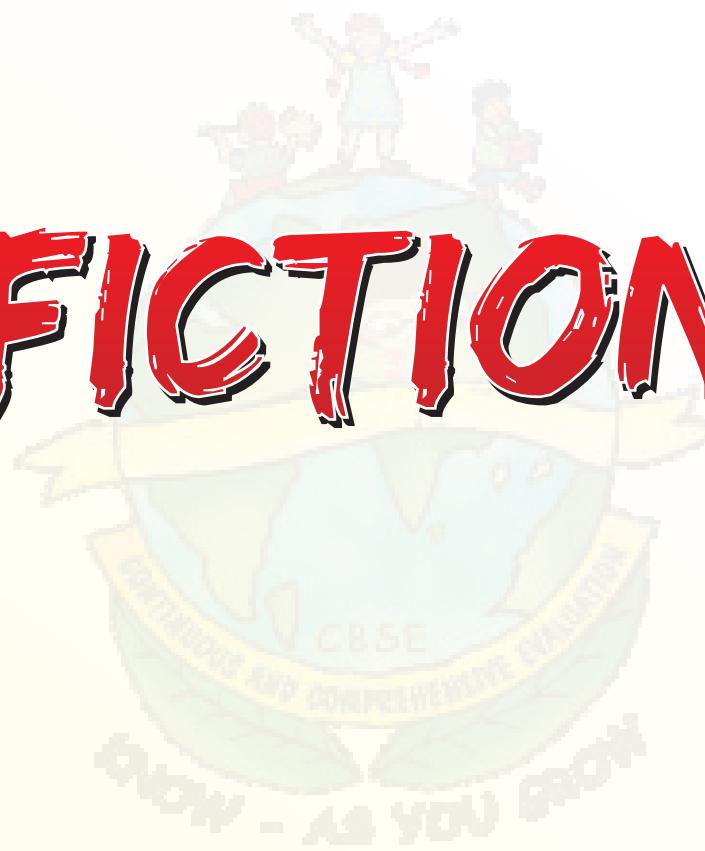


FICTION



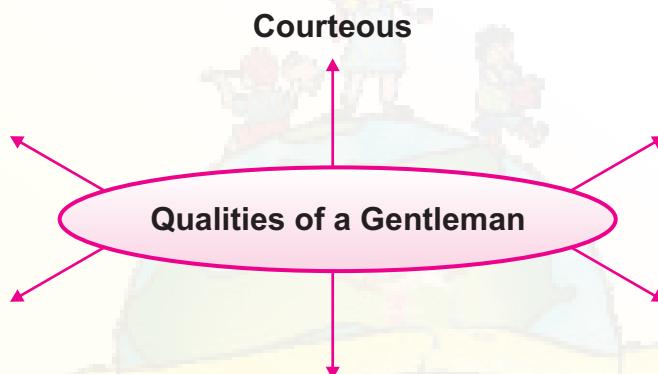
Fiction

UNIT 1

F. 1 Two Gentlemen Of Verona

A.J. Cronin

1. What are the qualities of a "gentleman"? Work with your partner and complete the following web-chart by listing the qualities of a gentleman.



Does a gentleman have consideration for others and their feelings?

2. Based on your discussion above, what do you think the story is about?

-
-

3. Now read the story given below. Your teacher will use a variety of techniques for different parts of the story e.g.

- Silent reading
- One student reading aloud to the whole class
- Students reading in small groups
- Dramatised reading in small groups

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

1. As we drove through the foothills of the Alps two small boys stopped us on the outskirts of Verona¹.

¹ Verona: a city in Italy. Romeo and Juliet are believed to have lived there





2. They were selling wild strawberries. "Don't buy," warned Luigi, our cautious driver. "You will get fruit much better in Verona. Besides, these boys....."
3. He shrugged his shoulders to convey his disapproval of their shabby appearance.
4. One boy had on a **worn**² jersey and cut-off khaki pants; the other a shortened army **tunic**³ gathered in loose folds about his skinny frame. Yet, gazing at the two little figures, with their brown skins, tangled hair and dark earnest eyes, we felt ourselves strangely attracted. My companion spoke to the boys, discovered that they were brothers. Nicola, the elder, was 13; Jacopo, who barely came up to the door handle of the car, was nearly 12. We bought their biggest basket, then set off toward town.
5. Next morning, coming out of our hotel, we saw our friends bent over shoeshine boxes beside the fountain in the public square, doing a brisk business.
6. We watched for a few moments; then as trade slackened we went over. They greeted us with friendly faces.
7. "I thought you picked fruit for a living," I said.
8. "We do many things, sir," Nicola answered seriously. He glanced at us hopefully. "Often we show visitors through the town ... to **Juliet's tomb**⁴ ... and other places of interest."
9. "All right," I smiled. "You take us along."
10. As we made the rounds, my interest was again provoked by their remarkable **demeanour**⁵. They were childish enough, and in many ways quite **artless**⁶. Jacopo was lively as a squirrel. Nicola's smile was steady and engaging. Yet in both these boyish faces there was a seriousness which was far beyond their years.
11. In the week which followed we saw them frequently, for they proved extremely useful to us. If we wanted a pack of American cigarettes, or seats for the opera or the name of a good restaurant, Nicola and Jacopo could be relied upon to satisfy our needs.
12. What struck one most was their willingness to work. During these summer days, under the hot sun, they shined shoes, sold fruit, hawked newspapers, conducted tourists round the town, and ran errands.



2 **worn-** old and damaged

4 **Juliet's tomb-** the place where Juliet, the

3 **tunic-** a loose outer garment that does not have sleeves

the woman Romeo loved, was buried. Romeo and Juliet is a play written by Shakespeare.

5 **demeanour-** appearance and behaviour

6 **artless-** guileless; innocent

-
13. One night, we came upon them in the windy and deserted square, resting on the stone pavement beneath the lights.
 14. Nicola sat upright, tired. A bundle of unsold newspapers lay at his feet. Jacopo, his head resting upon his brother's shoulder was asleep. It was nearly midnight.
 15. "Why are you out so late, Nicola?"
 16. "Waiting for the last bus from Padua. We shall sell all our papers when it comes in."
 17. "Must you work so hard? You both look rather tired."
 18. "We are not complaining, sir."
 19. But next morning, when I went over to the fountain to have my shoes shined, I said, "Nicola, the way you and Jacopo work, you must earn quite a bit. You spend nothing on clothes. You eat little enough --- when I see you have a meal it's usually black bread and figs. Tell me, what do you do with your money?"
 20. He coloured deeply under his sunburn, then grew pale. He looked to the ground.
 21. "You must be saving up to emigrate to America," I suggested. He looked at me sideways, spoke with an effort.
 22. "We should greatly like to go to the States. But here, at present, we have other plans."
 23. "What plans?"
 24. He smiled uncomfortably. "Just plans, sir," he answered in a low voice.
 25. "Well," I said, "we're leaving on Monday. Is there anything I can do for you before we go?"
 26. Nicola shook his head, but suddenly Jacopo said, "Sir," he burst out, "every Sunday we make a visit to the country, to Poleta, 30 kilometres from here. Usually we hire bicycles. But tomorrow, since you are so kind, you might send us in your car."
 27. I had already told Luigi he might have the Sunday off. However, I answered, "I'll drive you out myself."
 28. There was a pause. Nicola was glaring at his young brother in vexation. "We could not think of troubling you, sir."
 29. "It won't be any trouble."
 30. He bit his lip, then, in a rather **put out**⁷ tone, he said, "Very well."
 31. The following afternoon we drove to the tiny village set high upon the hillside. I imagined that our destinations would be some humble dwellings. But, directed by Jacopo, we drew up at a large red-roofed villa, surrounded by a high stone wall. I could scarcely believe my eyes and before I could recover breath my two passengers had leaped from the car.

7 **put out** : offended; annoyed



32. "We shall not be long, sir. Perhaps only an hour. May be you'd like to go to the cafe in the village for a drink?" They disappeared beyond the corner of the wall.
33. After a few minutes I followed. I found a grilled side-entrance and, determinedly, rang the bell.
34. A pleasant-looking woman with steel-rimmed spectacles appeared. I blinked as I saw that she was dressed in the white uniform of a trained nurse.
35. "I just brought two small boys here."
36. "Ah, yes." Her face lit up; she opened the door to admit me. "Nicola and Jacopo. I will take you up."
37. She led me through a cool, tiled **vestibule**⁸ into the hospital --- for hospital the villa had become. At the door of a little cubicle the nurse paused, put her finger to her lips, and with a smile bade me look through the glass partition.
38. The two boys were seated at the bedside of a girl of about twenty who, propped up on pillows, wearing a pretty lace jacket, was listening to their chatter, her eyes soft and tender. One could see at a glance her resemblance to her brothers. A vase of wild flowers stood on her table, beside a dish of fruit and several books.
39. "Won't you go in?" the nurse murmured. "Lucia will be pleased to see you."
40. I shook my head and turned away. I felt I could not bear to intrude upon this happy family party. But at the foot of the staircase I drew up and begged her to tell me all she knew about these boys.
41. She was eager to do so. They were, she explained, quite alone in the world, except for this sister, Lucia. Their father, a widower, a well-known singer, had been killed in the early part of the war. Shortly afterward a bomb had destroyed their home and thrown the three children into the streets. They had always known a comfortable and cultured life -- Lucia had herself been training as a singer --- and they had suffered horribly from near starvation and exposure to the cold winter.



42. For months they had barely kept themselves alive in a sort of shelter they built with their own hands amidst the rubble. Then for three years the Germans ruled the city. The boys grew to hate the Germans. When the resistance movement began secretly to form they were among the first to join. When the war was over, and we had peace at last, they came back to their beloved sister. And they found hersuffering from tuberculosis of the spine."
43. She paused, took a quick breath.
44. "Did they give up? I do not have to answer that question. They brought her here, persuaded us to take her into the hospital. In the twelve months she has been our patient she has made good progress. There is every hope that one day she will walk - and sing - again."
45. "Of course, everything is so difficult now, food so **scarce**⁹ and dear, we could not keep going unless we charged a fee. But every week, Lucia's brothers have made their payment." She added simply, "I don't know what they do, I do not ask. Work is scarce in Verona. But whatever it is, I know they do it well."
46. "Yes," I agreed. "They couldn't do it better."
47. I waited outside until the boys rejoined me, then drove them back to the city. They sat beside me, not speaking. For my part, I did not say a word --- I knew they would prefer to feel that they had safely kept their secret. Yet their devotion had touched me deeply. War had not broken their spirit. Their selfless action brought a new nobility to human life, gave promise of a greater hope for human society.

About the author

A.J. Cronin (1896-1974) was a doctor by training. He practised medicine in Wales and in London. It was while recovering from a breakdown in health that he wrote his first novel *Hatter's Castle*. It was a huge success. Cronin gave up practising medicine and took to writing as a career. He wrote a number of novels and short stories. Among his best-known novels are *The Citadel*, *The Key of the Kingdom*, and *The Spanish Gardener*. Some of his novels have been made into successful films. The title of the story is that of one of the early plays of Shakespeare. The story recounts the hard life chosen by two young boys so that they could pay for the treatment of their sister afflicted with tuberculosis. The boys' sacrifice, their sincerity and devotion to the cause and the maturity they display in their actions gives a new hope for humanity.

9 **scarce** : not enough



4. Based on your reading of the story answer the following questions by ticking the correct options.
1. The driver did not approve of the narrator buying fruit from the two boys because
 - a) the boys were untidy and poorly dressed
 - b) the strawberries were not fresh
 - c) they were asking for a heavy price
 - d) the driver did not approve of small boys who worked
 2. The narrator was most impressed by the boys'
 - a) desire to earn money
 - b) willingness to work
 - c) ability to perform many tasks
 - d) sense of fun
 3. Nicola was not pleased when Jacopo asked the narrator to drive them to Poleta as he
 - a) did not want a stranger to become involved with their plans
 - b) preferred going to Poleta by train so that he could enjoy the scenery
 - c) did not want to ask anyone for favours
 - d) did not want to take help from someone he did not know well
 4. The narrator did not go inside Lucia's room as
 - a) he did not want to intrude into their privacy
 - b) he thought that the boys would object
 - c) Lucia would not welcome a stranger
 - d) the boys would feel he was spying on them
 5. The boys were the first to join the resistance movement against the Germans because
 - a) the Germans had hurt their sister
 - b) the Germans ruled the city
 - c) the Germans had ruined their family
 - d) the Germans had destroyed their home
 6. The author did not speak to the boys on their return journey because
 - a) he thought the boys would prefer to keep their secret
 - b) he thought the boys were ashamed of their sister's condition



- c) he thought they wouldn't tell him the truth
- d) he thought the boys might ask him for money for their sister

5. What do you understand by the following statements?

- a) "We do many things, sir," Nicola answered seriously. He glanced at us hopefully.
- b) He coloured deeply under his sunburn, then grew pale.
- c) He smiled uncomfortably. "Just plans, sir," he answered in a low voice.
- d) Yet in both these boyish faces there was a seriousness which was far beyond their years.

6. Answer the following questions briefly.

- a. Why didn't Luigi, the driver, approve of the two boys?
- b. Why were the narrator and his companion impressed by the two boys?
- c. Why was the author surprised to see Nicola and Jacopo working as shoeshine boys?
- d. How were the boys useful to the author?
- e. Why were the boys in the deserted square at night? What character traits do they exhibit?
- f. The narrator asks the boys, "Must you work so hard? You both look rather tired." The boys reply, "We are not complaining, sir." What do you learn about the boys from their reply?
- g. When the narrator asks the boys about their plans, they are evasive. Why don't they disclose their problems?

7. Discuss the following questions and write the answers in your notebook.

- a. Appearances are deceptive. Discuss with reference to the two boys.
- b. Do you think the boys looked after Lucia willingly? Give reasons for your answer.
- c. How does the story 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' promise hope for society?

8. Look at the italic words in the following examples.

- a. We bought their biggest basket, then **set off** toward town.
- b. One night we **came upon** them in the windy and deserted square.
- c. He bit his lip, then in a rather **put out** tone he said, 'Very well.'
- d. I shook my head and **turned away**.



Here are a few more. Match the phrases to their meanings.

Phrases	Meanings
set up	to start on a journey
break down	to tolerate a situation or a person
set off	to lose control of your feelings and start crying
put up with	to enter
put off	to be faced with or opposed by
put on	to start/ establish a company
come in	to refuse/ reject
come across	to postpone
come up against	to try to get help/advice/ sympathy from someone
turn down	to wear
turn in	to meet or find by chance
turn to	to inform on or deliver up

Now use the phrases given above to complete the following sentences.

1. The landlord was suspicious of the two men staying in his flat so he called the police and them
2. Early in the morning we packed our bags and for a hike over the mountain.
3. Janvi some photographs of her grandfather in the old trunk.
4. My father his own business 10 years ago.
5. The Bank Paul's request for a loan.
6. The Corporation's decision to reduce the leave of the employees a lot of opposition.
9. **Two Gentlemen of Verona** is written in the **first person**. A story written in the first person is a first-hand account of events told or narrated through the eyes of a single character, typically the main character. Stories written in the first person are easily identified by the use of the pronoun 'I' rather than 'he or she'.

The reader will see phrases such as "I said, I thought," rather than "he said, she thought." Everything is experienced through the eyes of a single character, and all thoughts and observations are limited to that one person. There can be no outside



observer. If the narrator does not see or experience an event first-hand, it cannot be a part of the story. All scenes in the story are filtered through this person's unique perception.

The **third-person** is a narrative mode in which both the reader and author observe the situation either through the senses and thoughts of more than one character, or through an overarching godlike perspective that sees and knows everything that happens and everything the characters are thinking. In this mode of narration, the narrator can tell the reader things that the main character does not know, or things that none of the characters know.

Rewrite any part of the story you like in the third person.

10. **The narrator realises why Nicola and Jacopo work so hard. Yet he does not go in to meet their sister nor does he speak to them about what he learns from the nurse. Working in groups, discuss the following aspects of the story and share your views with the class.**
- The love and devotion, and the family values Nicola and Jacopo display.
 - Their pride in themselves and their family
 - The trust they place in the narrator
 - The reason the narrator does not disclose to them that he knows their secret.

WRITING TASK

- As the narrator, write an article on the lesson of love, faith and trust that you have learnt from the two young boys of Verona.**
- After her brothers' visit, Lucia writes a page in her diary about her past life and her present situation. As Lucia write the diary entry in about 150 words.**

LISTENING TASK

- Listen to an excerpt from the diary of a 13 year old girl Zlata Filipovic who writes of the horrors of war in Sarajevo in her book Zlata's Diary.**

Based on your listening of the passage, complete the following statements.

- The first sign of approaching war was
- The family went into the cellar when
- The 'awful cellar' was the only place that could save their lives because
- Zlata's friend, Nina died when
- Zlata and her father were worried about her mother's safety because



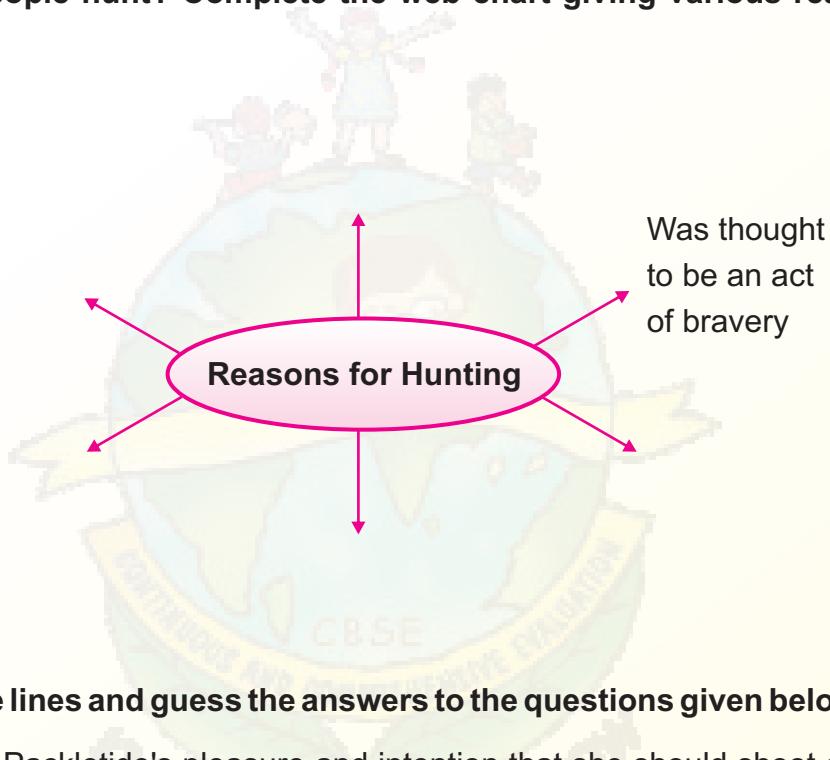
Fiction

UNIT 2

F.2 Mrs Packletide's Tiger

by Saki

1. Why do people hunt? Complete the web chart giving various reasons for the same:



2. Read these lines and guess the answers to the questions given below

It was Mrs. Packletide's pleasure and intention that she should shoot a tiger The compelling motivewas the fact that Loona Bimberton had recently personally procured tiger-skin and a heavy harvest of Press photographs could successfully counter that sort of thing.

- a) Why did Mrs. Packletide want to kill a tiger?
- b) What does it tell you about her?
- c) What is the tone of the storywriter?
- d) Do you think she was successful in her mission?
- e) What do you think the story is all about?



3. This story was written at a time when there was very little awareness about the need to protect the environment and the wildlife. Now read the story.

1. It was Mrs. Packletide's pleasure and intention that she should shoot a tiger. Not that the lust to kill had suddenly descended on her, or that she felt that she would leave India safer and more wholesome than she had found it, with one fraction less of wild beast

per million of inhabitants. The compelling motive for her sudden deviation towards the footsteps of **Nimrod**¹ was the fact that Loona Bimberton had recently been carried eleven miles in an aeroplane by an Algerian aviator, and talked of nothing else; only a personally procured tiger-skin and a heavy harvest of press photographs could successfully counter that sort of thing. Mrs. Packletide had already arranged in her mind the lunch she would give at her house in Curzon Street, **ostensibly**² in Loona Bimberton's honour, with a tiger-skin rug occupying most of the foreground and all of the conversation. She had also already designed in her mind the tiger-claw brooch that she was going to give Loona Bimberton on her next birthday. In a

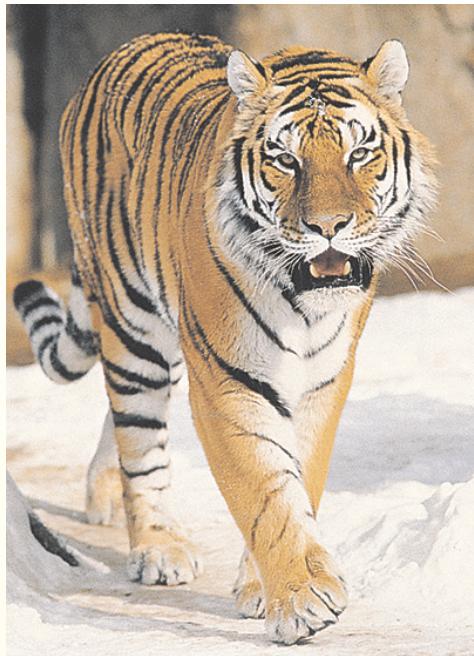
world that is supposed to be chiefly swayed by hunger and by love Mrs. Packletide was an exception; her movements and motives were largely governed by dislike of Loona Bimberton.

2. Circumstances proved **propitious**³. Mrs. Packletide had offered a thousand rupees for the opportunity of shooting a tiger without over-much risk or exertion, and it so happened that a neighbouring village could boast of being the favoured **rendezvous**⁴ of an animal of respectable antecedents, which had been driven by the increasing infirmities of age to abandon game-killing and confine its appetite to the smaller domestic animals. The prospect of earning the thousand rupees had stimulated the sporting and commercial instinct of the villagers; children were posted night and day on the outskirts of the local jungle to head the tiger back in the unlikely event of his attempting to roam away to fresh hunting-grounds, and the cheaper kinds of goats were left about with elaborate carelessness to keep him satisfied with his present quarters. The one great anxiety was lest he should die of old age before the date appointed for the memsahib's shoot. Mothers carrying their babies home through the jungle after the day's work in the fields hushed their singing lest they might curtail the restful sleep of the venerable herd-robber.

1. **Nimrod** : Biblical character (great grandson of Noah); a mighty hunter

2. **ostensibly**: supposedly 3. **propitious** : favourable

4. **rendezvous** : meeting



3. The great night duly arrived, moonlit and cloudless. A platform had been constructed in a comfortable and conveniently placed tree, and thereon crouched Mrs. Packletide and her paid companion, Miss Mebbin. A goat, gifted with a particularly persistent bleat, such as even a partially deaf tiger might be reasonably expected to hear on a still night, was **tethered**⁵ at the correct distance. With an accurately sighted rifle and a **thumb-nail pack of patience cards**⁶ the sportswoman awaited the coming of the quarry.
4. "I suppose we are in some danger?" said Miss Mebbin.
5. She was not actually nervous about the wild beast, but she had a morbid dread of performing an atom more service than she had been paid for.
6. "Nonsense," said Mrs. Packletide; "it's a very old tiger. It couldn't spring up here even if it wanted to."
7. "If it's an old tiger I think you ought to get it cheaper. A thousand rupees is a lot of money."
8. Louisa Mebbin adopted a protective elder-sister attitude towards money in general, irrespective of nationality or denomination. Her energetic intervention had saved many a rouble from dissipating itself in tips in some Moscow hotel, and francs and centimes clung to her instinctively under circumstances which would have driven them headlong from less sympathetic hands. Her speculations as to the market depreciation of tiger remnants were cut short by the appearance on the scene of the animal itself. As soon as it caught sight of the tethered goat it lay flat on the earth, seemingly less from a desire to take advantage of all available cover than for the purpose of snatching a short rest before commencing the grand attack.
9. "I believe it's ill," said Louisa Mebbin, loudly in Hindustani, for the benefit of the village headman, who was in ambush in a neighbouring tree.
10. "Hush!" said Mrs. Packletide, and at that moment the tiger commenced ambling towards his victim.
11. "Now, now!" urged Miss Mebbin with some excitement; "if he doesn't touch the goat we needn't pay for it." (The bait was an extra.)



5. **tethered** - fastened

6. **thumb - nail pack of patience cards** - small sized playing cards to play solitaire



12. The rifle flashed out with a loud report, and the great tawny beast sprang to one side and then rolled over in the stillness of death. In a moment a crowd of excited natives had swarmed on to the scene, and their shouting speedily carried the glad news to the village, where a thumping of tom-toms took up the chorus of triumph. And their triumph and rejoicing found a ready echo in the heart of Mrs. Packletide; already that luncheon-party in Curzon Street seemed immeasurably nearer.

13. It was Louisa Mebbin who drew attention to the fact that the goat was in death-throes from a mortal bullet-wound, while no trace of the rifle's deadly work could be found on the tiger. Evidently the wrong animal had been hit, and the beast of prey had succumbed to heart-failure, caused by the sudden report of the rifle, accelerated by **senile**⁷ decay. Mrs. Packletide was pardonably annoyed at the discovery; but, at any rate, she was the possessor of a dead tiger, and the villagers, anxious for their thousand rupees, gladly connived at the fiction that she had shot the beast. And Miss Mebbin was a paid companion. Therefore did Mrs. Packletide face the cameras with a light heart, and her pictured fame reached from the pages of the *Texas Weekly Snapshot* to the illustrated Monday supplement of the *Novoe Vremya*. As for Loona Bimberton, she refused to look at an illustrated paper for weeks, and her letter of thanks for the gift of a tiger-claw brooch was a model of repressed emotions. The luncheon-party she declined; there are limits beyond which repressed emotions become dangerous.

14. "How amused every one would be if they knew what really happened," said Louisa Mebbin a few days after the ball.

15. "What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Packletide quickly.

16. "How you shot the goat and frightened the tiger to death," said Miss Mebbin, with her disagreeably pleasant laugh.

17. "No one would believe it," said Mrs. Packletide, her face changing colour as rapidly as though it were going through a **book of patterns**⁸ before **post-time**⁹.

18. "Loona Bimberton would," said Miss Mebbin. Mrs. Packletide's face settled on an unbecoming shade of greenish white.



7. **senile** - characteristic of old age

8. **book of patterns** - Book showing the colour patterns of racing stables, with colours worn by jockeys.

9. **post-time** - the start of horse race and deadline for placing a bet

19. "You surely wouldn't give me away?" she asked.
20. "I've seen a week-end cottage near Dorking that I should rather like to buy," said Miss Mebbin with seeming irrelevance. "Six hundred and eighty, freehold. Quite a bargain, only I don't happen to have the money."

*

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21. Louisa Mebbin's pretty week-end cottage, christened by her "**Les Fauves**¹⁰," and gay in summer-time with its garden borders of tiger-lilies, is the wonder and admiration of her friends.
22. "It is a marvel how Louisa manages to do it," is the general verdict.
23. Mrs. Packletide indulges in no more big-game shooting.
24. "The **incidental**¹¹ expenses are so heavy," she confides to inquiring friends.

About the Author

Saki, (1870-1916), whose real name was Hector Hugh Munro, was a British writer, whose witty stories satirized the society and culture of his day. He was considered a master of the short story.

4. Answer the following questions in your own words:

- (a) Why did Mrs. Packletide wish to kill a tiger?
- (b) What made her decide to give a party in Loona Bimberton's honour? What did she intend to give Loona on her birthday?
- (c) How was the tiger shooting arranged? What kind of a tiger was chosen for the purpose?
- (d) In what way did the villagers help Mrs. Packletide shoot the tiger?
- (e) Who was Miss Mebbin? Was she really devoted to Mrs. Packletide? How did she behave during the tiger shooting?
- (f) Mrs. Packletide was a good shot. Discuss.
- (g) What comment did Miss Mebbin make after Mrs Packletide had fired the shot? Why did Miss Mebbin make this comment? How did Mrs Packletide react to this comment?
- (h) How did the villagers react to the tiger's death?
- (i) Do you think Mrs. Packletide was able to achieve her heart's desire? Give reasons for your answer.



- (j) How did Miss Mebbin manage to get her week-end cottage? Why did she plant so many tiger lilies in her garden?
- (k) "The incidental expenses are so heavy," she confides to inquiring friends. Who is the speaker? What is she referring to here?
- 5. Discuss the following questions in detail and write the answers in your notebooks:**
- Do you think the tiger shooting organized by the villagers was a serious affair? Give reasons for your answer.
 - Do you think the writer is trying to make fun of the main characters in the story i.e. Mrs. Packletide, Miss Mebbin and Loona Bimberton? Pick out instances from the story that point to this fact.
 - A person who is vain is full of self importance and can only think of himself/herself and can go to great lengths to prove his/her superiority. Do you think Mrs Packletide is vain? Give reasons in support of your answer.
 - Sometimes writers highlight certain negative aspects in society or human beings by making fun of it. This is called satire. In your groups discuss whether you would classify this story as a satire. Give reasons to support your answer
 - How does the writer create humor in this story?
- 6. Choose extracts from the story that illustrate the character of the people listed in the table given below. There are some words given to help you. You may add words of your own. One has been done as an example:**

vain jealous competitive shrewd manipulative stingy materialistic spiteful

Character	Extract from the story	What this tells us about the character
Mrs. Packletide	(i) The compelling motive for her sudden deviation towards the footsteps of Nimrod was the fact that Loona Bimberton had recently been carried eleven miles in an aeroplane by an Algerian aviator, and talked of nothing else; only a personally procured tiger-skin and a heavy harvest of Press photographs could successfully counter that sort of thing	Competitive

	<p>(ii) Mrs. Packletide had offered a thousand rupees for the opportunity of shooting a tiger without over-much risk or exertion,</p> <p>(iii) Mrs. Packletide faced the cameras with a light heart, and her pictured fame reached from the pages of the Texas Weekly Snapshot to the illustrated Monday supplement of the Novoe Vremya.</p>
Louisa Mebbin	<p>(i) "If it's an old tiger I think you ought to get it cheaper. A thousand rupees is a lot of money."</p> <p>(ii) Louisa Mebbin adopted a protective elder-sister attitude towards money in general, irrespective of nationality or denomination</p> <p>(iii) "How amused every one would be if they knew what really happened," said Louisa Mebbin a few days after the ball.</p> <p>(iv) Louisa Mebbin's pretty week-end cottage, christened by her "Les Fauves," and gay in summer-time with its garden borders of tiger-lilies, is the wonder and admiration of her friends</p>
Loona Bimberton	<p>(i) As for Loona Bimberton, she refused to look at an illustrated paper for weeks, and her letter of thanks for the gift of a tiger-claw brooch was a model of repressed emotions</p> <p>(ii) there are limits beyond which repressed emotions become dangerous.</p>



7. There are many amusing lines in the story. Here are a few of them. Rewrite each one in ordinary prose so that the meaning is retained. One has been done for you as an example:

- a) It was Mrs. Packletide's pleasure and intention that she should shoot a tiger.

Mrs. Packletide wanted to shoot a tiger

- b) Mrs. Packletide had already arranged in her mind the lunch she would give at her house in Curzon Street, ostensibly in Loona Bimberton's honour, with a tiger-skin rug occupying most of the foreground and all of the conversation.

.....
.....

- c) Mothers carrying their babies home through the jungle after the day's work in the fields hushed their singing lest they might curtail the restful sleep of the venerable herd-robber.

.....
.....

- d) Louisa Mebbin adopted a protective elder-sister attitude towards money in general, irrespective of nationality or denomination

.....
.....

- e) Evidently the wrong animal had been hit, and the beast of prey had succumbed to heart-failure, caused by the sudden report of the rifle, accelerated by senile decay

.....
.....

- f) As for Loona Bimberton, she refused to look at an illustrated paper for weeks, and her letter of thanks for the gift of a tiger-claw brooch was a model of repressed emotions

.....
.....

8. An oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines normally-contradictory terms. The most common form of oxymoron involves an adjective-noun combination of two words like- failed success

Writers often use an oxymoron to call attention to an apparent contradiction. For example, Wilfred Owen's poem *The Send-off* refers to soldiers leaving for the front line, who "lined the train with faces grimly gay." The oxymoron 'grimly gay' highlights the



contradiction between how the soldiers feel and how they act: though they put on a brave face and act cheerful, they feel grim. Some examples of oxymorons are- dark sunshine, cold sun, living dead, dark light, almost exactly etc.

The story Mrs. Packletide's Tiger has a number of oxymorons. Can you identify them and write them down in your notebooks?

WRITING TASK

9(a) Years later Mrs. Packletide writes her autobiography. As Mrs. Packletide, write about the tiger episode with the help of the clues given below.

jealous of the applause Loona was getting-thought of tiger hunt--all arranged-- Louisa Mebbin accompanied; turned out to be a blackmailer-huge price to pay to outdo a rival

(b) In groups of four construct the dialogues and enact the following situations from the story:

1. Mrs. Packletide and the headman of the village/other villagers discussing the details of the tiger shooting
2. Miss Mebbin blackmailing Mrs Packletide into gifting her a cottage
3. Loona Bimberton and a lady-friend discussing Mrs Packletide's hunting success

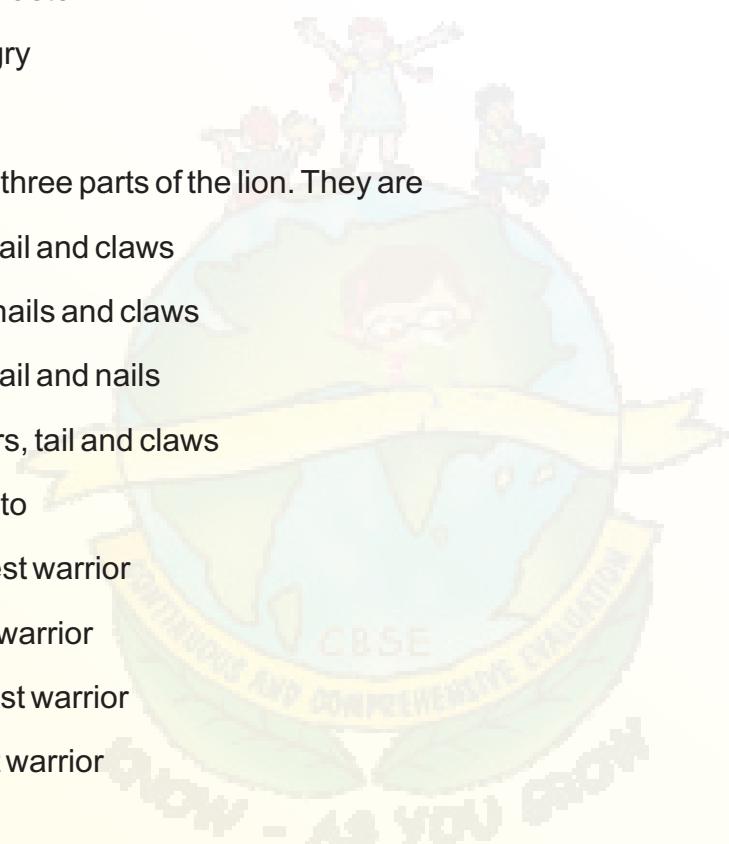
LISTING TASK

10. Listen to the passage on lion hunting and answer the questions given below:

1. The Maasai tribe in Africa hunt lions because
 - i. they live near the forests of Africa
 - ii. they view it as a sign of bravery and personal achievement
 - iii. they are a hunting tribe
 - iv. they adorn their bodies with body parts of the lion
2. Solo hunting has been banned because
 - i. it is dangerous
 - ii. of the declining lion population
 - iii. too many hunters have been killed
 - iv. it creates pride in the minds of the successful hunters



3. The hunting of lionesses is discouraged because
 - i. they bear the cubs
 - ii. they run much faster
 - iii. they are more fierce
 - iv. they cannot be spotted easily
4. The Maasai warriors chase a lion with rattle bells to
 - i. awaken it
 - ii. make it run faster
 - iii. make it angry
 - iv. frighten it
5. The Maasai use three parts of the lion. They are
 - i. the mane, tail and claws
 - ii. the mane, nails and claws
 - iii. the mane, tail and nails
 - iv. the whiskers, tail and claws
6. The tail is given to
 - i. the strongest warrior
 - ii. the fastest warrior
 - iii. the youngest warrior
 - iv. the bravest warrior



Fiction 2

UNIT

F.3 The Letter

By Dhumaketu

1. Look at the picture of the old man given below:



Working with your partner note down the feelings of the old man.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Can you think of reasons for these feelings? Discuss with your partner and note down possible reasons.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



3. Now read the story given below. Your teacher will use a variety of techniques for different parts of the story e.g.

- Silent reading
- One student reading aloud to the whole class
- Students reading in small groups
- Dramatised reading in small groups

1. In the grey sky of early dawn stars still glowed, as happy memories light up a life that is nearing its close. An old man was walking through the town, now and again drawing his tattered clothes tighter to shield his body from the cold and biting wind. From some houses came the sound of grinding mills, and the sweet voices of women singing at their work, and the sounds helped him along his lonely way. Except for the occasional bark of a dog, the distant steps of a workman going early to work, or the screech of a bird disturbed before its time, the whole town was wrapped in deathly silence. Most of its inhabitants were still in the arms of sleep, the sleep which grew more and more profound on account of the intense winter cold; for the cold used sleep to extend its sway over all things even as a false friend lulls his chosen victim with caressing smiles. The old man, shivering at times but fixed of purpose, plodded on till he came out of the town-gate on to a straight road. Along this he now went at a somewhat slower pace, supporting himself on his old staff.

2. On one side of the road was a row of trees, on the other side the town's public garden. The sky was darker now and the cold more intense, for the wind was blowing straight along the road, on which they fell like frozen snow, only the faint light of the morning star. At the end of the garden stood a handsome building of the newest style, and the light gleamed threw the crevices of its closed doors and windows.

3. **Beholding**¹ the wooden arch of this building, the old man was filled with the joy that the pilgrim feels when he first sees the goal of his journey. On the arch hung an old board with the newly painted letters "Post Office." The old man went in quietly and squatted on



1 **Beholding** : taking a look at; seeing

the veranda. The voices of two or three people busy and their routine work could be faintly heard through the wall.

4. "Police Superintendent," a voice called sharply. The old man started at the sound, but composed himself again to wait. But for the faith and love, that warmed him, he could not have borne the bitter cold.
5. Name after name rang out from within as the clerk read out the English addresses in the letters and flung them to the waiting postmen. From long practise he had acquired great speed at reading out the titles - Commissioner, Superintendent, **Diwan Sahib**², Librarian - and in flinging the letters out.
6. In the midst of this procedure a jesting voice from inside called, "Coachman Ali!" The old man got up, raised his eyes to heaven in gratitude and stepping forward put his hands to the door.
7. "Gokul Bhai!"
8. "Yes who is there?"
9. "You called out coachman Ali's name didn't you. Here I am I have come for my letter."
10. "It's a mad man, sir, who worries us by calling everyday for letters that never come," said the clerk to the postmaster.
11. The old man went back slowly to the bench on which he had been accustomed to sit for five long years.
12. Ali had been a clever shikari. As his skill increased so did his love for the hunt, till at last it was as impossible for him to pass a day without hunting as it is for the opium-eater to forgo his daily portion. When Ali sighted the earth-brown partridge, almost invisible to other eyes, the poor bird, they said, was as good as in his bag. His sharp eyes saw the hare crouching. Even when the dogs failed to see the creature cunningly hidden in the yellow brown scrub, Ali's eyes would catch the sight of his ears; and in another moment it was dead. Besides this he would often go out with his friends, the fishermen.
13. But when the evening of his life was drawing in, he left his old ways and suddenly took a new turn. His only child, Miriam married and left him. She went off with a soldier into his regiment in the Punjab, and for the last five years he had no news of this daughter for whose sake alone he dragged along a cheerless existence. Now he understood the meaning of love and separation. He could no longer enjoy the sportsman's pleasure and laughter at the bewildered terror of the young partridges bereft of their parents.
14. Although the hunter's instinct was in his very blood and bones, such loneliness had come into his life since the day Miriam had gone away, that now, forgetting his sport, he would become lost in the admiration of the green cornfield. He reflected deeply, and



came to the conclusion that the whole universe is built up through love and that the grief of separation is inescapable. And seeing this, he sat down under a tree and wept bitterly. From that day he had risen each morning at 4'oclock to walk to the post -office. In his whole life he had never received a letter, but with a devout serenity born of hope and faith, he persevered and was always the first to arrive.

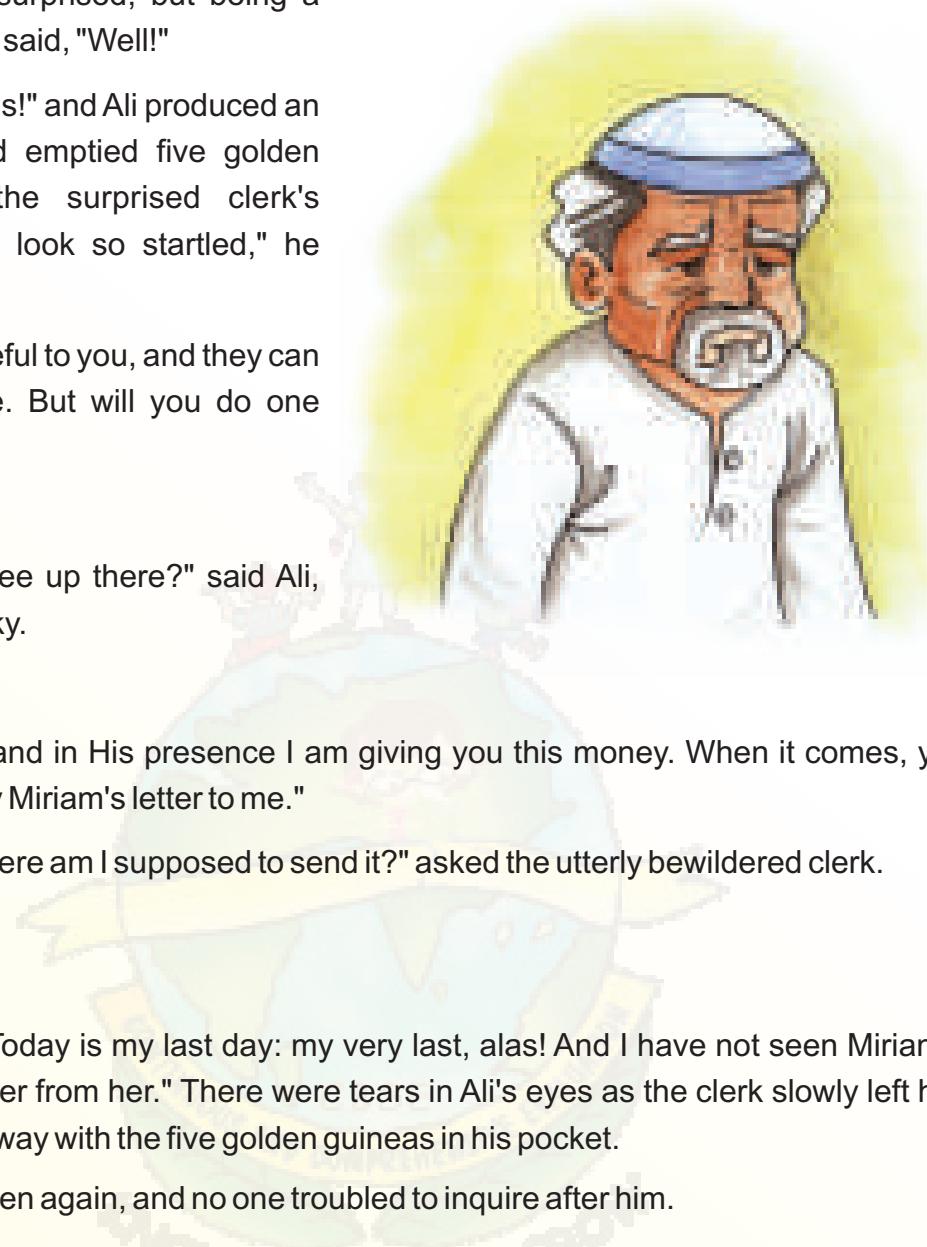
15. The post office, one of the uninteresting buildings in the world, became his place of pilgrimage. He always occupied a particular seat in a particular corner of the building, and when the people got to know his habit they laughed at him. The postmen began to make a game of him. Even though there was no letter for him they would call out his name for the fun of seeing him jump up and come to the door. But with a boundless faith and infinite patience, he came everyday, and went away empty-handed.
16. While Ali waited, peons would come for their firms' letters and he would hear them discussing their masters' scandals. These smart young peons in their spotless turbans and creaking shoes were always eager to express themselves. Meanwhile, the door would be thrown open and the post-master, a man with a face as sad and as inexpressive as a pumpkin, would be seen sitting on his chair inside. There was no glimmer of animation in his features; such men usually prove to be village schoolmasters, office clerks or postmasters.
17. One day, he was there as usual and did not move from his seat when the door was opened.
18. "Police Commissioner!" the clerk called out, and a young fellow stepped forward briskly for the letters.
19. "Superintendent!" Another voice called. Another peon came. And so the clerk, like a worshipper of Vishnu, repeated his customary thousand names.
20. At last they had all gone. Ali got up too and saluting the post-office as though it housed some precious relic, went off. A pitiable figure a century behind his time.
21. "That fellow," asked the post-master "is he mad?"
22. "Who, sir? Oh, yes," answered the clerk "no matter what the weather is he has been here everyday for the last five years. But he doesn't get many letters."
23. "I can well understand that! Who does he think will have time to write a letter everyday?"
24. "But he is a bit touched sir. In the old days he committed many sins; and maybe he shed some blood within sacred precincts and is paying for it now," the postman added in support of his statement.
25. "Mad-men are strange people," the postmaster said.



26. "Yes. Once I saw a postman in Ahmedabad who did absolutely nothing but make little heaps of dust. And another had a habit of going to the river bed in order to pour water on a certain stone everyday!"
27. "Oh! That's nothing" chimed in another. "I knew one madman who paced up and down all day long, another who never ceased declaiming poetry and a third who would slap himself on the cheek and then begin to cry because he was being beaten."
28. And everyone in the post office began to talk of lunacy. All working class people have the habit of taking periodic rests by joining in general discussion for a few minutes. After listening a while, the postmaster got up and said, "It seems as though the mad live in a world of their own making. To them perhaps we too appear mad. The mad-man's world is rather like the poet's, I should think!"
29. He laughed as he spoke the last words, looking at one of the clerks who wrote indifferent verse. Then he went out and the office became still again.
30. For several days Ali had not come to the post-office. There was no one with enough sympathy or understanding to guess the reason, but all were curious to know what had stopped the old man. At last he came again; but it was a struggle for him to breathe and on his face were clear signs of approaching end. That day he could not contain his impatience.
31. "Master Sahib", he begged the post-master, "have you a letter from my Miriam?"
32. The postmaster wanted to get out to the country, and was in a hurry.
33. "What a pest you are, brother!" he exclaimed.
34. "My name is Ali," answered Ali absent-mindedly.
35. "I know! I know! But do you think we've got your Miriam's name registered?"
36. "Then please note it down, brother. It will be useful if a letter should come when I am not here." For how should the villager who had spent three-quarters of his life hunting know that Miriam's name was not worth a pice to anyone but her father?
37. The postmaster was beginning to lose his temper. "Have you no sense?" he cried.
38. "Get away! Do you think we're going to eat your letter when it comes?" and he walked off hastily. Ali came out very slowly, turning after every few steps to gaze at the post office. His eyes were filled with tears of helplessness, for his patience was exhausted, even though he still had faith. Yet how could he still hope to hear from Miriam?
39. Ali heard one of the clerks coming up behind him, and turned to him.
40. "Brother!" he said.



41. The clerk was surprised, but being a decent fellow he said, "Well!"
42. "Here, look at this!" and Ali produced an old tin box and emptied five golden guineas into the surprised clerk's hands. "Do not look so startled," he continued.
43. "They will be useful to you, and they can never be to me. But will you do one thing?"
44. "What?"
45. "What do you see up there?" said Ali, pointing to the sky.
46. "Heaven."
47. "Allah is there, and in His presence I am giving you this money. When it comes, you must forward my Miriam's letter to me."
48. "But where---where am I supposed to send it?" asked the utterly bewildered clerk.
49. "To my grave."
50. "What?"
51. "Yes. It is true. Today is my last day: my very last, alas! And I have not seen Miriam, I have had no letter from her." There were tears in Ali's eyes as the clerk slowly left him and went on his way with the five golden guineas in his pocket.
52. Ali was never seen again, and no one troubled to inquire after him.
53. One day, however, trouble came to the postmaster. His daughter lay ill in another town, and he was anxiously waiting for news of her. The post was brought in, and the letters piled on the table. Seeing an envelope of the colour and shape he expected, the postmaster eagerly snatched it up. It was addressed to Coachman Ali, and he dropped it as though it had given him an electric shock. The haughty temper of the official had quite left him in his sorrow and anxiety, and had laid bare his human heart. He knew at once that this was the letter the old man had been waiting for: it must be from his daughter Miriam.
54. "Lakshmi Das!" called the postmaster, for such was the name of the clerk to whom Ali had given his money.
55. "Yes, sir?"
56. "This is for your old coachman, Ali. Where is he now?"



57. "I will find out, sir."
58. The postmaster did not receive his own letter all that day. He worried all night, and getting up at three, went to sit in the office. "When Ali comes at four o' clock," he mused, "I will give him the letter myself."
59. For now the postmaster understood Ali's heart and his very soul. After spending but a single night in suspense, anxiously waiting for news of his daughter, his heart was brimming with sympathy for the poor old man who had spent his nights in the same suspense for the last five years. At the stroke of five he heard a soft knock on the door: he felt sure it was Ali. He rose quickly from his chair, his suffering father's heart recognizing another, and flung the door wide open.
60. "Come in, brother Ali," he cried, handing the letter to the meek old man, bent double with age, who was standing outside. Ali was leaning on a stick, and the tears were wet on his face as they had been when the clerk left him. But his features had been hard then, and now they were softened by lines of kindness. He lifted his eyes and in them was a light so unearthly that the postmaster shrank back in fear and astonishment.
61. Lakshmi Das had heard the postmaster's words as he came towards the office from another quarter. "Who was that, sir? Old Ali?" he asked. But the postmaster took no notice of him. He was staring with wide-open eyes at the doorway from which Ali had disappeared. Where could he have gone? At last he turned to Lakshmi Das. "Yes, I was speaking to Ali," he said.
62. "Old Ali is dead, sir. But give me his letter."
63. "What! But when? Are you sure, Lakshmi Das?"
64. "Yes, that is so," broke in a postman who had just arrived. "Ali died three months ago."
65. The postmaster was bewildered. Miriam's letter was still lying near the door, Ali's image was still before his eyes. He listened to Lakshmi Das's recital of the last interview, but he could still not doubt the reality of the knock on the door and the tears in Ali's eyes. He was perplexed. Had he really seen Ali? Had his imagination deceived him? Or had it perhaps been Lakshmi Das?
66. The daily routine began. The clerk read out the addresses- Police Commissioner, Superintendent, Librarian - and flung the letters deftly.
67. But the postmaster now watched them as eagerly as though each contained a warm, beating heart. He no longer thought of them in terms of envelopes and postcards. He saw the essential human worth of a letter.
68. That evening you could have seen Lakshmi Das and the postmaster walking with slow steps to Ali's grave. They laid the letter on it and turned back.
69. "Lakshmi Das, were you indeed the first to come to the office this morning?"



70. "Yes, sir, I was the first."
71. "Then how.... No. I don't understand...."
72. "What, sir?"
73. "Oh, never mind," the postmaster said shortly. At the office he parted from Lakshmi Das and went in. The newly-wakened father's heart in him was reproaching him for having failed to understand Ali's anxiety, for now he himself had to spend another night of restless anxiety. Tortured by doubt and remorse, he sat down in the glow of the charcoal sigri to wait.

About the Author

Dhumaketu (1892-1965) was the pen name of Gaurishankar Govardhandas Josh, a prolific writer, who is considered one of the pioneers of the Gujarati short story. He published twenty-four collections of short stories, as well as thirty-two novels on historical and social subjects, and plays and travelogues. His writing is characterized by a poetic style, romanticism and powerful depiction of human emotions.

4. Answer the following questions by ticking the correct options:

- (a) Ali's walking to the Post Office daily even in biting cold weather shows his _____.
 - (i) courage
 - (ii) optimism
 - (iii) foolishness
 - (iv) strength of will
- (b) The Post Office is referred to as Ali's "place of pilgrimage" as he _____.
 - (i) visited it daily
 - (ii) came there to pray for a letter from his daughter
 - (iii) went there with faith and hope
 - (iv) believed God would bless him if he went there
- (c) The Post Master's rudeness to Ali reveals his _____.
 - (i) lack of empathy
 - (ii) preoccupation with his work
 - (iii) preconceived notions
 - (iv) sensitivity

- (d) Ali did not come to the Post Office for several days as _____.
- (i) he had given up hope
 - (ii) he was upset by the Post Master's rebuke
 - (iii) he was unwell and not able to walk to the Post Office
 - (iv) he was busy hunting
- (e) "Tortured by doubt and remorse, he sat down in the glow of the charcoal sigri to wait." The Post Master was waiting for _____.
- (i) a letter from Miriam
 - (ii) a letter from his own daughter
 - (iii) a letter from Ali
 - (iv) Ali to deliver Miriam's letter to him.

5. Answer the following questions briefly.

- (a) Who was Ali? Where did he go daily?
- (b) "Ali displays qualities of love and patience". Give evidence from the story to support the statement.
- (c) How do you know Ali was a familiar figure at the post office?
- (d) Why did Ali give up hunting?
- (e) What impression do you form of the postmaster after reading the story 'The Letter'?
- (f) The postmaster says to Ali, "What a pest you are, brother!" Do you agree with the statement? Give reasons for your answer.
- (g) "Ali came out very slowly, turning after every few steps to gaze at the post office. His eyes were filled with tears of helplessness, for his patience was exhausted, even though he still had faith." Why were Ali's eyes filled with tears of helplessness? What had exhausted his patience but not his faith?
- (h) "Tortured by doubt and remorse, he sat down in the glow of the charcoal sigri to wait." Who is tortured by doubt and remorse? Why? What is he waiting for?



6. The writer carefully builds up an atmosphere of loneliness and grief in the story. Working in groups, pick out words/ phrases from the story that build up the atmosphere. Copy the following table in your notebook and complete it.

Loneliness	Grief
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An old man was walking through the town, now and again drawing his tattered clothes tighter to shield his body from the cold and biting wind • his lonely way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the whole town was wrapped in deathly silence

7. Complete the table by explaining the following phrases/ sentences in your own words:

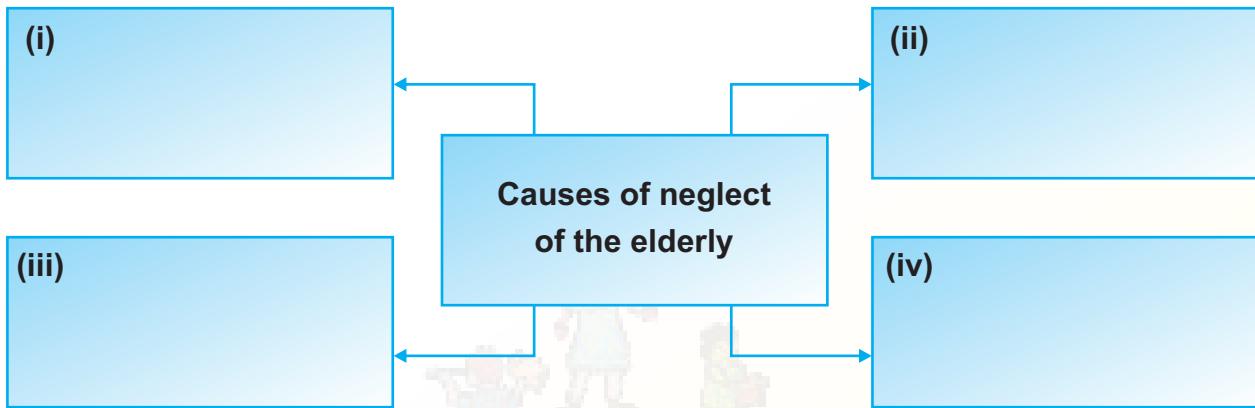
Phrases	Meanings
happy memories light up a life that is nearing its close	
the sounds helped him along his lonely way	
the cold used sleep to extend its sway over all things even as a false friend lulls his chosen victim with caressing smiles	
when the evening of his life was drawing in, he left his old ways and suddenly took a new turn	
the whole universe is built up through love and that the grief of separation is inescapable	
the post-master, a man with a face as sad and as inexpressive as a pumpkin, would be seen sitting on his chair inside	
And so the clerk, like a worshipper of Vishnu, repeated his customary thousand names	
The haughty temper of the official had quite left him in his sorrow and anxiety, and had laid bare his human heart	



8. LISTENING TASK

Now you are going to listen to an article about the break-up of the Joint Family system in India.

As you listen to the passage complete the boxes given below.



9. WRITING TASK

Tortured by doubt and remorse, the postmaster sits in the glow of a charcoal sigri that night, waiting for news of his daughter. As he sits, he writes his diary.

As the postmaster, write a diary entry in about 150 words outlining your feelings about the day's events.

10. SPEAKING TASK

- The postmaster believes that he saw Ali. What do you think? Discuss with your partner and present your views in front of the class.
- The postmaster was anxiously waiting for his ailing daughter's news. On not getting any news he visits his daughter's town. Now construct a dialogue between the postmaster and his daughter and enact it.



Fiction

UNIT 4

F.4 A Shady Plot

By Elsie Brown

- Given below is a list of words related to ghosts and ghost stories with their jumbled up meanings against them. Match the words/expressions with their correct meanings:

Apparition	a feeling of anticipation of or anxiety over a future event
Poltergeist	a reanimated corpse that is believed to rise from the grave at night to suck the blood of sleeping people
Clairvoyance	a conjurer who expels evil spirits by conjuration
Crystal Ball	a spelling board device intended to communicate with and through the spirit world, obtaining answers to questions
Eerie	beyond the range of normal experience or scientific explanation
Medium	any of a set of 22 playing cards bearing allegorical representations, used for fortune telling
Transmigration	a supernatural appearance of a person or thing, a ghost, spectre or phantom
Psychic	so mysterious, strange, or unexpected as to send a chill up the spine
Ouija Board	the supposed power to see objects or events that cannot be perceived by the senses
Exorcist	a person through whom the spirits of the dead are alleged to be able to contact the living
Premonition	a globe of quartz crystal in which images, believed to portend the future, are supposedly visible to fortune tellers



Paranormal	to pass into another body after death: going from one state of existence or place to another
Tarot Card	capable of extraordinary mental processes, such as extrasensory perception and mental telepathy
Vampire	German word, meaning "noisy ghost"-a troublesome spirit that announces its presence with unexplainable sounds and the creation of disorder

2. The title of the story is **A Shady Plot**. The dictionary defines the words as:

shady adjective

- a. Full of shade; shaded.
- b. Casting shade: a shady grove.
- c. Quiet, dark, or concealed; hidden.
- d. Of dubious character or of questionable honesty.

plot noun

- a. i) a small piece of ground, generally used for a specific purpose: a garden plot.
ii) a measured area of land
- b. a ground plan, as for a building; a diagram.
- c. storyline- the plan, scheme, or main story of a literary or dramatic work, as a play, novel, or short story
- d. a secret plan to accomplish a hostile or illegal purpose; a scheme.

**Based on the definitions above can you predict what the story will be about?
Make a brief note of your prediction in your notebook.**

3. Read the story given below. Your teacher will use a variety of techniques for different parts of the story. For example:

- Silent reading
- One student reading aloud to the whole class
- Students reading in small groups
- Dramatised reading in small groups



A SHADY PLOT

1. So I sat down to write a ghost story.
2. Jenkins was responsible.
3. "Hallock," he had said to me, "give us another on the supernatural this time. Something to give 'em the horrors; that's what the public wants, and your ghosts are live propositions."
4. Well, I was in no position to contradict Jenkins, for, as yet, his magazine had been the only one to print my stuff. So I had said, "Precisely!" in the deepest voice I was capable of, and had gone out.
5. I hadn't the shade of an idea, but at the time that didn't worry me in the least. You see, I had often been like that before and in the end things had always come my way--I didn't in the least know how or why. It had all been rather mysterious. You understand I didn't specialize in ghost stories, but more or less they seemed to specialize in me. A ghost story had been the first fiction I had written. Curious how that idea for a plot had come to me out of nowhere after I had chased inspiration in vain for months! Even now whenever Jenkins wanted a ghost, he called on me. And I had never found it healthy to contradict Jenkins. Jenkins always seemed to have an uncanny knowledge as to when the landlord or the grocer was pestering me, and he **dunned**¹ me for a ghost. And somehow I'd always been able to dig one up for him, so I'd begun to get a bit **cocky**² as to my ability.
6. So I went home and sat down before my desk and sucked at the end of my pencil and waited, but nothing happened. Pretty soon my mind began to wander off on other things, decidedly unghostly and material things, such as my wife's shopping and how on earth I was going to cure her of her alarming tendency to take every new fad that came along and work it to death. But I realized that would never get me any place, so I went back to staring at the ceiling.
7. "This writing business is delightful, isn't it?" I said sarcastically at last, out loud, too. You see, I had reached the stage of imbecility when I was talking to myself.
8. "Yes," said a voice at the other end of the room, "I should say it is!"



1. **dunned** : persistently ask for something that is overdue
 2. **cocky** : overconfident

9. I admit I jumped. Then I looked around.
10. It was twilight by this time and I had forgotten to turn on the lamp. The other end of the room was full of shadows and furniture. I sat staring at it and presently noticed something just taking shape. It was exactly like watching one of these moving picture cartoons being put together. First an arm came out, then a bit of sleeve of a stiff white **shirtwaist**³, then a leg and a plaid skirt, until at last there she was complete,--whoever she was.
11. She was long and angular, with enormous fishy eyes behind big bone-rimmed spectacles, and her hair in a tight wad at the back of her head (yes, I seemed able to see right through her head) and a jaw--well, it looked so solid that for the moment I began to doubt my very own senses and believe she was real after all.
12. She came over and stood in front of me and glared--yes, positively glared down at me, although (to my knowledge) I had never laid eyes on the woman before, to say nothing of giving her cause to look at me like that.
13. I sat still, feeling pretty helpless I can tell you, and at last she barked: "What are you gaping at?"
14. I swallowed, though I hadn't been chewing anything.
15. "Nothing," I said. "Absolutely nothing. My dear lady, I was merely waiting for you to tell me why you had come. And excuse me, but do you always come in sections like this? I should think your parts might get mixed up sometimes."
16. "Didn't you send for me?" she crisped.
17. Imagine how I felt at that!
18. "Why, no. I--I don't seem to remember----"
19. "Look here. Haven't you been calling on heaven and earth all afternoon to help you write a story?"
20. I nodded, and then a possible explanation occurred to me and my spine got cold. Suppose this was the ghost of a stenographer applying for a job! I had had an advertisement in the paper recently. I opened my mouth to explain that the position was filled, and permanently so, but she stopped me.
21. "And when I got back to the office from my last case and was ready for you, didn't you switch off to something else and sit there **drivelling**⁴ so I couldn't attract your attention until just now?"
22. "I--I'm very sorry, really."

3. **shirtwaist** : a woman's blouse shaped like a man's shirt
 4. **drivelling** : speak nonsense



23. "Well, you needn't be, because I just came to tell you to stop bothering us for assistance; you ain't going to get it. We're going on strike!"
24. "What!"
25. "You don't have to yell at me."
26. "I--I didn't mean to yell," I said humbly. "But I'm afraid I didn't quite understand you. You said you were----"
27. "Going on strike. Don't you know what a strike is? Not another plot do you get from us!"
28. I stared at her and wet my lips.
29. "Is--is that where they've been coming from?"
30. "Of course. Where else?"
31. "But my ghosts aren't a bit like you----"
32. "If they were, people wouldn't believe in them." She **draped**⁵ herself on the top of my desk among the pens and ink bottles and leaned towards me.
33. "In the other life I used to write."
34. "You did!"
35. She nodded.
36. "But that has nothing to do with my present form. It might have, but I gave it up at last for that very reason, and went to work as a reader on a magazine." She sighed, and rubbed the end of her long eagle nose with a **reminiscent**⁶ finger. "Those were terrible days; the memory of them made me mistake purgatory for paradise, and at last when I attained my present state of being, I made up my mind that something should be done.
37. I found others who had suffered similarly, and between us we organized 'The Writer's Inspiration Bureau.' We scout around until we find a writer without ideas and with a mind soft enough to accept impression. The case is brought to the attention of the main office, and one of us assigned to it. When that case is finished we bring in a report."
38. "But I never saw you before----"
39. "And you wouldn't have this time if I hadn't come to announce the strike. Many a time I've leaned on your shoulder when you've thought you were thinking hard--" I groaned, and clutched my hair. The very idea of that horrible scarecrow so much as touching me! And wouldn't my wife be shocked! I shivered. "But," she continued, "that's at an end. We've been called out of our beds a little too often in recent years, and now we're through."

5. **draped** : sat in an indolent manner; lolled

6. **reminiscent** : with one's mind full of memories

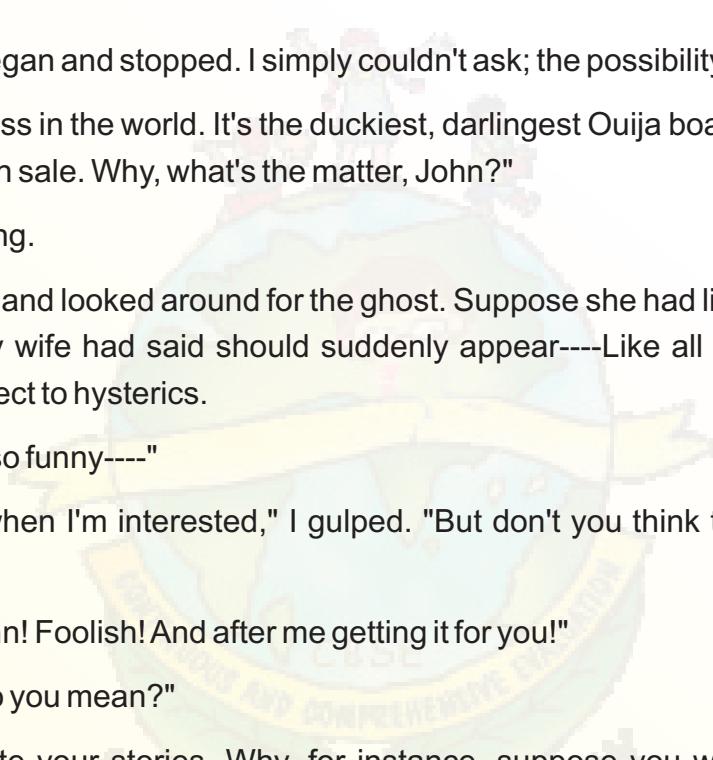


40. "But my dear madam, I assure you I have had nothing to do with that. I hope I'm properly grateful and all that, you see."
41. "Oh, it isn't you," she explained patronizingly. "It's those **Ouija board**⁷ fanatics. There was a time when we had nothing much to occupy us and used to haunt a little on the side, purely for amusement, but not any more. We've had to give up haunting almost entirely. We sit at a desk and answer questions now. And such questions!" She shook her head hopelessly, and taking off her glasses wiped them, and put them back on her nose again.
42. "But what have I got to do with this?"
43. She gave me a pitying look and rose.
44. "You're to exert your influence. Get all your friends and acquaintances to stop using the Ouija board, and then we'll start helping you to write."
45. "But---"
46. There was a footstep outside my door.
47. "John! Oh, John!" called the voice of my wife.
48. I waved my arms at the ghost with something of the motion of a beginner when learning to swim.
49. "Madam, I must ask you to leave, and at once. Consider the impression if you were seen here---"
50. The ghost nodded, and began, very sensibly, I thought, to demobilize and evaporate. First the **brogans**⁸ on her feet grew misty until I could see the floor through them, then the **affection**⁹ spread to her knees and gradually extended upward. By this time my wife was opening the door.
51. "Don't forget the strike," she repeated, while her lower jaw began to disintegrate, and as my Lavinia crossed the room to me the last vestige of her ear faded into space.
52. "John, why in the world are you sitting in the dark?"



-
7. **Ouija board:** a board on which are marked the letters of the alphabet. Answers to questions are spelt out by a pointer or glass held by the fingertips of the participants, and are supposedly formed by spiritual forces
8. **brogans :** a heavy ankle-high work boot with laces
9. **affection :** (here) condition; state of being affected



- 
53. "Just--thinking, my dear."
 54. "Thinking, rubbish! You were talking out loud."
 55. I remained silent while she lit the lamps, thankful that her back was turned to me. When I am nervous or excited there is a muscle in my face that starts to twitch, and this pulls up one corner of my mouth and gives the appearance of an idiotic grin. So far I had managed to conceal this affliction from Lavinia.
 56. "You know I bought the loveliest thing this afternoon. Everybody's wild over them!"
 57. I remembered her craze for taking up new fads and a **premonitory**¹⁰ chill crept up the back of my neck.
 58. "It--it isn't----" I began and stopped. I simply couldn't ask; the possibility was too horrible.
 59. "You'd never guess in the world. It's the duckiest, darlingest Ouija board, and so cheap! I got it at a bargain sale. Why, what's the matter, John?"
 60. I felt things slipping.
 61. "Nothing," I said, and looked around for the ghost. Suppose she had lingered, and upon hearing what my wife had said should suddenly appear----Like all sensitive women, Lavinia was subject to hysterics.
 62. "But you looked so funny----"
 63. "I--I always do when I'm interested," I gulped. "But don't you think that was a foolish thing to buy?"
 64. "Foolish! Oh, John! Foolish! And after me getting it for you!"
 65. "For me! What do you mean?"
 66. "To help you write your stories. Why, for instance, suppose you wanted to write an historical novel. You wouldn't have to wear your eyes out over those musty old books in the public library. All you'd have to do would be to get out your Ouija and talk to Napoleon, or William the Conqueror, or Helen of Troy--well, maybe not Helen--anyhow you'd have all the local colour you'd need, and without a speck of trouble. And think how easy writing your short stories will be now."
 67. "But Lavinia, you surely don't believe in Ouija boards."
 68. "I don't know, John--they are awfully thrilling."
 69. She had seated herself on the arm of my chair and was looking dreamily across the room. I started and turned around. There was nothing there, and I sank back with relief. So far so good.

10. **premonitory** : a foreboding.



70. "Oh, certainly, they're thrilling all right. That's just it; they're a darn sight too thrilling. They're positively devilish. Now, Lavinia, you have plenty of sense, and I want you to get rid of that thing just as soon as you can. Take it back and get something else."
71. My wife crossed her knees and stared at me through narrowed lids.
72. "John Hallock," she said distinctly. "I don't propose to do anything of the kind. In the first place they won't exchange things bought at a bargain sale, and in the second, if you aren't interested in the other world I am. So there!" and she slid down and walked from the room before I could think of a single thing to say. She walked very huffily.
73. Well, it was like that all the rest of the evening. Just as soon as I mentioned Ouija boards I felt things begin to cloud up; so I decided to let it go for the present, in the hope that she might be more reasonable later.
74. After supper I had another try at the writing, but as my mind continued a perfect blank I gave it up and went off to bed.
75. The next day was Saturday, and it being near the end of the month and a particularly busy day, I left home early without seeing Lavinia. Understand, I haven't quite reached the point where I can give my whole time to writing, and being **bookkeeper**¹¹ for a lumber company does help with the grocery bills and pay for Lavinia's fancy shopping. Friday had been a half holiday, and of course when I got back the work was piled up pretty high; so high, in fact, that ghosts and stories and everything else vanished in a perfect tangle of figures.
76. When I got off the street car that evening my mind was still churning. I remember now that I noticed, even from the corner, how brightly the house was illuminated, but at the time that didn't mean anything to me. I recall as I went up the steps and opened the door I murmured: "Nine times nine is eighty-one!"
77. And then Gladolia met me in the hall.
78. "Misto Hallock, de Missus sho t'inks you's lost! She say she done 'phone you dis mawnin' to be home early, but fo' de lawd's sake not to stop to **argify**¹² now, but get ready fo' de company an' come on down."
79. Some memory of a message given me by one of the clerks filtered back through my brain, but I had been hunting three lost receipts at the time, and had completely forgotten it.
80. "Company?" I said stupidly. "What company?"
81. "De Missus's Ouija boahrd pahrt," said Gladolia, and rolling her eyes she disappeared in the direction of the kitchen.

11. **bookkeeper** : accountant

12. **argify** : (here) argue



82. I must have gone upstairs and dressed and come down again, for I presently found myself standing in the dimly lighted lower hall wearing my second best suit and a fresh shirt and collar. But I have no recollections of the process.
83. There was a great chattering coming from our little parlour and I went over to the half-opened door and peered through.
84. The room was full of women--most of them elderly--whom I recognized as belonging to my wife's Book Club. They were sitting in couples, and between each couple was a Ouija board! The mournful squeak of the legs of the moving triangular things on which they rested their fingers filled the air and mixed in with the conversation. I looked around for the ghost with my heart sunk down to zero. What if Lavinia should see her and go mad before my eyes! And then my wife came and tapped me on the shoulder.
85. "John," she said in her sweetest voice, and I noticed that her cheeks were very pink and her eyes very bright. My wife is never so pretty as when she's doing something she knows I disapprove of, "John, dear I know you'll help us out. Mrs. William Augustus Wainright 'phoned at the last moment to say that she couldn't possibly come, and that leaves poor Laura Hinkle without a partner. Now, John, I know some people can work a Ouija by themselves, but Laura can't, and she'll just have a horrible time unless you---"
86. "Me!" I gasped. "Me! I won't---" but even as I spoke she had taken my arm, and the next thing I knew I was sitting with the thing on my knees and Miss Laura Hinkle opposite, grinning in my face like a flirtatious crocodile.
87. "I--I won't---" I began.
88. "Now, Mr. Hallock, don't you be shy." Miss Laura Hinkle leaned forward and shook a bony finger almost under my chin.
89. "I--I'm not! Only I say I won't---!"
90. "No, it's very easy, really. You just put the tips of your fingers right here beside the tips of my fingers---"
91. And the first thing I knew she had taken my hands and was **coyly**¹³ holding them in the position desired. She released them presently, and the little board began to slide around in an aimless sort of way. There seemed to be some force tugging it about. I looked at my partner, first with suspicion, and then with a vast relief. If she was doing



13 **coyly**: flirtatious but pretending to be shy or modest

it, then all that talk about spirits----Oh, I did hope Miss Laura Hinkle was cheating with that board!

92. "Ouija, dear, won't you tell us something?" she cooed, and on the instant the thing seemed to take life.
93. It rushed to the upper left hand corner of the board and hovered with its front leg on the word "Yes." Then it began to fly around so fast that I gave up any attempt to follow it. My companion was bending forward and had started to spell out loud: "T-r-a-i-t-o-r.' Traitor! Why, what does she mean?"
94. "I don't know," I said desperately. My collar felt very tight.
95. "But she must mean something. Ouija, dear, won't you explain yourself more fully?"
96. "'A-s-k-h-i-m!' Ask him. Ask who, Ouija?"
97. "I--I'm going." I choked and tried to get up but my fingers seemed stuck to that dreadful board and I dropped back again.
98. Apparently Miss Hinkle had not heard my protest. The thing was going around faster than ever and she was reading the message silently, with her brow corrugated, and the light of the huntress in her pale blue eyes.
99. "Why, she says it's you, Mr. Hallock. What does she mean? Ouija, won't you tell us who is talking?"
100. I groaned, but that **inexorable**¹⁴ board continued to spell. I always did hate a spelling match! Miss Hinkle was again following it aloud: "H-e-l-e-n.' Helen!" She raised her voice until it could be heard at the other end of the room. "Lavinia, dear, do you know anyone by the name of Helen?"
101. "By the name of----? I can't hear you." And my wife made her way over to us between the Book Club's chairs.
102. "You know the funniest thing has happened," she whispered excitedly. "Someone had been trying to communicate with John through Mrs. Hunt's and Mrs. Sprinkle's Ouija! Someone by the name of Helen----"
103. "Why, isn't that curious!"
104. "What is?"
105. Miss Hinkle **simpered**¹⁵.
106. "Someone giving the name of Helen has just been calling for your husband here."



14 **inexorable** : unstoppable

15 **simpered** : smile in a silly, often coy manner

107. "But we don't know anyone by the name of Helen----"
108. Lavinia stopped and began to look at me through narrowed lids much as she had done in the library the evening before.
109. And then from different parts of the room other manipulators began to report. Every plagued one of those five Ouija boards was calling me by name! I felt my ears grow crimson, purple, maroon. My wife was looking at me as though I were some peculiar insect. The squeak of Ouija boards and the murmur of conversation rose louder and louder, and then I felt my face twitch in the spasm of that idiotic grin. I tried to straighten my wretched features into their usual semblance of humanity, I tried and----
110. "Doesn't he look sly!" said Miss Hinkle. And then I got up and fled from the room.
111. I do not know how that party ended. I do not want to know. I went straight upstairs, and undressed and crawled into bed, and lay there in the burning dark while the last guest gurgled in the hall below about the wonderful evening she had spent. I lay there while the front door shut after her, and Lavinia's steps came up the stairs and--passed the door to the guest room beyond. And then after a couple of centuries elapsed the clock struck three and I dozed off to sleep.
112. At the breakfast table the next morning there was no sign of my wife. I concluded she was sleeping late, but Gladolia, upon being questioned, only shook her head, muttered something, and turned the whites of her eyes up to the ceiling. I was glad when the meal was over and hurried to the library for another try at that story.
113. I had hardly seated myself at the desk when there came a tap at the door and a white slip of paper slid under it. I unfolded it and read:
114. "DEAR JOHN,
115. "I am going back to my grandmother. My lawyer will communicate with you later."
116. "Oh," I cried. "Oh, I wish I was dead!"
117. And:
118. "That's exactly what you ought to be!" said that horrible voice from the other end of the room.
119. I sat up abruptly--I had sunk into a chair under the blow of the letter--then I dropped back again and my hair rose in a thick prickle on the top of my head. Coming majestically across the floor towards me was a highly polished pair of thick laced shoes. I stared at them in a sort of dreadful fascination, and then something about their gait attracted my attention and I recognized them.
120. "See here," I said sternly. "What do you mean by appearing here like this?"



121. "I can't help it," said the voice, which seemed to come from a point about five and a half feet above the shoes. I raised my eyes and presently distinguished her round protruding mouth.
122. "Why can't you? A nice way to act, to walk in sections----"
123. "If you'll give me time," said the mouth in an exasperated voice, "I assure you the rest of me will presently arrive."
124. "But what's the matter with you? You never acted this way before."
125. She seemed stung to make a violent effort, for a portion of a fishy eye and the end of her nose popped into view with a suddenness that made me jump.
126. "It's all your fault." She glared at me, while part of her hair and her plaid skirt began slowly to take form.
127. "My fault!"
128. "Of course. How can you keep a lady up working all night and then expect her to retain all her faculties the next day? I'm just too tired to materialize."
129. "Then why did you bother?"
130. "Because I was sent to ask when your wife is going to get rid of that Ouija board."
131. "How should I know! I wish to heaven I'd never seen you!" I cried. "Look what you've done! You've lost me my wife, you've lost me my home and happiness, you've---you've---"
132. "Misto Hallock," came from the hall outside, "Misto Hallock, I's gwine t' quit. I don't like no **hoodoos**¹⁶." And the steps retreated.
133. "You've---you've lost me my cook---"
134. "I didn't come here to be abused," said the ghost coldly. "I---I---"
135. And then the door opened and Lavinia entered. She wore the brown hat and coat she usually travels in and carried a suitcase which she set down on the floor.
136. That suitcase had an air of solid finality about it, and its lock leered at me **brassily**¹⁷.
137. I leaped from my chair with unaccustomed agility and sprang in front of my wife. I must conceal that awful phantom from her, at any risk!
138. She did not look at me, or--thank heaven!--behind me, but fixed her injured gaze upon the waste-basket, as if to wrest dark secrets from it.
139. "I have come to tell you that I am leaving," she **staccatoed**¹⁸.



16 **hoodoos** : placing curses and charms to bring bad luck on some one

17 **brassily** : rudely; insolently

18 **staccatoed** : spoke in an abrupt, detached manner

140. "Oh, yes, yes!" I agreed, flapping my arms about to attract attention from the corner.
 "That's fine--great!"
141. "So you want me to go, do you?" she demanded.
142. "Sure, yes--right away! Change of air will do you good. I'll join you presently!" If only she would go till Helen could depart! I'd have the devil of a time explaining afterward, of course, but anything would be better than to have Lavinia see a ghost. Why, that sensitive little woman couldn't bear to have a mouse say boo at her--and what would she say to a ghost in her own living-room?
143. Lavinia cast a cold eye upon me. "You are acting very queerly," she sniffed. "You are concealing something from me."
144. Just then the door opened and Gladolia called, "Mis' Hallock! Mis' Hallock! I've come to tell you I'se done lef' dis place."
145. My wife turned her head a moment. "But why, Gladolia?"
146. "I ain't stayin' round no place 'long wid dem Ouija board contraptions. I'se **skeered**¹⁹ of hoodoos. I's done gone, I is."
147. "Is that all you've got to complain about?" Lavinia inquired.
148. "Yes, ma'am."
149. "All right, then. Go back to the kitchen. You can use the board for kindling wood."
150. "Who? Me touch dat t'ing? No, ma'am, neva!"
151. "I'll be the **coon**²⁰ to burn it," I shouted. "I'll be glad to burn it."
152. Gladolia's heavy steps moved off kitchenward.
153. Then my Lavinia turned **waspishly**²¹ to me again. "John, there's not a bit of use trying to deceive me. What is it you are trying to conceal from me?"
154. "Who? Me? Oh, no," I lied elaborately, looking around to see if that dratted ghost was concealed enough. She was so big, and I'm rather a smallish man. But that was a bad move on my part.
155. "John," Lavinia demanded like a ward boss, "you are hiding somebody in here! Who is it?"
156. I only waved denial and gurgled in my throat. She went on, "It's bad enough to have you flirt over the Ouija board with that hussy----"
157. "Oh, the affair was quite above-board, I assure you, my love!" I cried, leaping lithely about to keep her from focusing her gaze behind me.

19 **skeered** : scared

20 **coon** : (here) the one doing a menial job

21 **waspishly** : in an irritated manner



158. She thrust me back with sudden muscle. "I will see who's behind you! Where is that Helen?"
159. "Me? I'm Helen," came from the ghost.
160. Lavinia looked at that apparition, that owl-eyed phantom, in plaid skirt and stiff shirtwaist, with hair skewed back and no powder on her nose. I threw a protecting husbandly arm about her to catch her when she should faint. But she didn't swoon. A broad, satisfied smile spread over her face.
161. "I thought you were Helen of Troy," she murmured.
162. "I used to be Helen of Troy, New York," said the ghost. "And now I'll be moving along, if you'll excuse me. See you later."
163. With that she telescoped briskly, till we saw only a hand waving farewell.
164. My Lavinia fell forgivably into my arms. I kissed her once or twice fervently, and then I shoved her aside, for I felt a sudden strong desire to write. The sheets of paper on my desk spread invitingly before me.
165. "I've got the **bulliest**²² plot for a ghost story!" I cried.

4. Based on your reading of the story above, answer the following questions by ticking the correct options.

1. The narrator earns his living by
 - a) writing ghost stories
 - b) working as a reader for a magazine
 - c) working as a stenographer
 - d) working as an accountant in a lumber company
2. The writer was overconfident about his ability to write ghost stories because
 - a) whenever magazines wanted a ghost story, they got in touch with him
 - b) he was always able to write a ghost story whenever he had to write one
 - c) the readers appreciated his ghost stories
 - d) he knew the ghost lady would help him write a good ghost story
3. The sight of the ghost materialising in his room filled the narrator with
 - a) fear
 - b) excitement



- c) joy
d) anticipation
4. The ghost wanted John to
a) stop his wife from using the Ouija board
b) stop using the Ouija board himself
c) stop his guests from using the Ouija board
d) stop people from using the Ouija board
5. John wants the ghost to disappear before his wife enters the room and waves his arms at the ghost with something of the motion of a beginner when learning to swim. His movement shows his
a) fear
b) amusement
c) desperation
d) anxiety
6. When the narrator says his wife is never so pretty as when she's doing something she knows he disapproves of, his tone is
a) amused
b) ironic
c) angry
d) irritated
7. The ghost says "It's all your fault.'It' here refers to
a) the narrator's wife's anger
b) the ghost's anger
c) the narrator's wife leaving him
d) the ghost materialising in sections.
8. Gladolia wishes to leave the narrator's house as
a) she does not like the Ouija boards
b) she is afraid of the ghost
c) she is afraid of magic and hoodoo
d) she likes Ouija boards and hoodoo

5. Answer the following questions briefly.

- a) What genre of stories does Jenkins want the narrator to write? Why?
- b) Does the narrator like writing ghost stories? Support your answer with evidence from the story.
- c) What makes Helen, the ghost, and her other co-ghosts organize The Writer's Inspiration Bureau?
- d) Why had Helen, the ghost been helping the narrator write ghost stories? Why was she going on strike? What condition did she place for providing continued help?
- e) How does the ghost undermine the narrator's faith in his ability to write ghost stories?
- f) Why does John want the ghost to disappear before his wife appears on the scene? What impression of his wife's character do you form from his words?
- g) Why does the narrator hesitate to be a partner to Laura Hinkle during the Ouija Board Party?
- h) What message does the ghost convey to the group that had assembled in the narrator's house? What is their reaction to the message?
- i) Do you agree with the narrator calling the assembly of women "manipulators"? Give reasons.
- j) Why is John's wife angry? What does she decide to do?
- k) Why does John wish he were dead?
- l) When confronted by Lavinia about his flirtations over the Ouija Board, John insists that 'the affair was quite above-board, I assure you, my love'. Bring out the pun in John's statement.
- m) John's apprehensions about his wife's reaction to her encounter with the ghost are unfounded. Justify.

6. Answer the following questions in detail:

- a) After her reconciliation with her husband, John Hallock, Lavinia writes a letter to her friend expressing how her relationship with him had almost been on the verge of breaking and what saved it. Write her letter.
- b) John Hallock reflects upon his experience with Helen's ghost and in retrospect he finds it quite amusing. All the same he is relieved that he is no longer plagued by it. Ironically, the self same ghost inspires his creativity and he writes a diary entry reflecting upon the comical aspect of his experience. Write his diary entry.



7. The narrator and his wife reveal something about their character in their words and actions. We also learn about them from what other people say. Can you pick out the words that describe them from the box given below? Also, pick out lines and instances from the story to illustrate your choice.

shy arrogant loyal clever overconfident manipulative
 protective self-disparaging suspicious sceptical jealous fearless
 firm shrewd strong gullible sly creative
 loves novelty and thrills

Person	Extract from story	What it tells us about the character
John Hallock	<p>1. ...in the end things had always come my way..... somehow I'd always been able to dig one (plot) up for him, so I'd begun to get a bit cocky as to my ability (to write stories).</p> <p>2. "But my ghosts aren't a bit like you----".</p> <p>3. We scout around until we find a writer without ideas and with a mind soft enough to accept impression.</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>5. _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>1. _____</p> <p>2. sceptical</p> <p>3. gullible</p> <p>4. creative</p> <p>5. protective</p>
Lavinia Hallock	<p>1. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>1. loves novelty and thrills</p> <p>2. Spendthrift</p> <p>3. suspicious</p> <p>4. jealous</p>

	5. Buys the Ouija board but says it is for John's research 6. Does not flinch when she meets the ghost but talks to her casually.	5. manipulative 6. strong
--	--	------------------------------

8. Gladolia, the narrator's cook, is an African. The language she speaks is different from that of the others. This is known as Dialect. A dialect consists of words or phrases that reflect the regional variety of a language. An author often uses a regional dialect to make the dialogue more authentic. Initially a dialogue may seem a little difficult to understand. However, as you continue reading, the language will become more comprehensible.

Working in groups, write what Gladolia's words mean as shown.

Column A	Column B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misto Hallock • de Missus • sho t'inks you's lost! • she done 'phone you dis mawnin' • fo' de lawd's sake • not to stop to argify now • I's gwine t' quit. • I don't like no hoodoos. • I'se done lef' dis place • I is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mister Hallock

9. Read and understand the following ghost phrases and expressions:
- To give up the ghost-- *to die or to stop trying*
 - A ghost of a chance-- *a poor chance, not likely to happen*
 - The ghost at the feast-- *something or someone that spoils your enjoyment by reminding you of something unpleasant*
 - Ghost town-- *a town where most people have left-abandoned and deserted*
 - Ghost-write- *to write for someone else*



- f) **Lay the ghost of something/somebody (to rest)**-- to finally stop being worried or upset by something or someone that has worried or upset you for a long time
- g) **Ghost image** -- secondary image, esp. one appearing on a television screen as a white shadow, caused by poor or double reception or by a defect in the receiver
- h) **the ghost of a smile** - faint trace of a smile
- i) **As white as a ghost**- very pale or white in the face

Now complete the following story by using the appropriate phrases in the blanks given below:

I was alone in a place that bore a deserted look like that of a _____. I increased the pace of my footsteps as I walked through the dark forest. I felt someone walking behind me. I turned immediately and spotted the contour of a figure in the form of a _____. It smiled at me wickedly. I started shaking with fear and perspiring profusely when I felt its skeletal hand upon my neck. I woke up with a start, relieved that it was only a nightmare.

This was not the first time I had had one. It had all started when I had watched the horrendous horror film with a eerie ghost character that had a scary ghost of a smile on its face. It had been almost a month. The strange thing was that I saw a similar face at the station the next morning. That was uncanny.

I was to attend a dinner at my friend's at Northanger Abbey that night. I had decided to narrate my experience to the group that would assemble there although I knew there was _____ that they would be convinced.

After everyone had finished pouring their drinks to themselves, I cleared my throat and started narrating my spooky experience. However, every one of the group started accusing me of being _____ and held me responsible for spoiling the spirit of revelry. I gave up the ghost and sat quietly waiting for the party to be over. Back at home, the fears returned. I knew I had to talk about my experience to somebody to feel better. I have now decided to _____ and publish my experience under a pseudonym. Only then can I _____.

10. SPEAKING

Ghosts and haunting have fascinated the public for centuries. Although many doubt the existence of ghosts or other paranormal entities, many people dedicate their lives to searching and recording paranormal activity. Ghost tours, support groups, and research societies, to name just a few, permeate our society and seek to answer questions about paranormal activity.



Interview your friends, relatives and people in your neighbourhood about whether they believe in the existence of ghosts. Ask them to tell you of any specific experiences they might have had in this context. In your groups identify the most fascinating anecdote you gathered on the basis of your interactions. Narrate it to the class.

11. WRITING

Do you think a story has an atmosphere? Complete the following blanks to make up your ghost story by choosing the correct options.

A Ghost Story

She opened the _____ (secret door/ spaceship's hatch/ door of the cottage/ cemetery gate/ door of the castle/ cockpit) _____ (brashly/ loudly/ silently/ stupidly/ fearfully/ joyously). Standing in front of her was a _____ (terrifying/ handsome/ smelly/ anonymous/ tiny/ huge/ bossy) _____ (policeman/ spy/ apparition/ witch/ prince/ wizard) with a _____ (wand/ rose/ rod/ knife/ scythe/ coded message) in his/ her (its) _____ (ghoulish/ bony/ beautiful/ fair/ manly/ gloved/ magical) hand.

Now that you have shared a ghost story/anecdote as well as completed a guided story in the class, create your own Ghost story on the basis of the starters given below:

- Stephen knew he would never sleep. The noises, those horrid sounds, would keep him awake...*
- Tap, tap, tap. Was it the branches of the nearby tree, or fingernails against the window?*
- People often say, 'There's no such thing as ghosts....*

You are familiar with the key elements of a short story viz setting, plot, conflict, character and point of view. Given below are specifics to be kept in mind while writing a Ghost story. Also make use of the vocabulary that you have learnt from the story A Shady Plot.

- Colours, sounds, feeling words
- Strong definite characters
- Creating suspense
- Setting the scene and the atmosphere



- Describing the weather
- Clear opening line
- Personal feelings
- Clear ending
- Describing the sounds
- Adding a dramatic element
- Mystery

Useful words and phrases to consider

when writing a ghost story

Chill ,Spooky, Gloom , Flooding, Scary , Hair-raising, Cobwebs, Eerie , Frightened , Spine-chilling , Spirit, Grotesque ,Old and cold , Shivers of fear, Uncanny atmosphere, Paranormal, Abandoned , Spectre , Dare , Chain-rattling , Shriek, Phantom, deathly , Creepy, Whispering, Cries, Howling , Frostiness , Blood-curdling Sensation , Indistinct, Supernatural , Weird, Wicked laughter, Horror, Aura , Lifeless , Scream, Shrill , Darkness, Abnormal, Mist , Fog , Vision, Headless, Footsteps , Graveyard, Apprehension , Corpse , Ghoul , Phantasm ,Horse and Carriage, Hooves

SPEAKING

12. While conventional Ghost stories are scary and gruesome, several modern versions are humorous. The Canterville Ghost, by Oscar Wilde, is one of the best ghost stories written in the vein of laughing satire. The story that you just read is another example in case. Humour arises out of the narrator's ability to laugh at himself, clever use of language as well as comic situations. Discuss within your groups what makes the Shady Plot humorous. Share your views during a whole class discussion.

LISTENING TASK

13. Listen to the extract from The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde and complete the following tasks as directed.
1. Answer the following questions:

1. The Ghost loved the stormy weather because(Complete the statement by ticking the correct option)
 - a) he liked the rain



- b) he liked the strong wind that shook and rattled all the windows and doors in the old house
 - c) his plan would fail otherwise
 - d) such weather was ideal for frightening the people in the house
2. The Ghost was particularly angry with Washington and wished to frighten him because.....(Complete the statement)
3. The Ghost did not wish to frighten Virginia because(Complete the statement)
4. The Ghost was most angry with(Complete the statement by ticking the correct option)
- a) Mr and Mrs Otis
 - b) Virginia
 - c) Washington
 - d) The Twins
5. Write two striking qualities of the Ghost as are revealed in this extract.
- a) _____
 - b) _____



Fiction

UNIT 5

F. 5 Patol Babu, Film Star

Satyajit Ray

- With your partner answer the following questions:

What are your strengths?

Strengths	Why do you feel so?

What is your dream career?

I want to become a.....

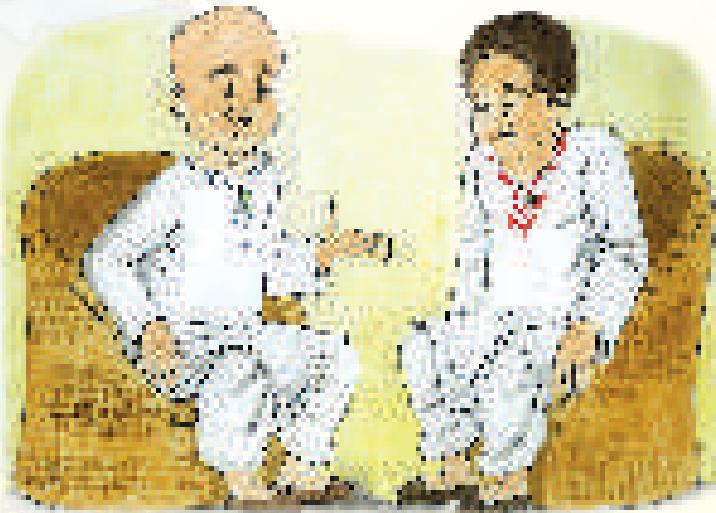
- Is there any correlation between your strengths and aspirations?
- Do you think you can achieve your dreams? Give reasons

- Read this story which tells of a chance opportunity that a man called Patol Babu gets to fulfill a lifelong dream.

- Patol Babu had just hung his shopping-bag on his shoulder when Nishikanto Babu called from outside the main door, 'Patol, are you in?'
- 'Oh, yes.' Said Patol Babu. 'Just a minute.'
- Nishikanto Ghosh lived three houses away from Patol Babu in Nepal Bhattacharji Lane. He was a genial person.
- Patol Babu came out with the bag. 'What brings you here so early in the morning?'
- 'Listen, what time will you be back?'
- 'In an hour or so. Why?'



- 7 'I hope you'll stay in after that - today being Tagore's birthday. I met my youngest brother-in-law in Netaji Pharmacy yesterday. He is in the film business, in the production department. He said he was looking for an actor for a scene in a film they're now shooting. The way he described the character - fiftyish, short, bald-headed - it reminded me of you. So I gave him your address and asked him to get in touch with you directly. I hope you won't turn him away. They'll pay you, of course.'
- 8 Patol Babu hadn't expected such news at the start of the day. That an offer to act in a film could come to a 52-year-old nonentity like him was **beyond his wildest dreams**¹.
- 9 'Well, yes or no?' asked Nishikanto Babu. 'I believe you did some acting on the stage at one time?'
- 10 'That's true,' said Patol Babu. 'I really don't see why I should say no. But let's talk to your brother-in-law first and find out some details. What's his name?'
- 11 'Naresh. Naresh Dutt. He's about thirty. A strapping young fellow. He said he would be here around ten-thirty.'
- 12 Buying provisions in the market, Patol Babu mixed up his wife's orders and bought red chillies instead of onion seeds. And he quite forgot about the aubergines. This was not surprising. At one time Patol Babu had a real passion for the stage; in fact, it **verged on obsession**². In *Jatras*, in amateur theatricals, in plays put up by the club in his neighbourhood, Patol Babu was always in demand. His name had appeared in handbills on countless occasions. Once it appeared in bold type near the top: 'Sitalakanto Ray (Patol Babu) in the role of Parasar'. Indeed, there was a time when people bought tickets especially to see him.
- 13 That was when he used to live in Kanchrapara. He had a job in the railway factory there. In 1934, he was offered higher pay in a clerical post with Hudson and Kimberley, in Calcutta, and was also lucky to find a flat in Nepal Bhattacharji Lane. He gave up his factory job and came to Calcutta with his wife. It was quite **smooth sailing**³ for some years, and Patol Babu was in his boss's good books. In 1943, when he was just **toying**



1 **beyond his wildest dream**- in a way he had not imagined
 2 **verged on obsession**- could not think of anything else
 3 **smooth sailing**- having no problems



with the idea⁴ of starting a club in his neighbourhood, sudden retrenchment in his office due to the war cost him his nine-year-old job.

- 14 Ever since then Patol Babu had struggled to make a living. At first he opened a variety store which he had to wind up after five years. Then he had a job in a Bengali firm which he gave up in disgust when his boss began to treat him in too high-handed a fashion. Then, for ten long years, starting as an insurance salesman, Patol Babu tried every means of earning a livelihood without ever succeeding in improving his lot. Of late he has been paying regular visits to a small establishment dealing in scrap iron where a cousin of his has promised him a job.
- 15 And acting? That has become a thing of the remote past; something which he **recalls at times with a sigh⁵**. Having a good memory, Patol Babu still remembers lines from some of his better parts, 'Listen, O listen to the thunderous twang of the mighty bow Gandiva engaged in gory conflict, and to the angry roar of the mountainous club whizzing through the air in the hands of the great Brikodara!' It sent a shiver down his spine just to think of such lines.
- 16 Naresh Dutt turned up at half past twelve. Patol Babu had given up hope and was about to go for his bath when there was a knock on the front door.
- 17 'Come in, come in, sir!' Patol Babu almost dragged the young man in and pushed the broken-armed chair towards him. 'Do sit down.'
- 18 'No, thanks. I ----'
- 19 'Oh yes. I must say I was quite taken aback. After so many years.'
- 20 'I hope you have no objection?'
- 21 'You think I'll be all right for the part?' Patol Babu asked with great diffidence.
- 22 Naresh Dutt **cast an appraising look⁶** at Patol Babu and gave a nod. 'Oh yes,' he said. 'There is no doubt about that. By the way, the shooting takes place tomorrow morning.'
- 23 'Tomorrow? Sunday?'
- 24 'Yes, and not in the studio. I'll tell you where you have to go. You know Faraday House near the crossing of Bentinck Street and Mission Row? It's a seven-storey office building. The shooting takes place outside the office in front of the entrance. We'll expect you there at eight-thirty sharp. You'll be through by midday.'
- 25 Naresh Dutt prepared to leave. 'But you haven't told me about the part,' said Patol Babu anxiously.

4 **toying with the idea-** considering an idea

5 **recalls at times with a sigh-** sometimes remembers past events and experiences fondly

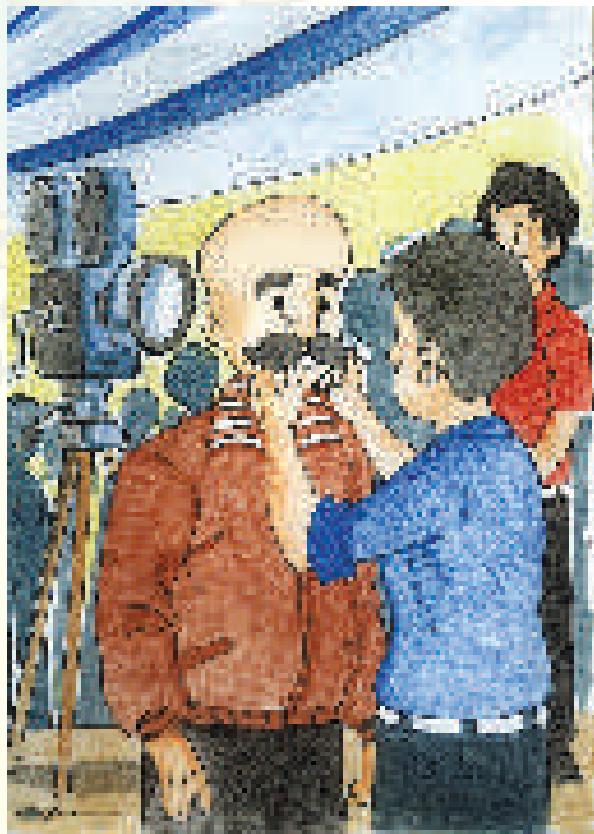
6 **cast an appraising look-** to consider or examine somebody or something and form an opinion about that person or thing.

- 26 'Oh yes, sorry. The part is that of a --- a pedestrian. An absent-minded, short-tempered pedestrian. By the way, do you have a jacket which buttons up to the neck?'
- 27 'I think I do. You mean the old-fashioned kind?'
- 28 'Yes. That's what you'll wear. What colour is it?'
- 29 'Sort of nut-brown. But woollen.'
- 30 'That's okay. The story is supposed to take place in winter, so that would be just right.'
- 31 Tomorrow at eight-thirty sharp. Faraday House.'
- 32 Patol Babu suddenly thought of a crucial question.
- 33 'I hope the part calls for some dialogue?'
- 34 'Certainly. It's a speaking part. You have acted before, haven't you?'
- 35 'Well, as a matter of fact, yes.'
- 36 'Fine. I wouldn't have come to you for just a walk-on part. For that we pick people from the street. Of course there's dialogue and you'll be given your lines as soon as you show up tomorrow.'
- 37 After Naresh Dutt left Patol Babu broke the news to his wife.
- 38 'As far as I can see, the part isn't a big one. I'll be paid, of course, but that's not the main thing. The thing is - remember how I started on the stage? Remember my first part? I played a dead soldier! All I had to do was lie still on the stage with my arms and legs spread. And remember how I rose from that position? Remember Mr. Watts shaking me by the hand? And the silver medal which the chairman of our municipality gave me? Remember? This is only the first step on the ladder, my dear better-half! Yes --the first step that would--God willing--mark the **rise to fame and fortune**⁷ of your beloved husband!'
- 39 'Counting your chickens again before they're hatched, are you? No wonder you could never **make a go of it**⁸!'
- 40 'But it's the real thing this time! Go and make me a cup of tea, will you? And remind me to take some ginger juice tonight. It's very good for the throat.'
- 41 The clock in the Metropolitan building showed seven minutes past eight when Patol Babu reached Esplanade. It took him another ten minutes to walk to Faraday House.
- 42 There was a big crowd outside the building. Three or four cars stood on the road. There was also a bus which carried equipment on its roof. On the edge of the pavement there was an instrument on three legs around which there was a group of busy people. Near the entrance--also on three legs--a pole which had a long arm extending from its top at



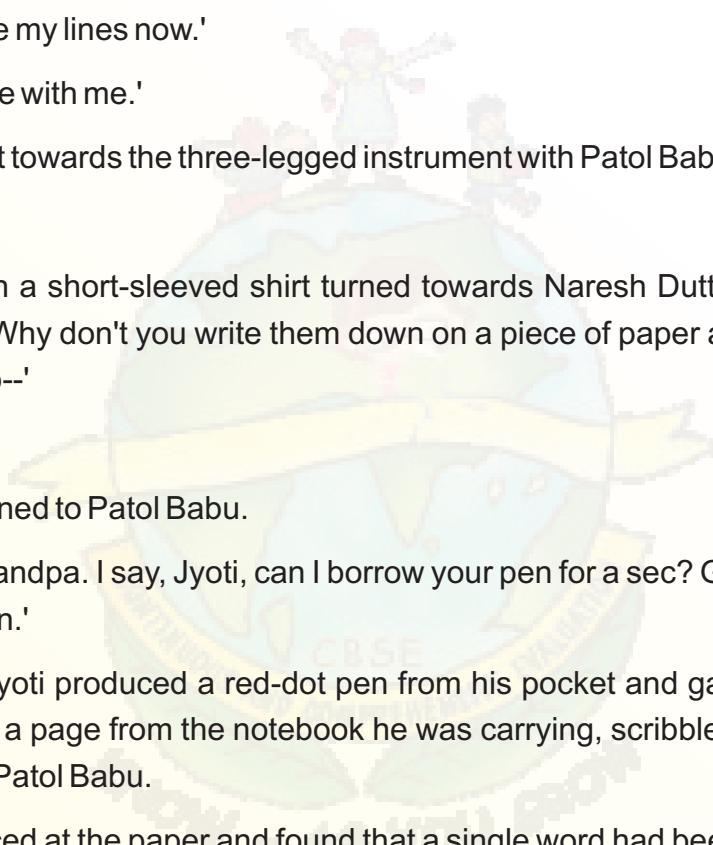
the end of which was suspended what looked like a small oblong beehive. Surrounding these instruments was a crowd of people among whom Patol Babu noticed some non-Begalis. What they were supposed to do he couldn't tell.

- 43 But where was Naresh Dutt? He was the only one who knew him.
- 44 With a slight tremor in his heart, Patol Babu advanced towards the entrance. It was the middle of summer, and the warm jacket buttoned up to his neck felt heavy. Patol Babu could feel beads of perspiration forming around the high collar.
- 45 'This way, Atul Babu!'
- 46 Atul Babu? Patol Babu spotted Naresh Dutt standing at the entrance and gesturing towards him. He had got his name wrong. No wonder, since they had only had a brief meeting. Patol Babu walked up, put his palms together in a namaskar and said, 'I supposed you haven't yet noted down my name. Sitalakanto Ray --- although people know me better by my nickname Patol. I used it on the stage too.'
- 47 'Good, good. I must say you're quite punctual.'
- 48 Patol Babu rose to his full height.
- 49 'I was with Hudson and Kimberley for nine years and wasn't late for a single day.'
- 50 'Is that so? Well, I suggest you go and wait in the shade there. We have a few things to attend to before we get going.'
- 51 'Naresh!'
- 52 Somebody standing by the three-legged instrument called out.
- 53 'Sir?'
- 54 'Yes, sir. He is"--er" that shot where they bump into each other.'
- 55 'Okay. Now, clear the entrance, will you? We're about to start.'
- 56 Patol Babu withdrew and stood in the shade of a paan shop. He had never watched a film shooting before. How hard these people worked! A youngster of twenty or so was carrying that three-legged instrument on his shoulder. Must weigh at least sixty pounds.



- 57 But what about his dialogue? There wasn't much time left, and he still didn't know what he was supposed to do or say.
- 58 Patol Babu suddenly felt a little nervous. Should he ask somebody? There was Naresh Dutt there; should he go and remind him? It didn't matter if the part was small, but, if he had to make the most of it, he had to learn his lines beforehand. How small he would feel if he muffed in the presence of so many people! The last time he acted on stage was twenty years ago.
- 59 Patol Babu was about to step forward when he was pulled up short by a voice shouting 'Silence!'
- 60 This was followed by Naresh Dutt loudly announcing with hands cupped over his mouth: 'We're about to start shooting. Everybody please stop talking. Don't move from your positions and don't crowd round the camera, please!'
- 61 Once again the voice was heard shouting 'Silence! Taking!' Now Patol Babu could see the owner of the voice. He was a stout man of medium height, and he stood by the camera. Around his neck hung something which looked like a small telescope. Was he the director? How strange!--he hadn't even bothered to find out the name of the director!
- 62 Now a series of shouts followed in quick succession"--'Start sound!' 'Running!' 'Camera!' 'Rolling!' 'Action!'
- 63 Patol Babu noticed that as soon as the word 'Action' was said, a car came up from the crossing and pulled up in front of the office entrance. Then a young man in a grey suit and pink make-up shot out of the back of the car, took a few hurried steps towards the entrance and stopped abruptly. The next moment Patol Babu heard the shout 'Cut!' and immediately the hubbub from the crowd resumed.
- 64 A man standing next to Patol Babu now turned to him. 'I hope you recognised the young fellow?' he asked.
- 65 'Why, no,' said Patol Babu.
- 66 'Chanchal Kumar,' said the man. 'He's coming up fast. Playing the lead in four films at the moment.'
- 67 Patol Babu saw very few films, but he seemed to have heard the name Chanchal Kumar. It was probably the same boy Koti Babu was praising the other day. Nice make-up the fellow had on. If he had been wearing a Bengali dhoti and panjabi instead of a suit, and given a peacock to ride on, he would make a perfect God Kartik. Monotosh of Kanchrapara--who was better known by his nickname Chinu--had the same kind of looks. He was very good at playing female parts, recalled Patol Babu.



- 
- 68 Patol Babu now turned to his neighbour and asked in a whisper, 'Who is the director?'
 - 69 The man raised his eyebrows and said, 'Why, don't you know? He's Baren Mullick. He's had three smash hits in a row.'
 - 70 Well, at least he had gathered some useful information. It wouldn't have done for him to say he didn't know if his wife had asked in whose film he had acted and with which actor.
 - 71 Naresh Dutt now came up to him with tea in a small clay cup.
 - 72 'Here you are, sir'--the hot tea will help your throat. Your turn will come shortly.'
 - 73 Patol Babu now had to come out with it.
 - 74 'If you let me have my lines now.'
 - 75 'Your lines? Come with me.'
 - 76 Naresh Dutt went towards the three-legged instrument with Patol Babu at his heels.
 - 77 'I say, Sosanko.'
 - 78 A young fellow in a short-sleeved shirt turned towards Naresh Dutt. 'This gentleman wants his lines. Why don't you write them down on a piece of paper and give it to him? He's the one who--'
 - 79 'I know, I know.'
 - 80 Sosanko now turned to Patol Babu.
 - 81 'Come along, Grandpa. I say, Jyoti, can I borrow your pen for a sec? Grandpa wants his lines written down.'
 - 82 The youngster Jyoti produced a red-dot pen from his pocket and gave it to Sosanko. Sosanko tore off a page from the notebook he was carrying, scribbled something on it and handed it to Patol Babu.
 - 83 Patol Babu glanced at the paper and found that a single word had been scrawled on it-- 'Oh!'
 - 84 Patol Babu felt a sudden throbbing in his head. He wished he could take off his jacket. The heat was unbearable.
 - 85 Sosanko said, 'What's the matter, Grandpa? You don't seem too pleased.'
 - 86 Were these people pulling his leg? Was the whole thing a gigantic hoax? A meek, harmless man like him, and they had to drag him into the middle of the city to make a laughing stock out of him. How could anyone be so cruel?
 - 87 Patol Babu said in a hardly audible voice, 'I find it rather strange.'
 - 88 'Why, Grandpa?'



- 89 'Just "Oh"? Is that all I have to say?'
- 90 Sosanko's eyebrows shot up.
- 91 'What are you saying, Grandpa? You think that's nothing? Why, this is a regular speaking part! A speaking part in a Baren Mullick film--do you realise what that means? Why, you're the luckiest of actors. Do you know that till now more than a hundred persons have appeared in this film who have had nothing to say? They just walked past the camera. Some didn't even walk; they just stood in one spot. There were others whose faces didn't register at all. Even today--look at all those people standing by the lamp-post; they all appear in today's scene but have nothing to say. Even our hero Chanchal Kumar has no lines to speak today. You are the only one who has--see?'
- 92 Now the young man called Jyoti came up, put his hand on Patol Babu's shoulder and said, 'Listen, Grandpa. I'll tell you what you have to do. Chanchal Kumar is a rising young executive. He is informed that an embezzlement has taken place in his office, and he comes to find out what has happened. He gets out of his car and charges across the pavement towards the entrance. Just then he collides with an absent-minded pedestrian. That's you. You're hurt in the head and say "Oh!", but Chanchal Kumar pays no attention to you and goes into the office. The fact that he ignores you reflects his extreme preoccupation--see? Just think how crucial the shot is.'
- 93 'I hope everything is clear now,' said Sosanko. 'Now, if you just move over to where you were standing. The fewer people crowd around here the better. There's one more shot left before your turn comes.'
- 94 Patol Babu went slowly back to the paan shop. Standing in the shade, he glanced down at the paper in his hand, cast a quick look around to see if anyone was watching, crumpled the paper into a ball and threw it into the roadside drain.
- 95 Oh.
- 96 A sigh came out of the depths of his heart.
- 97 Just one word--no, not even a word; a sound--oh!'
- 98 The heat was stifling. The jacket seemed to weigh a ton. Patol Babu couldn't keep standing in one spot any more; his legs felt heavy.
- 99 He moved up to the office beyond the paan shop and sat down on the steps. It was nearly half past nine. On Sunday mornings, songs in praise of the Goddess Kali were sung in Karali Babu's house. Patol Babu went there every week and enjoyed it. What if he were to go there now? What harm would there be? Why waste a Sunday morning in the company of these useless people, and be made to look foolish on top of that?
- 100 'Silence!'



- 101 Stuff and nonsense! To hell with your 'silence'! They had to put up this pompous show for something so trivial! Things were much better on the stage.
- 102 The stage.....the stage.....
- 103 A faint memory was stirred up in Patol Babu's mind. Some priceless words of advice given in a deep, mellow voice: 'Remember one thing, Patol; however small a part you're offered, never consider it beneath your dignity to accept it. As an artist your aim should be to make the most of your opportunity, and squeeze the last drop of meaning out of your lines. A play involves the work of many and it is the combined effort of many that makes a success of the play.'
- 104 It was Mr Pakrashi who gave the advice. Gogon Pakrashi, Patol Babu's mentor. A wonderful actor, without a tract of vanity in him; a saintly person, and an actor in a million.
- 105 There was something else which Mr Pakrashi used to say. 'Each word spoken in a play is like a fruit in a tree. Not everyone in the audience has access to it. But you, the actor, must know how to pluck it, get at its essence, and serve it up to the audience for their edification.'
- 106 The memory of his guru made Patol Babu bow his head in obeisance.
- 107 Was it really true that there was nothing in the part he had been given today? He had only one word to say--'Oh!', but was that word so devoid of meaning as to be dismissed summarily?
- 108 "Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh"--Patol Babu began giving the exclamation a different inflection each time he uttered it. After doing it for a number of times he made an astonishing discovery. The same exclamation, when spoken in different ways, carried different shades of meaning. A man when hurt said 'Oh' in quite a different way. Despair brought forth another kind of 'Oh'; sorrow provoked yet another kind. In fact, there were so many kinds of "Oh's"--the short "Oh", the long-drawn "Oh", "Oh" shouted and "Oh" whispered, the high-pitched "Oh" and the low-pitched "Oh", and the "Oh" starting low and ending high, and the "Oh" starting high and ending low. Strange! Patol Babu suddenly felt that he could write a whole thesis on that one monosyllabic exclamation. Why had he felt so disheartened when this single word contained a gold-mine of meaning? The true actor could make a mark with this one single syllable.
- 109 'Silence!'
- 110 The director had raised his voice again. Patol Babu could see young Jyoti clearing the crowd. There was something he had to ask him. He went quickly over to him.
- 111 'How long will it be before my turn comes, brother?'
- 112 'Why are you so impatient, Grandpa? You have to learn to be patient in this line of business. It'll be another half an hour before you're called.'

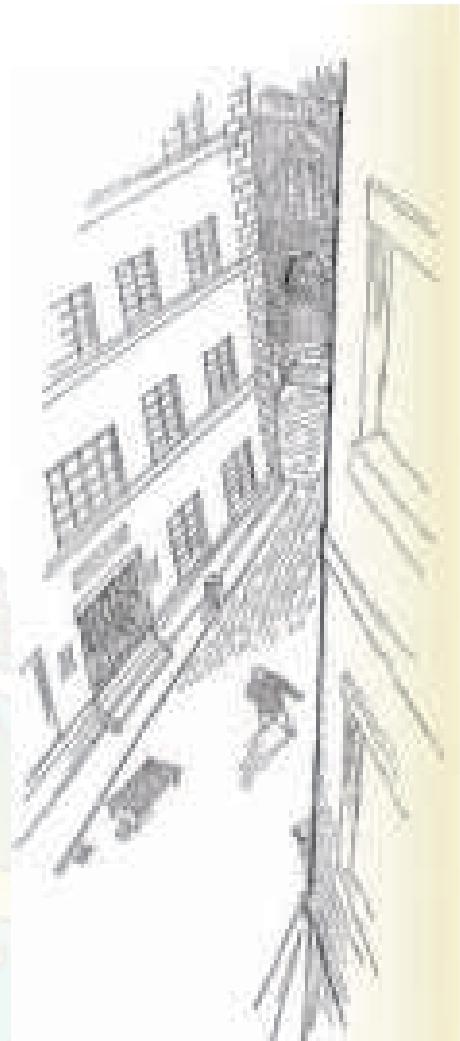


- 113 'That's all right. I'll certainly wait. I'll be in that side street across the road.'
- 114 'Okay--so long as you don't sneak off.'
- 115 'Start sound!'
- 116 Patol Babu crossed the road on tiptoe and went into the quiet little side street. It was good that he had a little time on his hands. While these people didn't seem to believe in rehearsals, he himself would rehearse his own bit. There was no one about. There were office buildings, so very few people lived here. Those who did--such as shopkeepers--had all gone to watch the shooting.
- 117 Patol Babu cleared his throat and started enunciating the syllable in various ways. Along with that he worked out how he would react physically when the collision took place--how his features would be twisted in pain, how he would fling out his arms, how his body would crouch to express pain and surprise--all these he performed in various ways in front of a large glass window.
- 118 Patol Babu was called in exactly half an hour. Now he had completely got over his apathy. All he felt now was a keen anticipation and suppressed excitement. It was the feeling he used to feel twenty years ago just before he stepped on to the stage.
- 119 The director Baren Mullick called Patol Babu to him. 'I hope you know what you're supposed to do?' he asked.
- 120 'Yes, sir.'
- 121 'Very good. I'll first say, "Start sound". The recordists will reply by saying "Running". That will be your cue to start walking from that pillar, and for the hero to come out of the car and make a dash for the office. You work out your steps so that the collision takes place at this spot, here. The hero ignores you and strides into the office, while you register pain by saying "Oh!", stop for a couple of seconds, then resume walking--okay?'
- 122 Patol Babu suggested a rehearsal, but Baren Mullick shook his head impatiently. 'There's a large patch of cloud approaching the sun,' he said. 'This scene must be shot in sunlight.'
- 123 'One question please.'
- 124 'Yes?'
- 125 An idea had occurred to Patol Babu while rehearsing; he now came out with it.
- 126 'Er--I was thinking--if I had a newspaper open in my hand, and if the collision took place while I had my eyes on the paper, then perhaps--'
- 127 Baren Mullick cut him short by addressing a bystander who was carrying a Bengali newspaper. 'D'you mind handing your paper to this gentleman, just for this one shot? Thanks. Now you take your position beside the pillar. Chanchal, are you ready?'



- 128 'Yes, sir.'
- 129 'Good. Silence!'
- 130 Baren Mullick raised his hand, then brought it down again, saying, 'Just a minute. Kesto, I think if we gave the pedestrian a moustache, it would be more interesting.'
- 131 'What kind, sir? Walrus, Ronald Colman or Butterfly? I have them all ready.'
- 132 'Butterfly, butterfly"--and make it snappy!'
- 133 The elderly make-up man went up to Patol Babu, took out a small grey moustache from a box, and stuck it on with spirit-gum below Patol Babu's nose.
- 134 Patol Babu said, 'I hope it won't come off at the time of the collision?'
- 135 The make-up man smiled. 'Collision?' he said. 'Even if you were to wrestle with Dara Singh, the moustache would stay in place.'
- 136 Patol Babu had a quick glance in a mirror which the man was holding. True enough, the moustache suited him very well. Patol Babu inwardly commended the director's **perspicacity**⁹.
- 137 'Silence! Silence!'
- 138 The business with the moustache had provoked a wave of comments from the spectators, which Baren Mullick's shout now silenced.
- 139 Patol Babu noticed that most of the bystanders' eyes were turned towards him.
- 140 'Start sound!'
- 141 Patol Babu cleared this throat. One, two, three, four, five--five steps would take him to the spot where the collision was to take place. And Chanchal Kumar would have to walk four steps. So if both were to start together, Patol Babu would have to walk a little faster than the hero, or else--
- 142 'Running!'
- 143 Patol Babu held the newspaper open in his hand. What he had to do when saying 'Oh!' was mix sixty parts of irritation with forty parts of surprise.

9 **perspicacity** - ability to understand somebody or something quickly and accurately.



- 144 'Action!'
- 145 Clop, clop, clop, clop--Wham!
- 146 Patol Babu saw stars before his eyes. The hero's head had banged against his forehead, and an excruciating pain had robbed him of his senses for a few seconds.
- 147 But the next moment, by a supreme effort of will, Patol Babu pulled himself together, and mixing fifty parts of anguish with twenty-five of surprise and twenty-five of irritation, cried 'Oh!' and, after a brief pause, resumed his walk.
- 148 'Cut!'
- 149 'Was that right?' asked Patol Babu anxiously, stepping towards Baren Mullick.
- 150 'Jolly good! Why, you're quite an actor. Sosanko, just take a look at the sky through the dark glass, will you.'
- 151 Jyoti now came up to Patol Babu and said, 'I hope Grandpa wasn't hurt too badly?'
- 152 'My God!' said Chanchal Kumar, massaging his head, 'You timed it so well that I nearly passed out!'
- 153 Naresh Dutt elbowed his way through the crowd, came up to Patol Babu and said, 'Please go back where you were standing. I'll come to you in a short while and do the necessary.'
- 154 Patol Babu took his place once again by the paan shop. The cloud had just covered the sun and brought down the temperature. Nevertheless, Patol Babu took off his woollen jacket, and then heaved a sigh of relief. A feeling of total satisfaction swept over him.
- 155 He had done his job really well. All these years of struggle hadn't **blunted his sensibility**¹⁰. Gogon Pakrashi would have been pleased with his performance. But all the labour and imagination he had put into this one shot--were these people able to appreciate that? He doubted it. They just got hold of some people, got them to go through certain motions, paid them for their labours and forgot all about it. Paid them, yes, but how much? Ten, fifteen, twenty rupees? It is true that he needed money very badly, but what was twenty rupees when measured against the intense satisfaction of a small job done with perfection and dedication?
- 156 Ten minutes or so later Naresh Dutt went looking for Patol Babu near the paan shop and found that he was not there. 'That's odd--the man hadn't been paid yet. What a strange fellow!'
- 157 'The sun has come out,' Baren Mullick was heard shouting. 'Silence! Silence! --- Naresh, hurry up and get these people out of the way!'



About the Author

Satyajit Ray (1921-1992), an Indian filmmaker and among the dozen or so great masters of world cinema, is known for his humanistic approach to cinema. He made his films in Bengali. Satyajit Ray received the honorary Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Ray wrote numerous short stories, articles, and novels in Bengali. He made a significant contribution to children's literature in Bengali. Most of his fiction was written for teen age children. His detective stories and novels were particularly popular with them. His stories are unpretentious and entertaining. The subjects include: adventure, detective stories, fantasy, science fiction and even horror

3. Answer the following questions briefly

- What was the news that Nishikanto Ghosh gave Patol Babu?
- How did Patol Babu react? Why?
- Why had Patol Babu lost his first job in Calcutta?
- How does Patol Babu reconcile to the dialogue given to him?
- Who was Mr. Pakrashi? How do his words help Patol Babu in enacting his role?
- How do we know that Patol Babu was a meticulous man?
- Why did Mr. Mullick turn down Patol Babu's request for a rehearsal?
- What were the special touches that Patol Babu gave to his role to make it more authentic?

4. Discuss the following questions in detail and write the answers in your notebooks:

- 'I hope the part calls for some dialogue?' Who says this? Why does he /she ask this question?
- 'Were these people pulling his legs? Was the whole thing a gigantic hoax? A meek, harmless man like him, and they had to drag him into the middle of the city to make a laughing stock out of him. How could anyone be so cruel?' Why does Patol Babu have these thoughts?
- Patol Babu is an amateur actor for whom walk-on part in a movie turns into an ultimate challenge. Discuss.
- Do you agree with the statement that Patol Babu is a practical man who comes to terms with whatever life has to offer? Give reasons for your answer.



- (e) Why does Patol Babu walk away before he can be paid for his role? What does this reveal about his character?

- (f) Do you think making a movie is an easy job? Discuss with reference to the story

5. **Here are some lines from the lesson. What do they tell us about Patol Babu's character? You may take help from the words given in the table below or find some of your own from the dictionary. The first one has been done for you**

passionate actor	diligent	unassuming	talented
genial	mercenary	short-tempered	introvert
meticulous	modest	humble	arrogant

- (a) That an offer to act in a film could come to a 52-year-old nonentity like him was beyond his wildest dreams unassuming; modest
- (b) Indeed, there was a time when people bought tickets especially to see him.....
- (c) 'I was with Hudson and Kimberley for nine years and wasn't late for a single day.'
-
- (d) It didn't matter if the part was small, but, if he had to make the most of it, he had to learn his lines beforehand. How small he would feel if he muffed in the presence of so many people.....
- (e) Patol Babu cleared his throat and started enunciating the syllable in various ways. Along with that he worked out how he would react physically when the collision took place--how his features would be twisted in pain, how he would fling out his arms, how his body would crouch to express pain and surprise--all these he performed in various ways in front of a large glass window.
- (f) It is true that he needed money very badly, but what was twenty rupees when measured against the intense satisfaction of a small job done with perfection and dedication?.....

6. **Here are some lines from the lesson. Match the meanings of the underlined words with their meanings listed below**

- (a) Then he had a job in a Bengali firm which he gave up in disgust when his boss began to treat him in too high-handed a fashion

stimulate the imagination



- (b) A faint memory was stirred up in Patol Babu's mind. to surrender or relinquish
- (c) At first he opened a variety store which he had to wind up after five years. staged
- (d) In *Jatras*, in amateur theatricals, in plays put up by the club in his neighbourhood, Patol Babu was always in demand to gain control over one's actions
- (e) Patol Babu was about to step forward when he was pulled up short by a voice shouting 'Silence!' shut down
- (f) Patol Babu pulled himself together stopped

7. After Patol Babu returns home he recounts his experience in front of the camera to his wife. In pairs write out the exchange in the form of a dialogue and enact it before the class. You may start like this....

Patol Babu's wife: So what happened at the shooting today? Did you get to do your role?

Patol Babu: Oh, Yes, I had the time of my life.....

8. Patol Babu impresses everyone at the shoot with his acting talent in spite of having a one word dialogue. In groups of four enact the word 'Oh' in different ways to show the following emotions:

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| • happiness | • sorrow |
| • excitement | • fear |
| • sarcasm | • pain |
| • disappointment | • surprise |

Each group will then enact one of these emotions to the rest of the class using the word 'Oh'. The other groups will try to guess which emotion is being expressed.

WRITING TASK

9. Patol Babu writes a letter to Nishikanto Ghosh to thank him for being instrumental in his getting a role in a film. He also shares his experience at the film shoot including the excitement and deep satisfaction that he derived from the same. Write the letter in about 200 words.



LISTENING TASK

10. Listen to the passage on character actors and complete the exercise as directed.

1. Supporting roles are those roles that do not affect the plot or the subject of the film (True/ False)
2. People become character actors chiefly because (Tick the right choices)
 - (a) they like doing supporting roles
 - (b) there are limited leading roles
 - (c) it is easier to act in a supporting role
 - (d) they can't find any other work
3. 'star quality' refers to things like(Tick the right choice)
 - (a) good looks and acting talent
 - (b) good looks and the right weight
 - (c) good looks and the right height
 - (d) good looks, height and right weight
4. After the age of forty the actors most likely to get less work are (Tick the right choice)
 - (a) character actors
 - (b) the male lead
 - (c) the female actors
 - (d) the female lead
5. The chief advantages of being a character actor is that(Tick the right choice)
 - (a) they are never blamed if a film fails
 - (b) they can act for as long as they like
 - (c) they do not have to take care of their looks
 - (d) they do not need to be skilled at horsemanship or swimming



Fiction

UNIT

F. 6 Virtually True

by Paul Stewart

1. Before reading the story, attempt the following working in groups of four or five.

- a. Do you play computer games? How many hours do you spend playing games on the computer as compared to outdoor games?
- b. Make a list of your favourite games. Have a class discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of computer games.
- c. Look in your dictionaries / computer to find synonyms for the word 'virtual'
- d. Look at the K.W.L. chart given below. Based on the information you have gathered till now, complete the K and W columns. You may work with your partner. After reading the story complete the third column.

	K-What I Know	W--What I want to know	L-What I learnt
Virtual Reality			
Virtual Environment			
3-D/ three-dimensional			
Simulation games			
Computer simulations			
Interactive psycho- drive games			
Teleporting			



Now read the story.

- 1 Sebastian Shultz. It isn't a name you come across every day. But there it was, large and clear, at the top of the newspaper article in front of me.
- 2 The reader of the newspaper was a big woman. I couldn't see her face, but I could hear her **wheezy**¹ breath.
- 3 *MIRACLE RECOVERY*, the headline said. *Sebastian Shultz, a 14 year-old schoolboy from South London, awoke yesterday from a **coma**² that doctors feared might last forever.*
- 4 It couldn't be the Sebastian Shultz I'd met. I leant forward to read the rest of the article.
- 5 Six weeks ago, Sebastian Shultz was badly injured in a motorway accident. His condition, on arrival at the General Hospital, was described as critical though stable. Despite doctors' hopes, the boy did not regain consciousness. His parents were informed that their son was in a coma.
- 6 At a press conference, Mrs Shultz said, "The doctors were doing all they could, but in our hearts we knew we needed a miracle."
- 7 Now that miracle has happened ...
- 8 At that moment, the woman's hand moved. I suddenly saw the photograph that went with the story, and gasped. The boy in the picture was Sebastian. There was no doubt. "But how?" I muttered.
- 9 Sebastian Shultz, the boy I'd got to know so well recently, had apparently been in a coma for all that time. I felt nervous and shivery. It didn't make any sense at all.
- 10 I stared out of the train window, and ran through the events in my head.
- 11 It all started a month ago. Dad and I had spent the entire Saturday afternoon at the Computer Fair.
- 12 Dad's **nutty**³ about computers. He's got a Pentium **150 Mhz**⁴ processor, with 256 of RAM, a 1.2 Gb hard disk drive and 16 speed **CD ROM**⁵, complete with speakers, printer, modem and scanner. It can do anything. Paint, play music, create displays; even when my homework's rubbish, it looks fantastic.
- 13 Best of all are the games. Tornado, MeBabash, Black Belt, Kyrene's Kastle -I've played them all. With the screen so big, and the volume up loud, it almost feels as if you're inside the games, battling it out with the Z or Bs, Twisters, or whatever.



1 **wheezy** - to breathe with an audible whistling sound, with difficulty

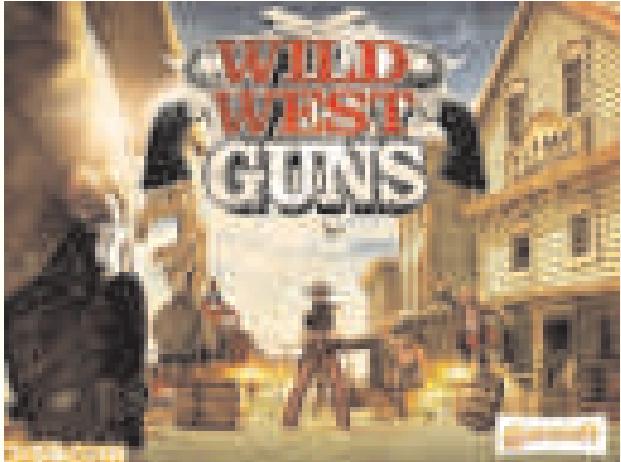
2 **coma** - a prolonged state of deep unconsciousness

3 **nutty** - crazy about; has a passion for

4 **Mhz** - megahertz - one million hertz (the unit of frequency equal to one cycle per second)

5 **CD ROM** - Random-Access Memory compact disk with Read-Only Memory

- 14 Technology was advancing every day, and Dad couldn't resist any of the new gadgets or **gizmos**⁶ that came on the market. That was why we went to the Computer Fair. We came away with a virtual reality visor and glove, and a handful of the latest interactive **psycho-drive**⁷ games. They're terrific. Not only do the visor and glove change what you see, but better than that, you can control the action by what you are thinking. Well, cool!
- 15 When we got them, I remember some of them were not new.
- 16 Anyway, back at home, I launched myself off into the first of the games. It was called Wildwest.



- 18 That's what I like about computers. The more futuristic they get, the better you can understand the past. I wasn't standing in the converted loft-the Powerbase as Dad calls it-anymore. I was really there, striding down the dusty track through the centre of town. There was a sheriff's badge pinned to my shirt.
- 20 As I burst in through the swing doors of the saloon, everyone went silent and glared at me. I strode over to the bar. '**Sarsaparilla!**'⁸ I said and a glass of fizzy red stuff came sliding along the bar towards me. As I took a sip, I heard a loud crash. I spun round. There, silhouetted in the doorway, was Black-Eyed Jed, the fastest gun in the west. 'This town ain't big enough for the both of us, Sheriff Dawson,' he drawled, and fingered his guns lightly. 'Outside. Just you and me.'
- 19 I can remember grinning. This was really cool!
- 20 I finished my drink and slammed the glass down on the bar. Jed had already left the saloon. All eyes were on me again. I wondered what sort of score I was notching up.
- 21 All at once, something strange happened. Up to that point the game had been pretty much as I expected. But when the second sheriff appeared through the back door, shouting and waving his arms about, I realized that the game was more complicated.
- 22 'Don't go out!' the second sheriff shouted.
- 23 'And who are you?' I asked.
- 24 He wasn't like the other characters in the saloon. For a start, he was about my age, and though he looked like a computer image, he somehow didn't move like one.

6 **gizmos** - gadgets, especially mechanical or electrical devices

7 **psycho-drive** - driven by mental power

8 **sarsaparilla** - a carbonated drink flavoured with sarsaparilla root.

- 25 'There's no time to explain,' he shouted. 'Just follow me.'
- 26 I did what I was told. We raced down a corridor, and through a door. We ran past some men and out through another door.
- 27 'Come ON!' shouted the other sheriff.
- 28 We went on through another door, and another,-and ended up back in the saloon.
- 29 'NO!' screamed the second sheriff. Then he ran to the back of the saloon and dived through the window. By the time I climbed out after him, he was already sitting on a horse. 'Jump up!' he cried.
- 30 He kicked the horse, and we sped off in a cloud of dust.
- 31 'Who are you?' I asked again.
- 32 But the second sheriff didn't answer. He'd seen the posse of men on horseback speeding after us. 'Keep your head down,' he said.
- 33 At that moment, the sound of a gunshot echoed round the air. The second sheriff groaned, and slumped back against me. Ahead of me, in bright neon lights came a message.

GAME OVER.

- 34 As I slipped off the visor, the empty desert disappeared and I found myself back in the Powerbase. I took off the glove and headphones. I glanced at the score on the screen. 21,095. Then I noticed the printer had come on. I picked up the piece of paper from the tray.
- 35 At the top was a picture of the second sheriff. This time though, he was wearing jeans and a sweatshirt. Printed over the bottom was a message. ***I'M STUCK. PLEASE HELP TO RETRIEVE ME. TRY 'DRAGONQUEST'.*** Sebastian Shultz.
- 36 I wanted to go straight into the game he'd suggested, but it was already half an hour after lights out.
- 37 Next morning I was up and back on the computer, and was soon walking through the massive studded doors of the dragon's castle lair.
- 38 The aim of the game was simple. I had to rescue the fair princess Aurora from the wicked dragon, and collect the wicked creature's treasure along the way. I'd already got loads by the time I reached the Princess, who'd been imprisoned at the top of a tall tower. She was a young woman with long golden plaits.
- 39 'My hero!' she squealed. 'Take me away from all this.' Behind me I could hear the dragon roaring. 'Rescue me now,' the princess said urgently.
- 40 'Never mind her,' came a voice, and a second knight appeared from the wardrobe. 'It's me who needs rescuing!'





- 41 'Sebastian?' I said.
- 42 The second knight nodded. 'Quick,' he said, 'while there's still time.' And with a pair of scissors he chopped off the princess's two long plaits. Then he tied them together, fixed one end round the bedpost and threw the other end out of the window.
- 43 'NOW!' he screamed, as he leapt for the window and down the hair rope.

4

4

At that moment the dragon appeared. I gasped, and leapt too.

- 45 As I lowered myself down I felt the dragon's fiery breath.
- 46 Across the moonlit battlements, we ran down a spiral staircase and through a secret passage on the other side of a tapestry. And the whole time I could hear and feel and even smell the evil dragon following in close pursuit.
- 47 'The dungeons,' Sir Sebastian cried out. 'They're our only hope.'
- 48 We went down the cold stone steps, swords drawn. Suddenly, the dragon appeared at the end of the corridor. Before we even had time to turn around, the dragon was upon us.
- 49 I swung my sword. But it was no good. The dragon was only interested in Sebastian, and there was nothing I could do to prevent it getting him.

GAME OVER

- 50 This time, the message in the printer said: BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME. PLEASE DON'T GIVE UP, MICHAEL. OTHERWISE I'LL HAVE TO STAY IN HERE FOR EVER. TRY 'JAILBREAK'. I THINK IT MIGHT JUST WORK! CHEERS, SEB.
- 51 I didn't even bother to read the rules of Jailbreak before going in. I knew that my task would be to rescue the boy. And sure enough, my cell mate was prisoner 02478: Shultz.
- 52 'I've got to get out of here,' Sebastian sighed. 'Are you going to help?'
- 53 'Of course,' I said. 'Have you got a plan?'
- 54 Stupid question. With the help of a **skeleton swipe-card**⁹, we were soon out of the cell and racing down corridors. Sirens wailed, guard dogs howled, heavy boots came tramping. Behind us, steel-barred doors slammed shut. We dodged the guards, we fled the dogs, we made it to a staircase and pounded upwards.

9 **Skeleton swipe-card** - a plastic card on which data has been stored magnetically and that can be read by an electronic reading device.

- 55 On the roof, Sebastian looked round, and glanced at his watch nervously. 'It should be here by now.'
- 56 'What?' I said.
- 57 'That!' said Sebastian and pointed.
- 58 'A helicopter!' I exclaimed.
- 59 'That was my idea!' said Sebastian excitedly. 'If only it would go a bit faster ...'
- 60 At that moment, the door behind us burst open. Twelve guards with vicious dogs were standing there. The next instant the dogs were hurtling towards us, all bared teeth and dripping jowls. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Sebastian take a step backwards.
- 61 'NOOOOOO!' I screamed.
- 62 But it was too late. The boy had slipped and was tumbling back through the air, down to the concrete below.

GAME OVER.

- 63 As I removed my visor I looked in the printer tray. This time it was empty. I felt really bad. I'd failed Sebastian; I'd failed the game. It was only later, when the scenes began to fade in my memory, that it occurred to me that Sebastian Shultz was the game.
- 64 Strangely, although I went back to Wildwest, Dragonquest and Jailbreak after that, I never met up with Sebastian again.
- 65 Then, yesterday, I heard from Sebastian. In the printer tray, was a sheet of paper.
- 66 CAN WE HAVE ONE LAST TRY? it said. I THINK THE HELICOPTER WAS THE RIGHT IDEA. THERE'S GOT TO BE SOME KIND OF AN ACCIDENT ... GO INTO 'WARZONE'. IF THIS DOESN'T WORK I WON'T BOTHER YOU AGAIN. CHEERS, SEB.
- 67 I couldn't tell which war zone we were in. It was a city somewhere. The tall buildings were windowless and **riddled**¹⁰ with holes. Machine gun fire raked the sky. Walls tumbled. Bombs exploded. All I knew was that Sebastian and I had to make it to that helicopter in one piece.
- 68 We ran across a no-man's-land of rubble and smoke, dodging **sniper fire**¹¹. At the far end we went through a door in a wall. The helicopter was on the ground, waiting for our arrival.
- 69 We started to run, but the tank fire sent us scuttling back to the wall.
- 70 'A jeep,' Sebastian shouted to me, and nodded at a vehicle parked by the road.
- 71 He jumped in, turned the ignition key and revved the engine. 'Jump in!'



- 72 I climbed into the passenger seat and we were off.
- 73 A tank was hurtling after us. Suddenly, Sebastian slammed on the brakes and sent the jeep skidding into a spin. I leapt clear, and jumped into the helicopter.
- 74 The helicopter started to go upwards. I looked around. Sebastian wasn't there.
- 75 'Wait!' I shouted at the pilot.
- 76 I looked back. The jeep had stopped, but Sebastian hadn't got out.
- 77 'COME ON!' I yelled. But Sebastian was sitting as if his body had been turned to stone.
- 78 The tank crashed into the jeep. Sebastian was thrown into the air.
- 79 Round and round he tumbled, closer to the helicopter. He landed with a thud, just below the hatch. I pulled him up. As he sat down beside me, the helicopter soared into the sky.
- 80 I'd done it! I'd rescued Sebastian at last! Before I had a chance to say anything to him though, the helicopter flew into thick cloud. It turned everything blinding white. I couldn't see a thing-until 'GAME OVER' flashed up.
- 81 When I removed the visor, the screen was flashing a score of 40,000,000.
- 82 I'd hit the jackpot. I'd finally cracked the game.
- 83 At least, that was what I thought then. Now I knew that Sebastian Shultz, the boy from the game, really did exist. I'd seen the proof in the newspaper.
- 84 But how? I wondered as I got off the train.
- 85 At home I checked the Net. I wanted to learn more about the MIRACLE RECOVERY story.
- 86 I found what I was looking for quickly enough. Apparently, at the time of the accident, Sebastian was using his laptop to play one of the same psycho-drive games that I've got.
- 87 My heart pounded furiously. What if, because Sebastian had been plugged into the computer when he banged his head in the accident, the computer had saved his memory in its own. And then what if the weird versions of the games I'd been drawn into had all been attempts to retrieve that memory?
- 88 After all, Dad always says about the computer's memory-'It can never forget, Michael. Nothing ever gets lost.'
- 89 But, even if it was possible that Sebastian's memory had been stored on disk, how had it ended up on my computer? Scrolling down the article I found a possible explanation.
- 90 Answering a reporter's question as to what the family was going to do next, Mr Shultz said that they were off to stock up on some games. 'It was while we were in the hospital, someone stole the lot. I don't know what happened to them.'



- 91 I said quietly. 'They ended up at the Computer Fair. And we bought them.'
- 92 I left the Net and checked my e-mail. There was one from Sebastian.
- 93 With trembling fingers I clicked in, and read the message.
- 94 DEAR MICHAEL, it said. THANK YOU! I'M NOT SURE HOW IT HAPPENED, BUT THANKS. YOU SAVED MY LIFE. LET'S MEET UP SOON. CHEERS, SEB. P.S. KEEP THE GAMES. YOU'VE EARNED THEM.
- 95 I shook my head. A real message from the real Sebastian Shultz. We both knew that by reliving the accident, something wonderful had happened. But then again, now that there are two advanced intelligences on earth, who can say what is and what isn't possible.
- 96 What I know is this. Everything that I've described is true - Virtually!

Exercises

1. According to the newspaper, what had happened to Sebastian Shultz?
2. 'Dad's nutty about computers.' What evidence is there to support this statement?
3. In what way did the second game seem very real?
4. The last game has tanks, jeeps, helicopters, guns and headings would you put this and the other games under?
5. What was Michael's theory about how Sebastian had entered the games?

B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. 'That was my idea' said Sebastian excitedly.' If only it would go a big faster.
- 1 Where was Sebastian when he spoke these word?
2. What was his idea, and what was he referring to ?
3. Was the idea a good one, and did it eventually succeed? How?

Writer: Paul Stewart (born june, 1955) is a writer of children's books, best known for the best selling 'The Edge Chronicles, The Free Lance novels' and The Far Flung Adventure Series which are written in collaboration with the illustrator Chris Riddel. Paul Stewart lives in the British seaside city of Brighton with his wife and children.

3. Answer the following questions briefly.

- (a) Why did the news of the 'miracle recovery' shock Michael?
- (b) Michael's meeting with Sebastian Shultz had been a chance meeting. Where had it taken place and how?

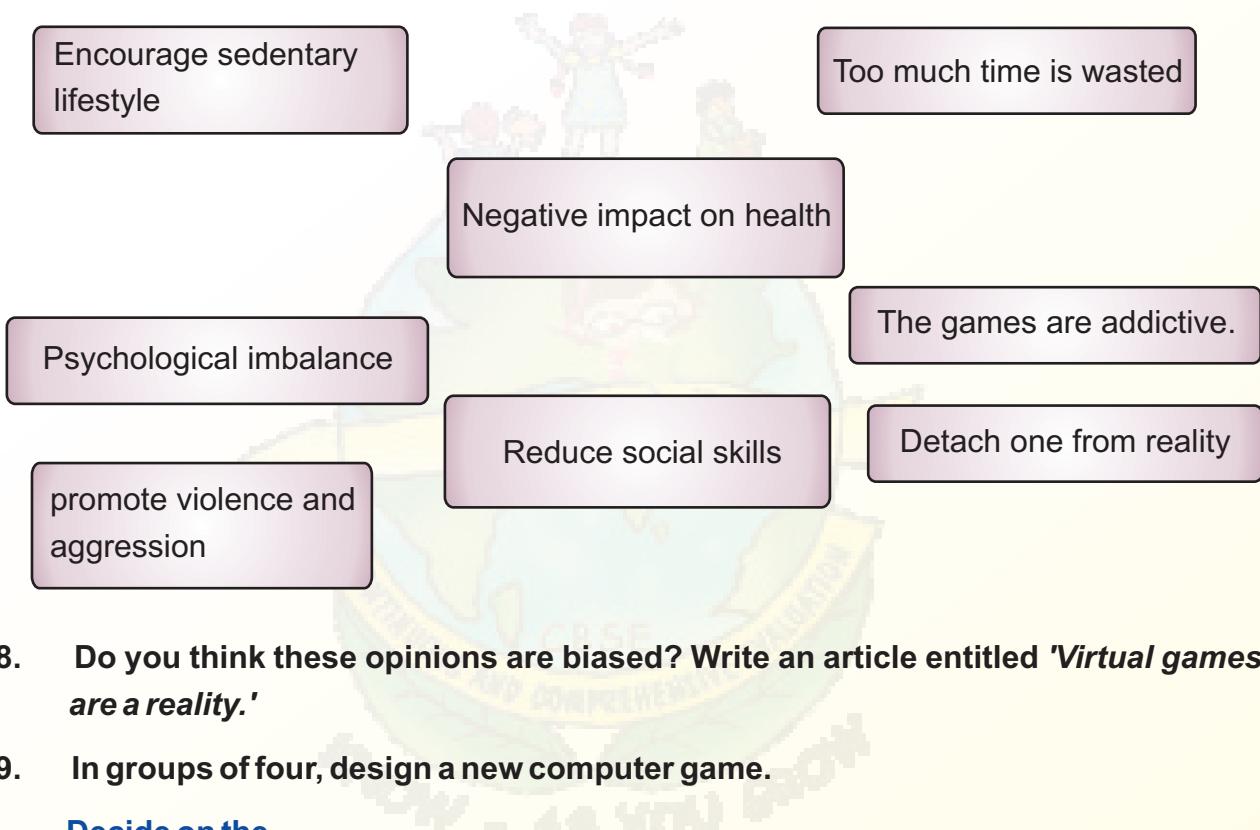


- (c) What kind of computers fascinated Michael and his dad? Why?
- (d) Describe the first place where Michael was virtually transported.
- (e) What help did Sebastian Shultz ask Michael for? How did he convey this message?
- (f) Why did Michael fail in rescuing Sebastian Shultz the first time?
- (g) The second attempt to rescue Sebastian Shultz too was disastrous. Give reasons.
- (h) Narrate the accident that injured Sebastian Shultz.
- (i) How had Sebastian Shultz entered the games?
- (j) How was Sebastian Shultz's memory stored on Michael's disk? Did Michael discover that?
- 4. Sebastian Shultz had a close brush with death. After he recovers, he returns to school and narrates his experience to his classmates. As Sebastian Shultz, narrate your experience.**
- 5. Continue the story.**
- Will Michael and Sebastian Shultz meet in real life? Will they be friends? Will they try to re-enter the virtual world together? You may use the following hints:**
- How the accident occurred
 - Transfer of memory
 - Meeting with Michael
 - Appeals for help
 - Rescue and recovery
- 6. Put the following sentences in a sequential order to complete the story.**
- (a) Sebastian Shultz was badly injured in a motorway accident and went into a coma.
- (b) Sebastian's memory was saved in the computer when he banged his head on it during the accident.
- (c) When Michael played the game, he entered Sebastian's memory.
- (d) Michael bought the latest psycho-drive games from the computer fair.
- (e) Sebastian Shultz was the second sheriff in the 'Dragonquest'
- (f) Michael pulled Sebastian into the helicopter and the screen flashed a score of 40,000,000.
- (g) Sebastian requested Michael to try 'Jailbreak'.

- (h) Sebastian failed to save the boy who fell through the air.
- (i) Sebastian thought the helicopter was the right idea and they should go into the 'Warzone'.
- (j) The games were stolen from Shultz's house.
- (k) Sebastian thanks Michael for saving his life and asks him to keep the games.

Writing

7. Do you think it is a true story? Could it happen to you one day? Here are some opinions about computer games in general.



Decide on the

- setting
- Plot
- Characters
- Objectives

Listening

10. Listen carefully to a text on 'Tour of Body' and answer the questions that are given below.

On the basis of your listening to the passage complete the following statements by choosing the answers from the given options:



- (1) The Cave Automatic Virtual Environment' is
- a modern surgical procedure
 - a three - dimensional virtual reality room
 - an accurate projection of the eye and the brain
 - a technique for developing anatomical pictures
- (2) Projected image on the four walls of a room enables researchers to
- carry out micro surgery
 - understand the functioning of the brain
 - virtually get inside the molecular structure of cells and parts of human body
 - reconstruct damaged parts of human body
- (3) The 'CAVE' is a boon to surgeons because
- they can treat diseases located in unreachable parts of the human body
 - it has made x-ray and MRI unnecessary
 - it helps them avoid surgical procedures in most cases
 - it enables surgeons to use very small surgical instruments
- (4) For the CAVE to develop a virtual environment it is essential
- to apply mathematical formulae
 - to project three - dimensional images on the walls
 - to obtain two - dimensional MRI data first
 - to understand the nature of the diseased cells and parts
- (5) Once inside a three - dimensional representation of an anatomical structure, surgeons can
- 'move' through and 'peel away' its layers
 - shrink themselves and travel inside the body parts
 - convert the data into a flat picture for detailed study
 - locate the diseased parts of the body quickly
- (6) Dr. Szilard Kiss used CAVE to
- travel inside the eye of his patient
 - identify the scar tissue growing over the retina
 - go inside the layers of the retina
 - isolate the ridge of the scar tissue



