

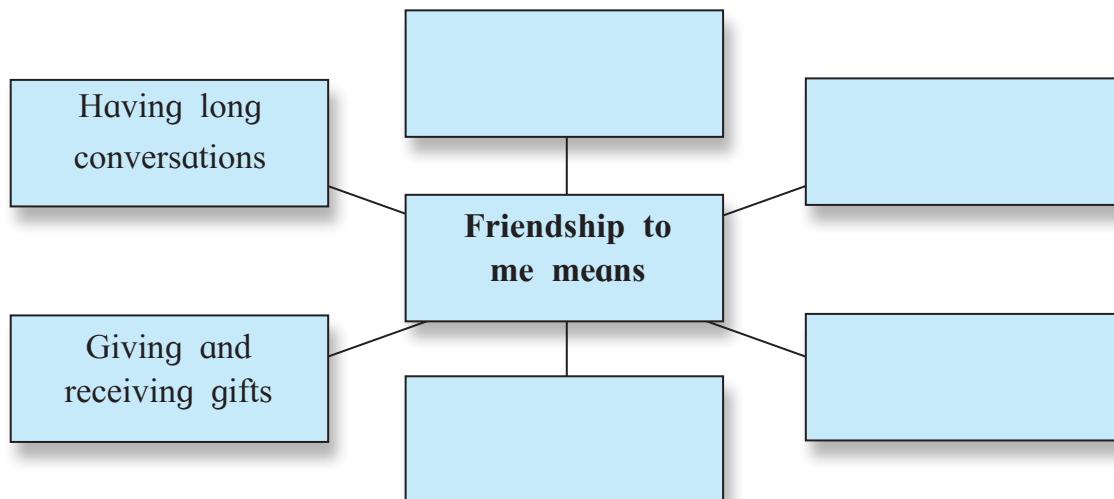
SECTION ONE

1.1 Being Neighborly

ICE BREAKERS

- **Read the following statements and mark those that apply to you.**
 - (i) I make friends easily.
 - (ii) I wish to be friends with someone but my friendship is rejected.
 - (iii) Someone has extended a hand of friendship towards me and I have not accepted it.
 - (iv) I have a large group of friends but no best buddy.
 - (v) I have a small group of close friends and have no wish to interact with anyone else.
 - (vi) I have cordial relationships with all but I cannot connect with anyone.
- **Complete the following web diagram.**

(i)



(ii) **If you see someone lonely or sad you will –**

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)

Louisa May Alcott : (1832-1888) An American writer in the mid to late 19th Century, is considered to be one of the earliest feminist writers. Out of the several books she wrote, her series, beginning with 'Little Women', has been hugely popular among the masses and critics alike for a century and a half. Her simple style and lively characters have left a mark and influenced generations of children and adults alike. The setting of her books is the suburbs of Boston. Her world view is wholesome and full of believable yet charming characters which captivates the readers.



The following extract is from 'Little Women' first published in 1868. This story of four sisters - Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy, their friend Laurie, their wise and loving parents of modest means, living in a suburb of a city in the East coast of America has caught the imagination of generations of readers young and old alike. Each character is real and distinctive. We remain firmly with the sisters through all their struggles, conflicts, triumphs and joys. It serves as a guiding light to us in all the phases of our lives. The extract affords us a tantalising glimpse into the book and narrates the beginning of a lifelong friendship between Jo, the brightest and liveliest of the four sisters and Laurie their wealthy, new neighbour. The March girls and Laurie, become best buddies and much more as the book progresses.

Neighborly: American spelling of 'neighbourly' (British)

sacque: infant short jacket and hood

Jo doesn't want to be a pussy-cat because ...

.....

Being Neighborly

"What in the world are you going to do now, Jo?" asked Meg one snowy afternoon, as her sister came tramping through the hall, in rubber boots, old **sacque** and hood, with a broom in one hand and a shovel in the other.

"Going out for exercise," answered Jo with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes.

"I should think two long walks this morning would have been enough! It's cold and dull out, and I advise you to stay warm and dry by the fire, as I do," said Meg with a shiver.

"Never take advice! Can't keep still all day, and not being a pussy-cat, I don't like to doze by the fire. I like adventures, and I'm going to find some."

Meg went back to toast her feet and read "**Ivanhoe**"; and Jo began to dig paths with great energy. The snow was light, and with her broom she soon swept a path all round the garden, for Beth to walk in when the sun came out and the **invalid dolls** needed air. Now, the garden separated the Marches' house from that of Mr. Laurence. Both stood in a suburb of the city, which was still countrylike, with groves and lawns, large gardens, and quiet streets. A low hedge parted the two estates. On one side was an old, brown house, looking rather bare and shabby, robbed of the vines that in summer covered its walls and the flowers, which then surrounded it. On the other side was a stately stone mansion, plainly **betokening** every sort of comfort and luxury, from the big coach house and well-kept grounds to the **conservatory** and the glimpses of lovely things one caught between the rich curtains. Yet it seemed a lonely, lifeless sort of house, for no children frolicked on the lawn, no motherly face ever smiled at the windows, and few people went in and out, except the old gentleman and his grandson.

To Jo's lively fancy, this fine house seemed a kind of enchanted palace, full of splendors and delights which no one enjoyed. She had long wanted to behold these **hidden glories** and to know the Laurence boy, who looked as if he would like to be known, if he only knew how to begin. Since the party, she had been more eager than ever, and had planned many ways of making friends with him, but he had not been seen lately, and Jo began to think he had gone away, when she one day spied a brown face at an upper window, looking **wistfully** down into their garden, where Beth and Amy were snow-balling one another.

"That boy is suffering for society and fun," she said to herself. "His grandpa does not know what's good for him, and keeps him shut up all alone. He needs a party of jolly boys to play with, or somebody young and lively. I've a great mind to go over and tell the old gentleman so!"

Ivanhoe : a historical novel by Walter Scott

invalid dolls : the dolls with broken limbs which Beth loves.

betokening : indicating

conservatory: glass room outside the house used as green house too.

hidden glories : guess the meaning of hidden glories in the context.

wistfully : longingly, sadly thinking of the past

Explain: "That boy is suffering for society and fun".

sallied: set out to do something

listless: lacking energy

flourished: waved

as dull as tombs: Discuss and name the figure of speech.

The idea amused Jo, who liked to do daring things and was always scandalizing Meg by her queer performances. The plan of “going over” was not forgotten. And when the snowy afternoon came, Jo resolved to try what could be done. She saw Mr. Lawrence drive off, and then **sallied** out to dig her way down to the hedge, where she paused and took a survey. All quiet, curtains down at the lower windows, servants out of sight, and nothing human visible but a curly black head leaning on a thin hand at the upper window.

“There he is,” thought Jo, “Poor boy! All alone and sick this dismal day. It’s a shame! I’ll toss up a snowball and make him look out, and then say a kind word to him.”

Up went a handful of soft snow, and the head turned at once, showing a face which lost its **listless** look in a minute, as the big eyes brightened and the mouth began to smile. Jo nodded and laughed, and **flourished** her broom as she called out...

“How do you do? Are you sick?”

Laurie opened the window, and croaked out as hoarsely as a raven...

“Better, thank you. I’ve had a bad cold, and been shut up a week.”

“I’m sorry. What do you amuse yourself with?”

“Nothing. It’s **as dull as tombs** up here.”

“Don’t you read?”

“Not much. They won’t let me.”

“Can’t somebody read to you?”

“Grandpa does sometimes, but my books don’t interest him, and I hate to ask Brooke all the time.”

“Have someone come and see you then.”

“There isn’t anyone I’d like to see. Boys make such a row, and my head is weak.”

“Isn’t there some nice girl who’d read and amuse you? Girls are quiet and like to play nurse.”

"Don't know any."

"You know us," began Jo, then laughed and stopped.

"So I do! Will you come, please?" cried Laurie.

"I'm not quiet and nice, but I'll come, if Mother will let me. I'll go ask Her. Shut the window, like a good boy, and wait till I come."

With that, Jo shouldered her broom and marched into the house, wondering what they would all say to her. Laurie was in a flutter of excitement at the idea of having company, and flew about to get ready, for as Mrs. March said, he was "**a little gentleman**", and did honor to the coming guest by brushing his curly pate, putting on a fresh color, and trying to tidy up the room, which in spite of half a dozen servants, was anything but neat. Presently there came a loud ring, than a decided voice, asking for "Mr. Laurie", and a surprised-looking servant came running up to announce a young lady.

"All right, show her up, it's Miss Jo," said Laurie, going to the door of his little parlor to meet Jo, who appeared, looking rosy and quite at her ease, with a covered dish in one hand and Beth's three kittens in the other.

"Here I am, bag and baggage," she said briskly. "Mother sent her love, and was glad if I could do anything for you. Meg wanted me to bring some of her **blanc-mange**, she makes it very nicely, and Beth thought her cats would be comforting. I knew you'd laugh at them, but I couldn't refuse, she was so anxious to do something."

It so happened that Beth's funny loan was just the thing, for in laughing over the kits, Laurie forgot his **bashfulness**, and grew sociable at once.

"That looks too pretty to eat," he said, smiling with pleasure, as Jo uncovered the dish, and showed the blanc-mange, surrounded by a garland of green leaves, and the scarlet flowers of Amy's pet geranium.

"It isn't anything, only they all felt kindly and wanted to show it. Tell the girl to put it away for



Complete the sentence :

"*a little gentleman*" means

.....

blanc-mange: almond flavoured milk pudding

bashfulness: shyness

Make a list of gifts you give/receive to/ from your friends.

1..... 2.....

3..... 4.....



your tea. It's so simple you can eat it, and being soft, it will slip down without hurting your sore throat. What a cozy room this is!"

"It might be if it was kept nice, but the maids are lazy, and I don't know how to make them mind. It worries me though."

"I'll right it up in two minutes, for it only needs to have the hearth brushed, so – and the things made straight on the mantelpiece, so – and the books put here, and the bottles there, and your sofa turned from the light, and the pillows plumped up a bit. Now then, you're fixed."

And so he was, for, as she laughed and talked, Jo had whisked things into place and given quite a different air to the room. Laurie watched her in respectful silence, and when she beckoned him to his sofa, he sat down with a sigh of satisfaction, saying gratefully...

"How kind you are! Yes, that's what it wanted. Now please take the big chair and let me do something to amuse my company."

"No, I came to amuse you. Shall I read aloud?" and Jo looked affectionately toward some inviting books near by.

"Thank you! I've read all those, and if you don't mind, I'd rather talk," answered Laurie.

"Not a bit. I'll talk all day if you'll only set me going. Beth says I never know when to stop." "Is Beth the rosy one, who stays at home good deal and sometimes goes out with a little basket?" asked Laurie with interest.

"Yes, that's Beth. She's my girl, and a regular good one she is, too."

"The pretty one is Meg, and the curly-haired one is Amy, I believe?"

"How did you find that out?"

Laurie **colored up**, but answered frankly, "Why, you see I often hear you calling to one another, and when I'm alone up here, I can't help looking over at

*Guess the meaning of
following word:*

- **colored up**

your house, you always seem to be having such good times. I beg your pardon for being so rude, but sometimes you forget to put down the curtain at the window where the flowers are. And when the lamps are lighted, it's like looking at a picture to see the fire, and you all around the table with your mother.

Her face is right opposite, and it looks so sweet behind the flowers, I can't help watching it. I haven't got any mother, you know." And Laurie poked the fire to hide a little twitching of the lips that he could not control.

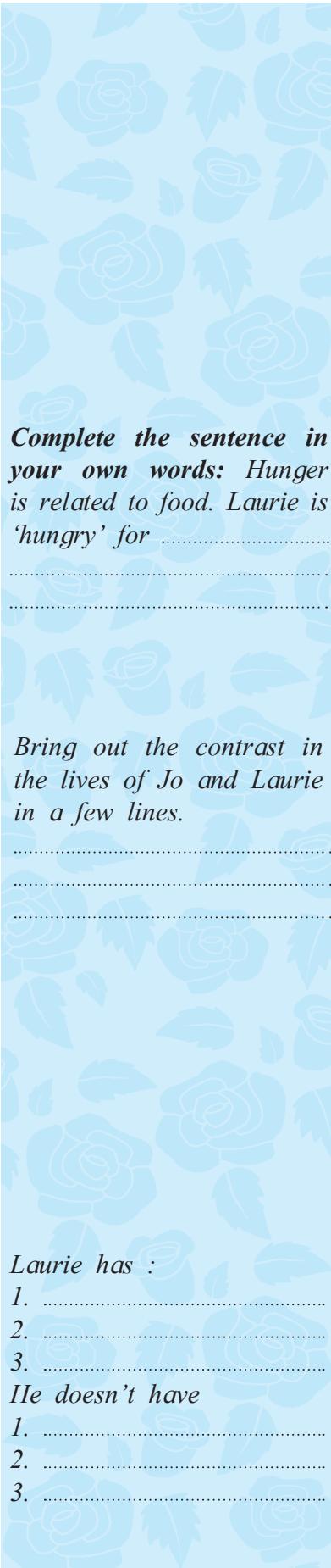
The solitary, hungry look in his eyes went straight to Jo's warm heart. She had been so simply taught that there was no nonsense in her head, and at fifteen she was as innocent and frank as any child. Laurie was sick and lonely, and feeling how rich she was in home and happiness, she gladly tried to share it with him. Her face was very friendly and her sharp voice unusually gentle as she said...

"We'll never draw that curtain any more, and I give you leave to look as much as you like. I just wish, though, instead of peeping, you'd come over and see us. Mother is so splendid, she'd do you heaps of good, and Beth would sing to you if I begged her to, and Amy would dance. Meg and I would make you laugh over our funny stage properties, and we'd have jolly times. Wouldn't your grandpa let you?"

"I think he would, if your mother asked him. He's very kind, though he does not look so, and he lets me do what I like, pretty much, only he's afraid I might be a bother to strangers," began Laurie, brightening more and more.

"We are not strangers, we are neighbors, and you needn't think you'd be a bother. We want to know you, and I've been trying to do it this ever so long. We haven't been here a great while, you know, but we have got acquainted with all our neighbors but you."

"You see, Grandpa lives among his books, and doesn't mind much what happens outside. Mr. Brooke, my tutor, doesn't stay here, you know, and I have no



Complete the sentence in your own words: Hunger is related to food. Laurie is 'hungry' for

Bring out the contrast in the lives of Jo and Laurie in a few lines.

Laurie has :

1.

2.

3.

He doesn't have

1.

2.

3.

Describe the effect of Laurie's words on Jo.

to wait on

Find out the meaning of the phrase.

cross: old-fashioned word for anger

*Find out what **good breeding** means.*

revelled: enjoyed in a lively, noisy way without drinking and dancing

one to go about with me, so I just stop at home and get on as I can."

"That's bad. You ought to make an effort and go visiting everywhere you are asked, then you'll have plenty of friends, and pleasant places to go to. Never mind being bashful. It won't last long if you keep going."

Laurie turned red again, but wasn't offended at being accused of bashfulness, for there was so much good will in Jo it was impossible not to take her blunt speeches as kindly as they were meant.

"Do you like your school?" asked the boy, changing the subject, after a little pause, during which he stared at the fire and Jo looked about her, well pleased.

"Don't go to school, I'm a businessman – girl, I mean. I go **to wait on** my great-aunt, and a dear, **cross** old soul she is, too," answered Jo.

Laurie opened his mouth to ask another question, but remembering just in time that it wasn't manners to make too many inquiries into people's affairs, he shut it again, and looked uncomfortable. Jo liked his **good breeding** and didn't mind having a laugh at Aunt March, so she gave him a lively description of the fidgety old lady, her fat poodle, the parrot that talked Spanish, and the library where she **revelled**. Laurie enjoyed that immensely, and when she told about the prim old gentleman who came once to woo Aunt March, and in the middle of a fine speech, how Poll had tweaked his wig off to his great dismay, the boy lay back and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, and a maid popped her head in to see what was the matter.

"Oh! That does me no end of good. Tell on, please," he said, taking his face out of the sofa cushion, red and shining with merriment.

Much elated with her success, Jo did "tell on", all about their plays and plans, their hopes and fears for Father, and the most interesting events of the little world in which the sisters lived. Then they got to talking about books, and to Jo's delight, she found

that Laurie loved them as well as she did, and had read even more than herself.

"If you like them so much, come down and see ours. Grandfather is out, so you needn't be afraid," said Laurie, getting up.

"I'm not afraid of anything," returned Jo, with a toss of the head.

"I don't believe you are!" exclaimed the boy, looking at her with much admiration, though he privately thought she would have good reason to be a trifle afraid of the old gentleman, if she met him in some of his moods.

The atmosphere of the whole house being summerlike, Laurie led the way from room to room, letting Jo stop to examine whatever struck her fancy. And so, at last they came to the library, where she clapped her hands and **pranced**, as she always did when especially delighted. It was lined with books, and there were pictures and statues, and distracting little cabinets full of coins and curiosities, and Sleepy **Hollow chairs**, and queer tables, and bronzes, and best of all, a great open fireplace with quaint tiles all round it.

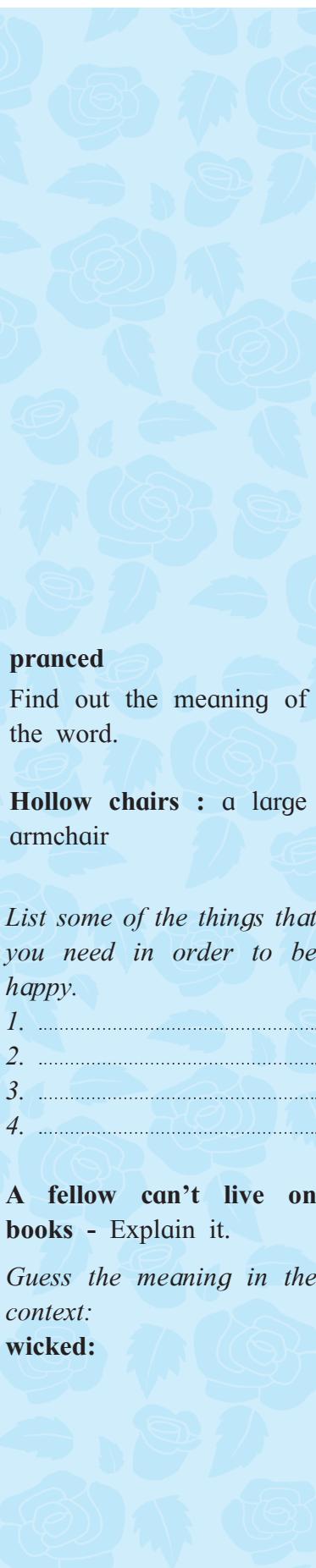
"What richness!" sighed Jo, sinking into the depth of a velour chair and gazing about her with an air of intense satisfaction. "Theodore Laurence, you ought to be the happiest boy in the world," she added impressively.

"**A fellow can't live on books**," said Laurie, shaking his head as he perched on a table opposite.

Before he could say more, a bell rang, and Jo flew up, exclaiming with alarm, "Mercy me! It's your grandpa!"

"Well, what if it is? You are not afraid of anything, you know," returned the boy, looking **wicked**.

"I think I am a little bit afraid of him, but I don't know why I should be. Marmee said I might come, and I don't think you're any the worse for it," said Jo, composing herself, though she kept her eyes on the door.



pranced

Find out the meaning of the word.

Hollow chairs : a large armchair

List some of the things that you need in order to be happy.

1.
2.
3.
4.

A fellow can't live on books - Explain it.

Guess the meaning in the context:

wicked:

I'm happy as a cricket here. Name and explain the figure of speech.

List the things that Jo notices in the portrait:

1.
2.
3.

"I'm a great deal better for it, and ever so much obliged. I'm only afraid you are very tired of talking to me. It was so pleasant, I couldn't bear to stop," said Laurie gratefully.

"The doctor to see you, sir," and the maid beckoned as she spoke.

"Would you mind if I left you for a minute? I suppose I must see him," said Laurie.

"Don't mind me. **I'm happy as a cricket here,**" answered Jo.

Laurie went away, and his guest amused herself in her own way. She was standing before a fine portrait of the old gentleman when the door opened again, and without turning, she said decidedly, "I'm sure now that I shouldn't be afraid of him, for he's got kind eyes, though his mouth is grim, and he looks as if he had a tremendous will of his own. He isn't as handsome as my grandfather, but I like him."



"Thank you, ma'am," said a gruff voice behind her, and there, to her great **dismay**, stood old Mr. Laurence.

Poor Jo blushed till she couldn't blush any redder, and her heart began to beat uncomfortably fast as she thought what she had said. For a minute a wild desire to run away possessed her, but that was cowardly, and the girls would laugh at her, so she resolved to stay and get out of the scrape as she could. A second look showed her that the living eyes, under the bushy eyebrows, were kinder even than the painted ones, and there was a sly twinkle in them, which lessened her fear a good deal. The gruff voice was gruffer than ever, as the old gentleman said abruptly, after the dreadful pause, "So you're not afraid of me, hey?"

"Not much, sir."

"And you don't think me as handsome as your grandfather?" "Not quite, sir."

"And I've got a tremendous will, have I?"

"I only said I thought so."

"But you like me in spite of it?"

"Yes, I do, sir."

That answer pleased the old gentleman. He gave a short laugh, shook hands with her, and, putting his finger under her chin, turned up her face, examined it gravely, and let it go, saying with a nod, "You've got your grandfather's spirit, if you haven't his face. He was a fine man, my dear, but what is better, he was a brave and an honest one, and I was proud to be his friend."

"Thank you, sir," And Jo was quite comfortable after that, for it suited her exactly.

"What have you been doing to this boy of mine, hey?" was the next question, sharply put.

"Only trying to be neighbourly, sir." And Jo told how her visit came about.

"You think he needs cheering up a bit, do you?"

"Yes, sir, he **seems a little lonely**, and young folks

Find out the reason for Jo's dismay.

Complete the sentence:

In spite of Jo's apprehensions, Grandpa is

1.

2.

3.

Discuss what Jo meant by this.

(1) "Only trying to be neighbourly, sir."

(2) seems a little lonely

- (3) splendid Christmas present

*The word **affair** in the context means...*

Hummels : a poor family, whom the March family helps.

*Guess the meaning of the phrase in the context:
go on being neighborly*

would do him good perhaps. We are only girls, but we should be glad to help if we could, for we don't forget the **splendid Christmas present** you sent us," said Jo eagerly.

"Tut, tut, tut! That was the **boy's affair**. How is the poor woman?"

"Doing nicely, sir." And off went Jo, talking very fast, as she told all about the **Hummels**, in whom her mother had interested richer friends than they were.

"Just her father's way of doing good. I shall come and see your mother some fine day. Tell her so. There's the tea bell, we have it early on the boy's account. Come down and **go on being neighborly**."

"If you'd like to have me, sir."

"Shouldn't ask you, if I didn't." And Mr. Laurence offered her his arm with old-fashioned courtesy.

"What would Meg say to this?" thought Jo, as she was marched away, while her eyes danced with fun as she imagined herself telling the story at home.

- *Louisa May Alcott*

BRAINSTORMING

(A1) (i) **Jo's decision to make friends with the lonely boy next door proves to be a good one. Elaborate. You may begin with 'Jo was a bold, friendly and warm person...'**

(ii) **Read the extract 'Being Neighborly' and complete the following statements:**

- To Jo the fine house seemed like
- Jo swept a path around the garden for
- Jo entered the old stone house carrying
- In order to tidy the room, Jo

(iii) **Bring out the contrast between the two houses with the help of the following points.**

House of March

- Old, brown house
-

House of Laurence

-
- Well kept grounds

3. Children played all around. c.
4. d. No motherly face smiled at the windows.

(A2) The traits of the characters you meet in the extract are jumbled. Sort them out and write them in the appropriate columns.

(Shy, bold, gruff, friendly, withdrawn, perceptive, empathetic, playful, lonely, happy, gentlemanly, frank, mature, dull, sharp, adventurous.)

Jo	Laurie	Grandpa

(A3) (i) Write down in your own words the way Laurie confirmed the names of the March sisters.

(ii) Give a brief account of the interaction between Grandpa and Jo.

(A4) (i) Find proverbs, maxims and idioms related to ‘friendship’.

(a) For example: Birds of a feather flock together.

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(ii) The extract deals with the atmosphere of two homes. Collect the words associated with -

(a) Home (b) Library (c) Garden

(A5) Change into indirect speech.

(a) “Do you like your school?” asked the boy.

“Don’t go to school; I’m a businessman – girl, I mean”, answered Jo.

(b) Jo flourished her broom as she called out... “How do you do? Are you sick?”

Laurie opened the window and croaked out as hoarsely as a raven.....

“Better, thank you. I’ve had a bad cold and been shut up a week.”

(c) “The pretty one is Meg and the curly-haired is Amy, I believe?” – Laurie

“How did you find that out?” – Jo

(d) "I'm not afraid of anything," returned Jo, with a toss of the head.

"I don't believe you are!" exclaimed the boy.

We use indirect speech when we use our own words to report what someone says.

Changes should be made to the original words when changing from Direct speech to Indirect.

The boy wanted to know whether she (Jo) liked school. To which, Jo answered rather emphatically that she did not go to school. She further added that she was a businessman, and jovially corrected the gender.

Note: Observe the aspects of tenses, Reflexive Pronouns that have undergone changes while transforming Direct speech into Indirect speech certain meanings will have to be conveyed when converting to Indirect speech.

For example : In the above sentence –

Jo has corrected herself when she claims she is a business woman. Since she is a girl she says she is a businessman – girl. (Note – At the time when this novel was written, 'businesswomen' was not a prevalent term).

- (A6)**
- (i)** Narrate in 100 words an incident, that illustrates the way a friend of yours 'made you feel happy and accepted', at some point in your life.
 - (ii)** Give reasons, for us being reluctant to make friends with some strangers, but being comfortable with some, even after meeting them for the first time.
 - (iii)** Are friends different from neighbours? Are you friends with your neighbours? Give examples and write.
 - (iv)** Make a note in your exercise book about how people amused themselves in earlier times, without TV, internet or social media for entertainment.

(A7) Use your imagination and extend the story in about 100 to 150 words.

(A8) Project:

If you are social, like to meet new people, can empathise and connect with people easily, make a list of careers available to you and write in brief about them.

For example: Human Resource Development or HRD.
