

Unit 2

READING

The Brook Alfred Tennyson

Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892) was Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom for much of the Victorian period. A master of rhythm and rich, descriptive imagery, Tennyson authored lyric poems such as 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', 'Break, Break, Break', 'Ulysses', and 'The Lady of Shalott' which remain popular to this day.

In the following poem, a small stream narrates its journey from its origin in the hills to its destination, the river with which it merges. Tennyson creates a poem full of music and beautiful imagery out of simple words.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorpes, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland set
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
 With here a blossom sailing,
 And here and there a lusty trout,
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
 Upon me, as I travel
 With many a silvery waterbreak
 Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
 To join the brimming river
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
 I slide by hazel covers;
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
 Among my skimming swallows;
 I make the netted sunbeam dance
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wildernesses;
 I linger by my shingly bars;
 I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

GLOSSARY

<i>haunts</i>	places where one frequently spends time
<i>coot</i>	a water bird
<i>hern</i>	old word for heron, another type of water bird
<i>sally</i>	a sudden movement out of a hidden place
<i>bicker</i>	to argue
<i>thorpe</i>	a village or hamlet
<i>brimming</i>	full to the brim
<i>sharps ... trebles</i>	musical notes
<i>eddying</i>	moving in a circular way
<i>babble</i>	to talk or make noise without stopping or making sense; this word is often used to describe the sound of a brook
<i>fret</i>	to worry; (in this context) to constantly wear down
<i>fallow</i>	a piece of land that has been ploughed but left without being sown with crops
<i>foreland</i>	an area of land bordering on another
<i>mallow</i>	a plant
<i>trout, grayling</i>	types of fish
<i>waterbreak</i>	an area of water which is broken up or foaming, especially in a stream or brook
<i>hazel covers</i>	small groups of hazel trees
<i>skimming swallows</i>	swallows (a type of bird) flying just over the water without touching it
<i>murmur</i>	soft continuous sound
<i>brambly</i>	thorny
<i>wilderness</i>	jungle area
<i>linger</i>	to stay for a while
<i>shingly</i>	full of shingles (small pebbles)
<i>loiter</i>	to wait around or to walk aimlessly
<i>cresses</i>	small weeds that are edible

COMPREHENSION

A. Choose the right answer from the following options.

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
 - a. the poet
 - b. the brook
 - c. the reader

2. What is the one line that is repeated throughout the poem?
 - a. For men may come and men may go / But I go on for ever
 - b. I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance
 - c. Half a league, half a league, half a league onward

3. Which of the following words are not 'sound' words?
 - a. babbling
 - b. murmuring
 - c. shimmering

4. What kind of fish are found in this brook?
 - a. Trout and grayling
 - b. Snapper and herring
 - c. Hilsa and pomfret

B. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words.

1. The brook murmurs under moon & stars

2. The word used to describe the sunbeam in the poem is

3. A is a small, fast flowing body of water.

4. is another word for 'talking a lot' in the poem.

C. Answer the following questions in 50–100 words.

1. What kind of landscape is described in the first three stanzas?
2. What are the types of water bodies and plant life that are talked about in the poem?
3. Explain the line: 'I make the netted sunbeam dance / Against my sandy shallows.'
4. What is the mood of the poem?

D. Answer the following questions in 200–300 words.

1. What are the various words the poet uses to describe the sound of the brook? How does it contribute to the effect of the poem?

2. How has the poet described landscape, flowers, plants and colours in the poem? How does it make you feel as a reader? Substantiate your answer with examples from the poem.
3. Explain what you think is meant by the lines 'For men may come and men may go, / But I go on for ever'. What does it say about Nature?
4. Who is the speaker of the poem? What is this technique of investing human qualities into non-living things called? Why do you think the poet has chosen to use this technique here? How does it contribute to the effect of the poem?

GRAMMAR

Articles

The words 'a', 'an' and 'the' are called articles. They always come before a noun or noun phrase, and help to identify the person, place, animal or thing referred to by them.

The articles 'a' and 'an' are called *indefinite articles*, and they come before singular countable nouns and identify the person or thing they represent in a general way. For example, in the sentence 'A woman came in a car', the indefinite article 'a' only identifies the nouns that follow as some woman and as some car, without telling us anything more specific about their identity. Similarly, in the sentence 'I saw an object lying there', the indefinite article 'an' simply identifies what was seen as some object—again in a general way.

The indefinite article 'a' is used when the following noun begins with a consonant sound, and the indefinite article 'an' appears when the following noun begins with a vowel sound. Look at the use of 'a' and 'an' in the sentences below. The nouns which follow the indefinite article in the first two sentences begin with consonant sounds. In contrast, the nouns following the indefinite article in the last two sentences begin with vowel sounds.

I wrote with *a* pencil.

Bina was baking *a* cake.

An owl hooted.

Let me give you *an* umbrella.

It is important to remember that we are referring to consonant and vowel sounds, and not letters. For example, in the sentences below, the indefinite article 'a' appears with words beginning with the letter 'u', because in the words concerned the letter is pronounced as the consonant sound /j/.

Vinod wants to join *a* university.

We are members of *a* union.

Similarly, in the sentences below, the indefinite article 'an' is used before words beginning with the letter 'h', because in the words concerned the consonant letter is silent.

You are *an* honest person.

I have been waiting here for *an* hour.

The article 'the' is the *definite article*, and it precedes both singular and plural nouns to refer to the person or thing they represent in a specific way. For example, in the sentence 'Deepu saw the helicopter take off', the use of the definite article indicates that it was a specific helicopter that Deepu saw, and this information is shared by the speaker as well as by the listener. Again, in the sentence 'Will you watch the film?' the use of the definite article indicates a specific film. Look at the following sentences.

The acrobat ran up the rope ladder.

Keep the apple and the banana on a plate.

The dog chased a cat up a tree.

Hamid was waiting for Alok at the bus stop.

Uses of indefinite articles

- before a noun that is introduced for the first time in speech or writing

*I will tell you about *an* officer in the Indian navy. (The speaker/reader has not heard of the officer ever before.)*

- before a noun which represents not an individual person or thing, but an instance of a whole class

A doctor must have a lot of compassion. (Here the reference is not to a particular doctor, but to all members of the profession.)

- to indicate the numeral one

*I gave him *a* rupee. (meaning, one rupee)*

- with personal names in two very specific situations

- when the person referred to is a stranger to the speaker

*Father has gone to the bank with *a* Dr Sen. (The speaker does not know who Dr Sen is.)*

- when the qualities of the person, and not the person herself, are being referred to

*Rohit is turning out to be *an* Einstein. (very good at physics)*

*Your niece is *a* Sonal Mansingh. (an exceptionally talented dancer)*

Uses of the definite article

- before a noun that has already been mentioned and is referred to again in the same piece of speech or writing.

*Nimi bought a book on marine life. After she read *the* book, she decided to study oceanography.*

- when used with a singular countable noun, 'the' is used to refer to a whole class of things, objects, etc.

The psychiatrist is a doctor who treats mental illness. (referring to all doctors who have specialised in the area)

- when used to refer to a noun which is the only one of its kind in a particular situation
 I would like to speak to an employee here. (when there are many employees)
but I would like to speak to *the* person in charge here. (when there is only one person in charge)
- when the noun following it is made specific by the use of a qualifying word, phrase or clause

The red flowers are geraniums. (underlined word, an adjective)

The flowers in the vase are geraniums. (underlined words, an adjectival phrase)

The flowers that I gave you are geraniums. (underlined words, an adjectival clause)
- before the names of mountain ranges (but not mountain peaks or hills), oceans, seas, rivers, lakes and groups of islands (but not with a single island)

Mount Everest is the highest peak in *the* Himalayas.

The Andaman and Nicobar islands and Sri Lanka are both close to India.

We flew over *the* Pacific Ocean.
- before points on the earth, and before points of the compass
 ‘*the* South Pole’, ‘*the* equator’, ‘*the* west’, ‘*the* Middle East’
- with adjectives in the superlative degree

Susan is *the* fastest sprinter in the college.
- before adjectives when they are used as nouns referring to a class of people, animals, things, etc.

The strong can carry the logs of wood upstairs. (meaning those who are strong)
- before the names of holy books
 ‘*the* Gita’, ‘*the* Koran’, ‘*the* Granth Sahib’
- before the names of well-known buildings, the names of trains and the names of newspapers

‘*the* Rashtrapati Bhavan’, ‘*the* Rajdhani Express’, ‘*the* Indian Express’
- before the plural forms of proper nouns to refer to families

The Mehtas are wonderful hosts.
- before the singular forms of proper nouns to suggest a comparison

Anu is *the* Sania Mirza of our college. (implying that she is a brilliant tennis player)
- before names of countries which consist of more than one word

Roma used to live in *the* United States of America.
but Roma used to live in America.

Articles are not used in the following cases.

- usually, before proper nouns, except in the situations given above
- before abstract nouns, e.g., 'peace' and names of activities and subjects of study, e.g., 'gardening' and 'economics', except when they are made specific by some phrases that follow them
 We long for peace. (not 'the peace')
but We long for *the* peace of the hills.
- before mass nouns like 'air' and 'milk', except when these are made specific by a following phrase or clause
 We breathe air. (not 'the air')
but We breathe in *the* air of the sea.
- before the names of most diseases (exceptions 'headache' and 'cold')
 Cancer, if detected early, is curable.
- before names of colleges and universities, if the name does not include 'of'
 Ranjit took a degree in law from Delhi University.
but Ranjit took a degree in law from *the* University of Delhi.
- before the names of meals had at different times of the day
 He took us out to dinner.
but *The* dinner we had at Balu's Tiffin Centre was delicious.
- before nouns like 'church', 'college', 'hospital', when we are referring to them in relation to their primary purpose (prayer, higher education, treatment for illness, etc.) and not as places or buildings
 Her daughter is at college. (for education)
but Her daughter cycles to *the* college. (the building and surrounding campus)
 They go twice a week to church. (to pray)
but They reached *the* church before 7 a.m. (the building)
- usually before some collective nouns such as 'humankind', 'society' and 'humanity'
 This is a great service to humanity.
 Will society forget such a great person?
- in phrases with the preposition 'by' showing means of transport/transmission
 Mansur came to the city by train.
 You can go by car.

EXERCISES

Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with 'a', 'an' or 'the'. In case more than one article can be used, use the one you think would be more appropriate than the other(s). If the blank space does not need any of the three words, indicate this with an X.

1. The..... peacock is in danger of extinction.

2. Could you get me a kilogram of tea, please.
3. There is a European and an Eskimo among the tourists.
4. Sally I know lives in Bhubaneswar.
5. Sajita found a wallet on her way home. She took the wallet to the police station.
6. We must work to save the tigers from becoming extinct.
7. Have you had x breakfast?
8. You must reach the school before 9 a.m.
9. It is an awe-inspiring sight to see the Brahmaputra in spate.
10. This is a painting of the Western Ghats, and that is a photograph of x Mahabaleshwar peak.
11. Mary will go to school when she is three.
12. Our library has three copies of the Mahabharata.

Some of the following sentences may have errors relating to the use of articles. Rewrite the sentences correctly. If you think the given sentence is correct, leave the space below it blank.

1. The oranges and lemons are citrus fruits.
.....

2. Asif is going to visit the Oxford University.
.....

3. The elephants and the lions are found in India.
.....

4. Have you been to Nilgiri hills?
.....

5. History is not really Lisa's favourite subject, but she finds the history of the Greeks fascinating.
.....

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6. You can take Visaka Express to Mumbai.

You can take the Visaka Express to mumbai

7. The children have been sent to the bed.

.....

8. Gold you buy here is of excellent quality.

The Gold !

9. Manoj heard a old tale about an unicorn.

a Unicorn.

10. Philosophy discussed in this book is very difficult to understand.

The philosophy

Fill in the blanks with indefinite articles where necessary.

1. She doesn't own a car.

2. He came from humble beginnings.

3. I saw bears at the zoo.

4. He asked for milk

5. She didn't get an invitation.

6. I saw an eagle fly by.

7. She was an English teacher. She taught at a European university.

8. He bought milk, butter, and a loaf of bread.

9. The table is made of wood.

10. Dr Abdul Kalam was an honest man.

Insert articles wherever necessary.

1. There is book in my backpack. Book is very heavy.

A) There is book in my backpack. Book is very heavy.

2. Do you know where I left car keys?

The car keys

3. I enjoy reading detective novels, especially ones by famous author Arthur Conan Doyle.

Detective novels

4. French drink wine, while Americans drink beer.

French drink wine

5. Group of MBA students from university of Mumbai visited Harvard University in United States.

MBA students

6. Bible was first book to be printed by Gutenberg in fifteenth century.

Bible

7. I am fond of music of Mozart. My grandfather owns antique piano.

antique piano

8. Cloth is sold by metre. Metre of this fabric cost me moon.

metre

9. Sun is at highest point in sky at noon.

Sun

10. After humans, chimpanzee is most intelligent among animals.

chimpanzee

Correct the following sentences by using the right articles.

1. All applicants must possess an university degree.

a

2. I am studying for a MA in history.

3. He had spelt the word with a 's' instead of a 'c'.

4. I always use a HB pencil.

5. In the class, the children were having arithmetic lesson.

6. My brother is electrical engineer.

7. The war lasted almost hundred years.

8. I always get headache if I don't wear my glasses.

9. Swiss are very fussy about hygiene.

10. His lawyer produced an important new evidence.

11. Give it to cat.

12. Ann is doctor.

13. Our plants need ~~a~~ water.

.....

14. We had a breakfast in the hotel restaurant.

.....

15. We must try harder to stop these people from destroying the nature.

.....

16. I don't like driving in ~~a~~ heavy traffic.

.....

17. The petrol is expensive.

.....

18. They have ~~the~~ really bad roads here.

.....

VOCABULARY

Word Formation II

In the previous unit, you learnt about some common methods of word formation. In this unit, we will look at another method: the formation of new words using root words from other languages, specifically from Greek and Latin.

A root is a simple form of a word, or a part of a word, without any prefix or suffix. It is the foundational unit of any word, its main part. Many English words were borrowed from Greek and Latin. It is a good idea to learn the meaning of common roots, as this could help you deduce the meaning of new and unfamiliar words.

Greek root	Meaning	Examples
auto	self	autograph, automatic
bio	life	biology, biography
chrono	time	chronology, synchronise

dem	people	democracy, demographic
electro	amber ³	electricity, electromagnet
geo	earth	geography, geology
graph	write	autograph, graphic
mega	large	megawatt megabyte
meter	measure	thermometer, kilometre
pan	all, entire	pandemic, pantheon
phil	love	philosophy, bibliophile
photo	light	photograph, photosynthesis
psych	mind, soul	psychiatry, psychology
tele	far away	television, telescope
theo	god	theology, atheist

Latin root	Meaning	Examples
audi	hear	audio, audience
bene	good	benefit, benign
cred	believe, trust	credential, incredible
dict	speak	dictate, verdict
doct	teach	document, doctor
fact	make	factory, manufacture
fin	end, limit	final, confine
gen	birth	gene, generation
mis / mit	send	transmit, missile
nov / nou	new	novice, renovate
omni	all	omnivorous, omnipotent
port	carry	transport, portable
scrib / script	write	scribble, script
sens / sent	feel	sentiment, sensation
vid / vis	see	visible, video

³ Amber has magnetic properties.

EXERCISE

In the third column of the table below, write down at least two words formed using the given word roots.

Root	Meaning	Words formed
phone	(Greek) sound	
temp	(Latin) time	
alter	(Latin) other	
therm	(Greek) heat	
pater	(Latin) father	

WRITING**Punctuation**

(Punctuation is an essential criterion for good writing. It provides clarity and organisation to a written text.) Proper punctuation can also indicate those words or phrases that a writer wishes to stress.

A poorly punctuated passage is difficult to read. On the other hand, (a passage which is correctly punctuated signals the fact that the writer is competent, careful, and aware of the niceties of communication—all of which create a good impression in the reader.)

In this section, we will revise the five most important punctuation marks: the full stop, the comma, the colon, the semicolon, and the apostrophe.

The FULL STOP or the **period** (.) marks the end of a sentence (which is not an exclamation or a question). It announces the end of a logical and complete thought.

I went to college this morning.

Kolkata is the capital of West Bengal.

Its other uses include the indication of abbreviations (such as 'a.m.' or 'etc.'), ellipses ('I... I'm not sure...') and decimal points in numbers ('7.5%').

A common error involving the use of full stops is the writing of sentence fragments. A complete sentence contains both a subject (what or whom the sentence is about) and a predicate (which tells us something about the subject or expresses an action).

- * When Shoaib found the cap. He returned it to Vijaya.
- ✓ When Shoaib found the cap, he returned it to Vijaya.

When a single word forms the entire sentence—such as in a greeting ('Hello.') or a command ('Stop.')—the full stop may be placed after the word.

The **COMMA (,)** has many applications in English. If used incorrectly, it may change the meaning of a sentence entirely, and cause much confusion.

Commas are used after each item in a series of three or more words or phrases.

You may choose either apples, bananas, or pears.

She shouted, waved her arms, jumped, and ran away.

Fundamental rights include right to equality, right to freedom, and right to education.

A comma is necessary when two independent clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction (e.g., 'and', 'or', 'but', 'yet').

Vijaya left her cap on the field, and now it is missing.

A comma is necessary when a subordinate clause precedes an independent (main) clause.

Upon finding her cap missing, Vijaya returned to the field.

Commas are used to enclose non-restrictive (i.e., non-defining) clauses or non-essential details in a sentence. The commas are placed on either end of such an insertion or clause.

Vijaya, our team captain, has lost her cap.

Commas are also used before question tags.

Vijaya lost his cap, didn't she?

The **COLON (:)** is used to elaborate on an idea that has been stated. One way of doing this is by introducing a list.

Vijaya played several sports: hockey, basketball, kho kho, and volleyball.

The colon also separates two independent clauses where the second clause demonstrates or explains the first.

The election results were in: she had lost.

Note that the clause before the colon is always a complete, independent statement in itself.

The **SEMICOLON (;)** is used to link two or more independent clauses that are connected to each other.

She refused to give up; she had worked too hard.

Each of these clauses could have been a separate sentence, but the semicolon joins them in order to emphasise the relation of one to the other.

The semicolon is also used to separate items in a list in which each item itself contains commas.

The players who got injured were Sumi, the Loreto striker; Mallika, one of the midfielders for Miranda House; and Vijaya, the goalkeeper and captain of our team.

The APOSTROPHE (') has two (very different) functions in English punctuation. Its first function is to indicate possession for nouns.

Vijaya's cap

the dog's tail

three weeks' leave

Note that the apostrophe is not used to indicate possession for personal pronouns.

This cap is *yours*, not *hers*.

The dog wagged *its* tail.

The second use of the apostrophe is to indicate omissions in contractions.

it's = it is

didn't = did not

I'm = I am

they'd = they would

we've = we have

you're = you are

EXERCISES

PUNCTUATE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES CORRECTLY. CAPITALISE WORDS WHERE REQUIRED.

1. i speak telugu and hindi better than english, what about you ?

.....

2. i need an assistant who can do the following input data write reports and complete tax forms

.....

3. whos there oh its you

.....

4. the ganges is considered a holy river by the hindus its source is the gangotri glacier in the himalayas and it empties into the bay of bengal in eastern india

.....

5. i drove my rusty old green ambassador back home as it chugged slowly down the street its engine grunting and wheezing its wheels wobbling all the way i realised it was time to buy a new car

.....

6. he got what he worked for a promotion

.....

7. you're responsible for your belongings

.....

8. it's a lovely day today isn't it i want to go to the park but im not sure if its open

.....

9. you may be required to bring many things sleeping bags pans utensils and warm clothing

.....

.....

10. id forgotten that hed mentioned that its there

.....

11. i am soaking wet i forgot my umbrella

.....

12. whos the indian teams captain

.....

13. sultan was born at gandhi memorial hospital in hyderabad hes an investment banker he lives in new york but he visits india often his sisters birthday is in january on new years day

.....

.....

Determine whether the sentences below require or do not require a semicolon. If they do, mark the semicolon's correct position. If you think a comma has been used incorrectly, change it to a semicolon.

1. She went swimming every day while on holiday in Coorg.

.....

2. He is not from Hyderabad he is from Bangalore.

.....

3. Her fitness is poor she will probably not do well in the physical education exam.

.....
4. I want to go to the library, but I think it might be closed today.

.....
5. Are you okay travelling by bus, or do you want to travel by train?

.....
6. All of the art supplies are in that cabinet, we only take them out during art class.

.....
7. The weather was terrible it wouldn't stop raining.

LIFE SKILLS

Self-Improvement

Every one of us has strengths and weaknesses. Being aware of these qualities and personality traits is the first step to self-improvement. **Self-improvement** is where you not only learn to recognise those areas of your personality which need work and improvement, but also actively work on those problem areas to make yourself into a better and more rounded person. For instance, if you have a tendency to procrastinate, you can improve yourself by maintaining a schedule and making sure you finish jobs as and when they need to be done.

If you cannot see or accept that there are areas of your personality you need to improve then you will end up remaining in the same position you are in for the rest of your life. People will find it hard to relate to you or work with you, and you might not be very successful at what you do. The ability to change and grow, and become better over time means that you will be able to successfully integrate yourself into whatever environment you find yourself in, whether at work or in your other social spheres.

The Nobel Prize-winning writer George Bernard Shaw was a socially conscious individual who wished to improve the society of his time. However, he found himself unable to influence people and spread his ideas because he was not very good at public speaking. In the following extract from the essay 'How I became a public speaker', Shaw talks about how he improved his ability to speak so as to effect change in people's minds.

How I Became a Public Speaker

George Bernard Shaw

When I went with Lecky to the Zetetical meeting I had never spoken in public. I knew nothing about public meeting or their order. I had an air of impudence, but was really an arrant coward, nervous and self-conscious to a heart-breaking degree. Yet, I could not hold my tongue. I started up and said something in the debate, and then, feeling that I had made a fool of myself, as in fact I had, I was so ashamed that I vowed I would join the Society; go every week; speak in every debate; and become a speaker or perish in the attempt. I carried out this resolution. I suffered agonies that no one suspected. During the speech of the debater I resolved to follow, my heart used to beat as painfully as a recruit's going under fire for the first time. I could not use notes; when I looked at the paper in my hand I could not collect myself enough to decipher a word. And of the four or five points that were my pretext for this ghastly practice I invariably forgot the best.

The Society must have hated me; for to it I seemed so uppish and self-possessed that at my third meeting I was asked to take the chair. I consented as offhandedly as if I were the Speaker of the House of Commons; and the secretary probably got his first inkling of my hidden terror by seeing that my hand shook so that I could hardly sign the minutes of the previous meeting. My speeches must have been little less dreaded by the Society than they were by myself; but I noticed that they were hardly ever ignored; for the speaker of the evenings, in replying, usually addressed himself almost exclusively to my remarks, seldom in an appreciative vein. Besides, though ignorant of economics, I had read, in my boyhood, Mill on Liberty, on Representative Government, and on the Irish Land Question; and I was as full of Darwin, Tyndall and George Eliot as most of my audience. Yet every subject struck my mind at an angle that produced reflections new to my audience. My first success was when the Society paid to Art, of which it was utterly ignorant, the tribute of setting an evening aside for a paper on it. I wiped the floor with that meeting; and several members confessed to me afterwards that it was this performance that first made them reconsider their first impression of me as a bumptious discordant idiot.

I persevered doggedly. I haunted all the meetings in London where debates followed lectures. I spoke in the streets, in the parks, at demonstrations, anywhere and everywhere possible. In short, I infested public meetings like an officer afflicted with cowardice, who takes every opportunity of going under fire to get over it and learn his business.

I had quiet literary evenings in University College at the meetings of the New Shakespeare Society under F.J. Furnivall, and breezier ones at his Browning Society. I joined another very interesting debating society called the Bedford founded by Stopford Brooke who had not then given up his pastorate at Bedford Chapel to devote himself to literature. At all these meetings I took part in the debates. My excessive nervousness soon wore off.

I soon became sufficiently known as a Socialist orator to have no further need to seek out public debates. I was myself sought after. This began when I accepted an invitation from a Radical Club at Woolwich to lecture to it. At first I thought of reading a written lecture; for it seemed hardly possible to speak for an hour without text when I had hitherto spoken for ten

minutes or so only in debates. But if I were to lecture formally on Socialism for an hour, writing would be impossible for want of time: I must extemporize. The lecture was called 'Thieves', and was a demonstration that the proprietor of an unearned income inflicted on the community exactly the same injury as a burglar does. I spoke for an hour easily, and from that time always extemporized. [...]

I never took payment for speaking. It often happened that provincial Sunday Societies offered me the usual ten guineas fee to give the usual sort of lecture, avoiding controversial politics and religion. I always replied that I never lectured on anything but very controversial politics and religion, and that my fee was the price of my railway ticket third class if the place was farther off than I could afford to go at my own expense. The Sunday Society would then assure me that on these terms I might lecture on anything I liked and how I liked. Occasionally, to avoid embarrassing other lecturers who lived by lecturing, the account was settled by a debit and credit entry; that is, I was credited with the usual fee and expenses, and gave it back as a donation to the Society. In this way I secured perfect freedom of speech, and was armed against the accusation of being a professional agitator. For instance, at the election of 1892, I was making a speech in the Town Hall of Dover when a man rose and shouted to the audience not to let itself be talked to by a hired professional agitator from London. I immediately offered to sell him my emoluments for five. He hesitated; and I came down to four. I offered to make it five shillings-half-a-crown-a shilling-six pence. When he would not deal even at a penny I claimed that he must know perfectly well that I was there at my own expense. If I had not been able to do this, the meeting, which was a difficult and hostile one, would probably have broken up.

GLOSSARY

<i>arrant</i>	complete, utter
<i>impudence</i>	being deliberately cheeky and mischievous
<i>recruit going under fire</i>	a first-time soldier going into war
<i>decipher</i>	to make out; to decode
<i>pretext</i>	a false reason given to justify a course of action
<i>ghastly</i>	causing great horror or fear
<i>upnish</i>	arrogant
<i>offhandedly</i>	without making a big deal
<i>seldom</i>	very rarely
<i>wipe the floor with</i>	inflict a humiliating defeat on
<i>bumptious</i>	irritatingly opinionated
<i>discordant</i>	harsh, jarring, without harmony
<i>doggedly</i>	without giving up
<i>pastorate</i>	the office of a pastor (priest)
<i>extemporized</i>	to speak without notes

<i>provincial</i>	from the countryside (not from the city)
<i>agitator</i>	someone who deliberately stirs up political arguments
<i>emoluments</i>	salary

ACTIVITIES

Individual activity

The author of the above extract, George Bernard Shaw, felt that he needed to improve his public speaking ability as it would help him spread his message. He confronted his fear of speaking in public by forcing himself to make speeches in front of large groups. He didn't let failure deter him, and persevered till he became better at it.

Reflect on the following and make notes for self-improvement:

- Identify one area of your life that you would like to improve. It could be anything from becoming punctual to becoming better at penalty shootouts, as long as it is personal to you—something that you wish for yourself, and not something that you do simply because other people would like it.
- Think about what you need to do to improve in this area.
- Also think about the challenges you might face and the obstacles preventing you from improving.
- Make an action plan to help you improve. This should consist of something you do every day (or at least at regular intervals, such as once in three days or once a week).
- Get started on your action plan and do not give up. Don't overthink it—just do it!

Group activity

Here is a group activity that will help you improve your public speaking ability.

- Form groups of five.
- Each individual in a group must choose a topic from a limited set of topics suggested by the class teacher.
- Every person should talk on her/his chosen topic to the rest of the group for exactly a minute.
- At the end of each individual's speech, the rest of the group gives suggestions to the speaker on what she/he can improve on.

WRITING ACTIVITY