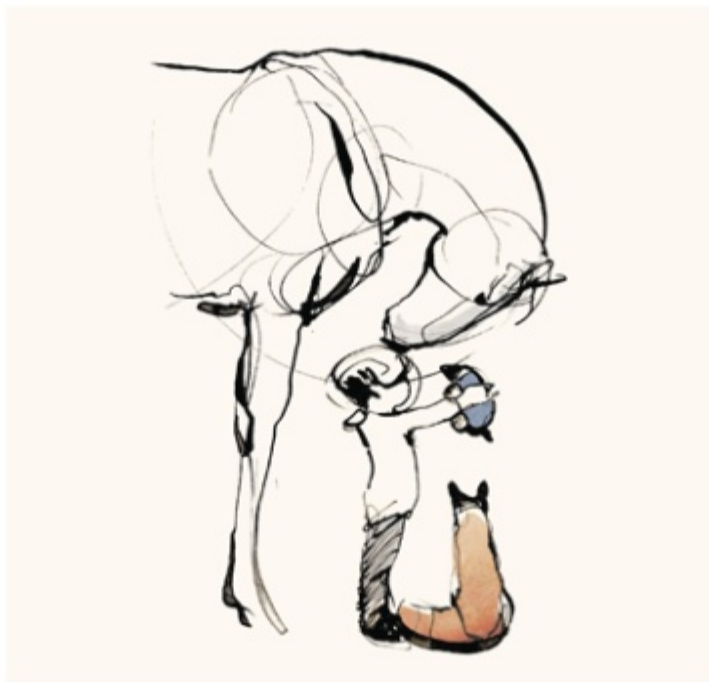


## Unit Five

# Humans and Environment



Sketch: Charlie Mackesy

**After we have studied the unit, we will be able to**

- understand the relationship between human beings and nature
- sympathise with the different species living on planet earth
- read and understand texts
- ask and answer questions
- write the main ideas in our own words



## Lesson 1: The Little Bird

**Key phrases:** bird-catching net, basping for breath, it was dead, caged bird, let it go, picture books

**A. Look at the sketch and discuss with your classmates what you see in it.**



**B. Read the story by Leo Tolstoy and answer the questions that follow:**

It was Seryozha's birthday, and he received many presents: tops, hobby-horses and picture books. But the best gift of all was from his uncle. It was a net for catching birds.

A little board was attached to a frame on which a net was stretched. Grain was sprinkled on the board, and then the net was set out in the yard. When a bird flew up and perched on the board, the board would turn over and the net would fall.

Seryozha was so happy he came running to his mother to show her his net. His mother said, "It's not a nice toy at all. What do you want with little birds? Why do you want to torment them?"

"I'll put them in cages. They'll sing, and I'll feed them." Seryozha got some grain, sprinkled it on the little board and set the net out in the garden. He stood next to it, waiting for birds to come flying down. But the birds were afraid of him and did not come near the net.

Seryozha went in to dinner and left the net in the garden.

When he came to look at it after dinner he saw that the net had fallen and a little bird was thrashing about under it. Seryozha was very excited. He caught the bird and took it into the house.

"Look, Mamma! I've caught a bird. It must be a nightingale.

Oh, how fast its heart is beating."

His mother said, "It's a siskin. Don't torment it. Let it go."

"No, I'll feed it and care for it."

Seryozha put the siskin in a cage, and for two days he fed it grain, changed its water and cleaned the cage. On the third day he forgot about the siskin and did not change its water.

Then his mother said to him, "See? You forgot all about your little bird. I think you had better let it go."

No, I won't forget. I'll give it some fresh water now and clean the cage."

Seryozha stuck his hand into the cage and began cleaning it, but the siskin became frightened and beat its wings against the cage. Seryozha cleaned the cage out and went for water.

His mother saw that he had forgotten to close the little door and called after him, "Close the cage door, Seryozha, or your bird might fly out and hurt itself."

No sooner had she said this than the siskin found the door, spread its wings happily and flew across the room to the window. But it did not see the glass pane. It hit the pane and fell to the windowsill.

Seryozha came running, picked up the little bird and took it back to the cage. The siskin was alive, but it lay on its breast with its little wings spread out and was breathing jerkily.

Seryozha began to cry.

"Mamma! What'll I do?"

"There's nothing you can do now."

Seryozha did not leave the room that day. He kept gazing at the siskin. The siskin lay on its breast as before, breathing jerkily.

When Seryozha went to bed that night the siskin was still alive.

Seryozha could not fall asleep for a long while. No sooner would he close his eyes than he would imagine the siskin lying there, gasping for breath.

When Seryozha went up to the cage the next morning he saw the siskin lying on its back with its legs curled up. It was dead.  
Never again did Seryozha catch another bird.



**C. Match the words in Column A with their meanings in Column**

Column A (Difficult Words)	Column B (Meanings)
1. Nightingale	A. A ledge below a window
2. Siskin	B. Breathing with difficulty
3. Thrashing	C. To cause distress or suffering
4. Torment	D. A small bird known for its song
5. Perched	E. Moving violently or wildly
6. Jerkily	F. A sheet of glass in a window
7. Pane	G. A small songbird related to finches
8. Windowsill	H. Sitting or resting on something high
9. Gasping	I. Moving in sudden, sharp motions

**D. True or false? If false, write the correct statement.**

- Seryozha's mother was happy with the bird-catching net.
- Seryozha caught a siskin using the net.
- Seryozha forgot to feed the bird on the second day.
- The siskin flew into the window after escaping from the cage.
- Seryozha's mother helped him catch the bird.
- Seryozha never tried to catch another bird after the siskin died.



**E. Answer the following questions:**

1. What did Seryozha receive as a gift from his uncle?
2. Why did Seryozha's mother not like the idea of catching birds?
3. What kind of bird did Seryozha catch in the net?
4. How did Seryozha take care of the bird at first?
5. If you were in Seryozha's place, what would you have done differently after catching the siskin?

**F. Make a list of birds in your locality and categorise which are wild and which are domestic?**

## Lesson 2: Poems about Nature

**A. Look at the image and discuss in groups the possible answers to the questions:**

1. What could be the colours of the field, the trees and birds?
2. Where are the birds going?

**B. Now read the poem by Rachel Field and answer the questions that follow:**

**Something Told the Wild Geese**

Something told the wild geese  
It was time to go.  
Though the fields lay golden  
Something whispered, — "snow".

Leaves were green and stirring,  
Berries, lustre-glossed,  
But beneath warm feathers  
Something cautioned, — "frost".

All the sagging orchards  
Steamed with amber spice,  
But each wild breast stiffened  
At remembered ice.

Something told the wild geese  
It was time to fly —  
Summer sun was on their wings,  
Winter in their cry.

**Note**

Lustre-glossed – Shiny and smooth.

Cautioned – Gave a warning.

Sagging – Hanging down or sinking.

Amber – A warm, yellow-brown colour.

Stiffened – Became hard or tense.

Steamed – Gave off steam or mist.

**C. Answer the following questions:**

1. What makes the geese decide to leave?
2. What happens to the leaves and berries in the poem?
3. What changes in nature tell us that winter is near?

**D. Read another poem on nature****Green Escape**

--Joseph Auslander

I have turned my face  
Away from streets and crowds  
To a windy place  
And clouds.

I have turned from skyscrapers  
That scratch out the sky,  
From wet newspapers  
Always whipping by.

I have taken away my heart,  
I will give it again  
To be split apart  
By wind and rain.

I will stand like a stone  
All day in the grass  
Where the bees drone  
And pass and repass.

I will watch them brush  
Gold across their legs,  
Hear the bird at hush  
Over her eggs.

I will hear the wild swan  
Lift high and harsh  
His crooked clarion  
Across the marsh.

Where the jewel-weed hangs,  
Where the spotted stream runs,  
Where the green beetle bangs  
Bronze on bronze—

Rooted in the deep ground,  
The sky tugging at my hair,  
There will I be found—  
There!

**Note**

Skyscrapers – Very tall buildings.

Whipping – Moving quickly or being blown around by the wind.

Drone – A continuous, low humming sound, like bees make.

Repass – To pass by again.

Clarion – A loud, clear sound, like a trumpet.

Marsh – Wet, grassy land, often near water.

Jewel-weed – A type of plant with bright orange or yellow flowers.

Rooted – Fixed firmly in place, like a plant in the ground.

Tugging – Pulling something with effort.

**C. Answer the following questions:**

1. Why does the speaker turn away from the streets and crowds?
2. What does the speaker hear and see in the grass?
3. How does the speaker describe the sound of the swan?
4. Where does the speaker want to be found at the end of the poem?

**Lesson 3: Dancing Bears****A. Read the story by Spencer Holst and answer the following questions:****Brilliant Silence**

Two Alaskan Kodiak bears joined a small circus where the pair appeared in a nightly parade pulling a covered wagon. The two were taught to somersault, to spin, to stand on their heads, and to dance on their hind legs, paw in paw, stepping in unison. Under a spotlight the dancing bears, a male and a female, soon became favourites of the crowd. The circus went south on a West Coast tour through Canada to California and on down into Mexico, through Panama into South America,



down the Andes the length of Chile to those southernmost isles of Tierra del Fuego. There a jaguar jumped a juggler, and afterwards, mortally mauled the animal trainer; and the shocked show people disbanded in dismay and horror. In the confusion the bears went their own way. Without a master, they wandered off



by themselves into the wilderness on those densely wooded, wildly windy, subantarctic islands. Utterly away from people, on an out-of-the-way uninhabited island, and in a climate they found ideal, the bears mated, thrived, multiplied, and after a number of generations populated the entire island. Indeed, after some years, descendants of the two moved out onto half a dozen adjacent islands; and seventy years later, when scientists finally found and enthusiastically studied the bears, it was discovered that all of them, to a bear, were performing splendid circus tricks.

On nights when the sky is bright and the moon is full, they gather to dance. They gather the cubs and the juveniles in a circle around them. They gather out of the wind at the center of a sparkling, circular crater left by a meteorite which had fallen in a bed of chalk. Its glassy walls are chalk white, its flat floor is covered with white gravel, and it is well-drained, and dry. No vegetation grows within. When the moon rises above it, the light reflecting off the walls fills the crater with a pool of moonlight, so that it is twice as bright on the crater floor as anywhere else in that vicinity. Scientists speculate that originally the full moon had reminded the two bears of the circus spotlight, and for that reason they danced. Yet, it might be asked, what music do the descendants dance to? Paw in paw, stepping in unison what music can they possibly hear inside their heads as they dance under the full moon and the Aurora Australis, as they dance in brilliant silence?

## Note

Kodiak: A type of bear that comes from Kodiak Island in Alaska.

Somersault: A movement where someone or something rolls over completely in the air or on the ground.

Unison: Doing something at the same time as others.

Jaguar: A large wild cat found mainly in South America.

Mauled: Attacked and injured badly by a person or animal

Subantarctic: Areas close to but just north of Antarctica

Adjacent: Next to or very close to something..

Speculate: To guess or make an assumption about something.

Aurora Australis: A natural light display in the sky near the South Pole.

Meteorite: A piece of rock or metal from space that lands on Earth.

Crater: A bowl-shaped hole in the ground caused by something like a meteorite.

Vicinity: The area around a particular place.

**C. Complete the sentences with clues given:**

Aurora    Australis,    travelled,    remote,    trained,    mated,    shiny,  
attacked,    deep hollow,    shock,    pool.

- a) The bears were \_\_\_\_\_ to perform circus tricks.
- b) The circus \_\_\_\_\_ south on a West Coast tour.
- c) A jaguar \_\_\_\_\_ a juggler.
- d) The showpeople disbanded in \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) The bears wandered off into the \_\_\_\_\_ islands.
- f) They \_\_\_\_\_ and multiplied on the island.
- g) The meteorite left a \_\_\_\_\_ on the island.
- h) The bears danced in a \_\_\_\_\_ crater.
- i) The light from the moon filled the crater with a \_\_\_\_\_ of moonlight.
- j) They danced under the moon and the \_\_\_\_\_.

**D. Choose the best answer.**

- 1. What was the primary attraction of the two Kodiak bears in the circus?
  - a) Their ability to speak
  - b) Their size and strength
  - c) Their dancing and circus tricks
  - d) Their hunting skills
- 2. Where did the circus travel after leaving Canada?
  - a) Europe
  - b) South America
  - c) Alaska
  - d) Asia
- 3. What happened to the circus after the jaguar attacked?
  - a) The circus became more popular
  - b) The showpeople disbanded in fear
  - c) The bears were rescued by locals
  - d) The animal trainer survived and continued
- 4. After being separated from the circus, where did the bears wander?
  - a) Into a nearby town
  - b) Into the rainforest
  - c) Into subantarctic islands
  - d) Into the circus tent
- 5. Why did the bears thrive on the uninhabited island?
  - a) They were provided food by local people
  - b) They found an ideal climate and environment
  - c) They returned to the circus regularly
  - d) They learned to fish from local animals

6. **How long after the circus incident did scientists discover the bears again?**
  - a) 20 years
  - b) 50 years
  - c) 70 years
  - d) 100 years
7. **What unusual discovery did scientists make about the descendants of the original bears?**
  - a) They had become smaller in size
  - b) They performed circus tricks naturally
  - c) They had developed new hunting techniques
  - d) They had become nocturnal
8. **Where do the bears gather to dance on nights with a full moon?**
  - a) On the shore by the ocean
  - b) In the forest near their dens
  - c) In a crater left by a meteorite
  - d) On a mountain peak
9. **What feature makes the crater where the bears dance unique?**
  - a) It is covered with trees and flowers
  - b) Its walls are chalk white and reflective
  - c) It is filled with water and fish
  - d) It is surrounded by glaciers
10. **What do scientists speculate reminds the bears of their circus days?**
  - a) The sound of the wind
  - b) The presence of other animals
  - c) The full moon, which resembles the spotlight
  - d) The shape of the island

## Lesson 4: The Farming Teacher

**A. Talk about the picture and answer the questions:**



- 1) What do you see in the picture?
- 2) Do you think that the children are enjoying what they are doing? Tell why.
- 3) Do you think it is important to learn how to farm? Explain.



**B. Read the text by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi and answer the following questions**

"This is your teacher today. He's going to show you all sorts of things." With that the headmaster introduced a new teacher. Totto-chan took a good look at him. In the first place, he wasn't dressed like a teacher at all. He wore a short striped cotton work jacket over his undershirt, and instead of a necktie, he had a towel hanging around his neck. As for his trousers, they were of indigo-dyed cotton with narrow legs, and were full of patches. Instead of shoes, he wore workmen's thick two-toed, rubber-soled socks, while on his head was a rather dilapidated straw hat.

The children were all assembled by the pond at Kuhonbutsu Temple.

As she stared at the teacher, Totto-chan thought she had seen him before. "Where!" she wondered. His kindly face was sun burnt and full of wrinkles. Even the slender pipe dangling from a black cord around his waist that served as a belt looked familiar. She suddenly remembered!

"Aren't you the farmer who works in the field by the stream!" she asked him, delighted.

"That's right," said the "teacher, with a toothy smile, wrinkling up his face. "You pass my place ev'ry time you go fer yer walks to Kuhonbutsu! That's my field. That one over there full o' mustard blossoms."

"Wow! So you're going to be our teacher today, cried the children excitedly.

"Naw!" said the man, waving his hand in front of his face. "I ain't no teacher! I'm just a farmer. Your headmaster just asked me to do it, that's all."

"Oh yes, he is. He's your farming teacher," said the headmaster, standing beside him. "He very kindly agreed to teach you how to plant a field. It's like having a baker teach you how to make bread. Now then," he said to the farmer, "tell the children what to do, and let's get started."

At an ordinary elementary school, anyone who taught the children anything would probably have to have teaching qualifications, but Mr. Kobayashi didn't worry about things like that. He thought it important for children to learn by actually seeing things done.

"Let's begin then," said the farming teacher.

The place where they were assembled was besides the Kuhonbutsu pond and it was a particularly quiet section--a pleasant place, where the pond was shaded by trees. The headmaster had already had part of a railroad car put there for storing the children's farming implements, such as spades and hoes. The half-car had a peaceful look, neatly placed as it was right in the middle of the plot they were going to cultivate.



The farming teacher told the children to spades and hoes from the car and started them on weeding. He told them all about weeds: how hardy they were; how some grew faster than crops and hid the sun from them; how weeds were good hiding places for bad insects; and how weeds could be a nuisance by taking all the nourishment from the soil. He taught them one thing after another. And while he talked, his hands never stopped pulling out weeds. The children did the same. Then the teacher showed them how to hoe; how to make furrows; how to spread fertilizer; and everything else you had to do to grow things in a field, explaining as he demonstrated.

A little snake put its head out and very nearly bit the hand of Ta-chan, one of the older boys, but the farming teacher reassured him, "The snakes here ain't poisonous, and they won't hurt you if you don't hurt them."

Besides teaching the children how to plant a field, the farming teacher told them interesting things about insects, birds, and butterflies, about the weather, and about all sorts of other things. His strong gnarled hands seemed to attest that everything he told the children, he had found out himself through experience.

The children were dripping with perspiration when they had finally finished planting the field with the teacher's help. Except for a few furrows that were a bit uneven, it was an impeccable field, whichever way you looked at it.

From that day onward, the children held that farmer in high esteem, and whenever they saw him, even at a distance, they would cry, "There's our farming teacher!" Whenever he had any fertilizer left he would bring it over and spread it on the children's field, and their crops grew well. Every day someone would visit the field and report to the head-master and the other children on how it was doing. The children learned to know the wonder and the joy of seeing the seeds they had planted themselves sprout. And whenever two or three of them were gathered together, talk would turn to the progress of their field.

Terrible things were beginning to happen in various parts of the world. But as the children discussed their tiny field - they were still enfolded in the very heart of peace.

**Note:**

Dilapidated – In a state of disrepair or ruin due to age or neglect.

Furrows – Long, narrow trenches made in the ground for planting seeds.

Implements – Tools or equipment used for a specific purpose.

Nuisance – Something or someone causing inconvenience or annoyance.

Perspiration – The process of sweating.

Esteem – Respect and admiration, often for someone or something.

Attest – Provide evidence or proof of something.

Gnarled – Rough and twisted, often due to age or hard work (usually describing hands or trees).

Impeccable – Flawless or without any mistakes.

**B. True or false? If false, write the correct statement.**

1. The headmaster introduced the new teacher as someone who would teach the children to farm.
2. The new teacher was wearing formal attire, including a necktie and dress shoes.
3. The teacher was recognized by Totto-chan as a farmer she had seen before.
4. The children were assembled in a classroom to begin their lesson.
5. The farming teacher reassured Totto-chan that the snakes around the area were not poisonous.
6. The teacher used both hands and words to explain how to plant the field.
7. The children planted the field with the farming teacher's help, but it was messy and uneven.
8. Despite the terrible things happening in the world, the children felt a sense of peace while working on their field.

**C. Answer the questions below:**

1. Who introduced the new teacher to the children?
2. What did the new teacher wear instead of shoes?
3. What were the children going to learn from the farming teacher?
4. How did the farming teacher reassure Totto-chan about the snake?
5. What did the children feel when they saw the seeds they planted start to

**D. Have you worked in a crop field before? Share your experience with your friends in the class.**

## Lesson 5: We Lost Our Home

**A. Look at the image and discuss in groups the possible answers to the questions.**



- 1) What do you see in this picture?
- 2) Do you think this lake is natural? Explain.
- 3) What are things that you know about Kaptai Lake situated in Rangamati, Bangladesh?

Hakkonchandra village was situated to the east of Kaptai dam, in the Rangamati district of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). A family in that village who belonged to the Boro Hambe clan had a son who was an ivory craftsman and was later recognized and appreciated as one of the very first craftsmen among the Jumma population in the CHT region. His niece is the mother whose story is given here.

It is difficult to say exactly when she was born, but she thinks she is over eighty years old now. She is my grandmother and one of the eyewitnesses of the discussed episode in the history of CHT. Her family was relatively affluent. She had six siblings—three brothers and three sisters. Their family was well-respected in the neighborhood since their father was a schoolteacher. Sushama Chakma was not acquainted with paucity and poverty in the early years of her life. When the northern parts of CHT were submerged permanently due to Kaptai dam, not just the Chakma population but some Hajong, Marma and Adi-Bangali residents who had lived for long among us also lost all their possessions. The wealthiest families became displaced people. They had to constantly move from one place to the other. About 50,000 Chakma, Hajong, and Tripuri people had to leave the country and migrate permanently.

Like many others, she lost a secure life and her homeland with her relatives. Her husband had to leave his public service to live like a refugee. Her only possessions were memories of better times and the determination to survive. While moving from one location to another for resettlement in the reserve forest, they spent countless sleepless nights thinking about their uncertain future. Despite the constant struggle to find happiness in pain, the sun never shone for her family.

(This excerpt is taken from The Bangladesh Environmental Humanities Reader)  
Forma-8, English For Today Class-8



**B. Match the words in Column A with their correct meanings in Column B.**

Column A	Column B
1. Affluent	A. To leave one's country permanently
2. Paucity	B. A feeling of uncertainty or anxiety
3. Displaced	C. Wealthy or having an abundance
4. Refugee	D. A lack of something, scarcity
5. Permanent	E. Forced to leave one's home
6. Resettlement	F. Lasting or intended to last forever
7. Possessions	G. A process of establishing a new residence
8. Migration	H. Items owned or held by someone
9. Struggle	I. A difficult fight or effort
10. Uncertain	J. To move from one place to another

**C. Complete the paragraph by the clues given below.**

**flee, resettlement, east, refugee, flooded, ivory**

Hakkonchandra village, located \_\_\_\_\_ of the Kaptai Dam in the Rangamati district, was home to a family from the Boro Hambe clan. Their son became a renowned \_\_\_\_\_ craftsman among the Jumma community. His niece, Sushama Chakma, my grandmother, is now over eighty and witnessed significant historical events. Her family was prosperous, with six siblings, thanks to their father's work as a schoolteacher. However, when the Kaptai Dam \_\_\_\_\_ northern CHT, many, including Chakma and Hajong people, lost everything. About 50,000 individuals had to \_\_\_\_\_ to India, including Sushama, who lost her stable life. Her husband became a \_\_\_\_\_, and all they had were memories and a will to survive. They endured sleepless nights during their \_\_\_\_\_ in the forest, struggling with an uncertain future, and happiness eluded them.

**D. Answer to the following questions.**

1. How many siblings did Sushama Chakma have?
2. What happened to the land when the Kaptai Dam was built?
3. What did Sushama and her family lose after they had to move?

**E. Find out if anyone from your family have visited the Kaptai Lake in Rangamati? If so, listen to their experience and share it with the class.**