

# Hornbill



11072

Textbook in English for Class XI  
(Core Course)



## PLEDGE

India is my country.  
All Indians are my brothers and sisters.  
I love my country and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage.  
I shall always strive to be worthy of it.  
I shall respect my parents, teachers and all my elders and treat everyone with courtesy.  
I pledge my devotion to my country and its people.  
My happiness lies in their well-being and prosperity.

રાજ્ય સરકારની વિનામૂલ્યે યોજના હેઠળનું પુસ્તક



રાષ્ટ્રીય શैક્ષિક અનુસંધાન ઔર પ્રશિક્ષણ પરિષદ  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING



Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks  
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## Co-ordination

Dr. Krishna Dave  
(Academic Secretary)

## **Preparation and Planning**

Dr. Kamlesh N. Parmar  
(Dy. Director : Academic)

## Layout and Planning

Shri Manish H. Badheka  
(Dy. Director : Production)

## Distribution-Planning

Shri Harshad H. Chaudhary  
(Dy. Director : Administration-  
Distribution)

Preface

With a view to carrying out 'Equal Curriculum Policy' Gujarat State Government and Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training took a combined initiative decision to implement the textbooks of NCERT, New Delhi in Gujarat as per the Resolution No. MSHBH/1217/1036/CHH dated : 25/10/2017. This textbook of **English** published by NCERT is being implemented in **class XI** state wide.

NCERT has prepared the revised textbook of English for **class XI** in the year 2023. The same textbook has been printed by Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks without making any change or amendments. Constructive suggestions for the enhancements of quality of this textbook are always welcomed.

The Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks thanks NCERT officials for their kind co-operation and academic support.

Vinaygiri Gosai Dr. Vinod Ramchandra Rao

## Director

Executive President

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## Foreword

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

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

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

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

*Director*

New Delhi  
20 December 2005

National Council of Educational  
Research and Training

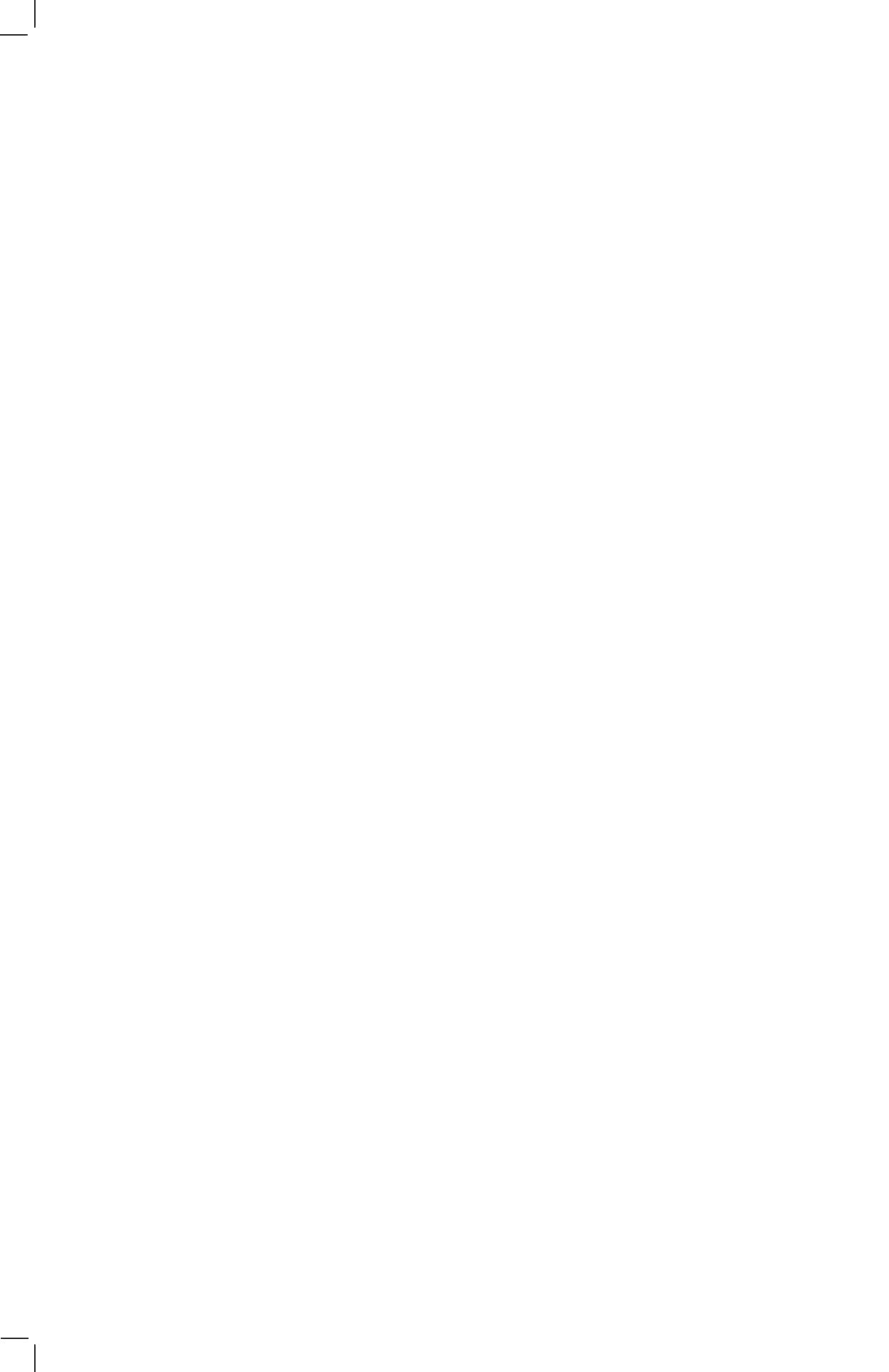
## **Rationalisation of Content in the Textbooks**

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to reduce content load on students. The National Education Policy 2020, also emphasises reducing the content load and providing opportunities for experiential learning with creative mindset. In this background, the NCERT has undertaken the exercise to rationalise the textbooks across all classes. Learning Outcomes already developed by the NCERT across classes have been taken into consideration in this exercise.

**Contents of the textbooks have been rationalised in view of the following:**

- Content based on genres of literature in the textbooks and supplementary readers at different stages of school education
- Content that is meant for achieving Learning Outcomes for developing language proficiency and is accessible at different stages
- For reducing the curriculum load and examination stress in view of the prevailing condition of Pandemic
- Content, which is easily accessible to students without much interventions from teachers and can be learned by children through self-learning or peer-learning
- Content, which is irrelevant in the present context

**This present edition, is a reformatted version after carrying out the changes given above.**



## About the Book

THIS textbook for Class XI is based on the English syllabus on the lines suggested by the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. It aims to help learners develop proficiency in English by using language as an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition.

In the Reading Skills section, the texts have been chosen to mirror the kind of serious reading in real life that a school-leaver should be capable of. The prose pieces are drawn from biographies, travelogues, science fiction, art and contemporary expository prose by writers from different parts of the world. Samples from journalistic writing have also been included. The play, placed centrally in the textbook, is on a theme that learners will particularly identify with and is in a lighter vein. The poems relate to universal sentiments and appeal to contemporary sensibilities.

Learners at this stage bring along with them a rich resource of world-view, knowledge and cognitive strategies. Teachers should encourage them to make educated guesses at what they read and help them initially to make sense of the language of the text and subsequently become autonomous readers. The Notes after every Unit help the teacher and learners with strategies for dealing with the particular piece.

The activities suggested draw upon the learners' multilingual experiences and capacities. Comprehension is addressed at two levels: one of the text itself and the other of how the text relates to the learners' experience. The vocabulary exercises will sensitise learners to make informed choices of words, while the points of grammar highlighted will help them notice the use of forms. The 'Things to Do' section at the end of every unit invites learners to look for other sources of information that will help them deal with learning tasks across the curriculum.

The section on Writing Skills prepares them for the kind of independent writing that a school-leaver will need to engage in for academic as well as real-life purposes. Help has been provided in a step-by-step manner to lead the learners on to make notes, summarise, draft letters and write short essays, paying attention to the form, content and the process of writing.

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA**

## **PREAMBLE**

**WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA**, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a **[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

**JUSTICE**, social, economic and political;

**LIBERTY** of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

**EQUALITY** of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

**FRATERNITY** assuring the dignity of the individual and the **[unity and integrity of the Nation];**

**IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY** this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)



# **Textbook Development Committee**

## **CHAIRPERSON, ADVISORY GROUP FOR TEXTBOOKS IN LANGUAGES**

Professor Namwar Singh, formerly *Chairman*, School of Languages,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

## **CHIEF ADVISOR**

R. Amritavalli, *Professor*, English and Foreign Languages University  
(EFLU), Hyderabad

## **CHIEF COORDINATOR**

Ram Janma Sharma, Former *Professor* and *Head*, Department of  
Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi

## **MEMBERS**

Indu Khetarpal, *Principal*, Salwan Public School, Gurgaon

Malathy Krishnan, *Reader*, EFLU, Hyderabad

Nasiruddin Khan, *Reader* (Retd.), NCERT, New Delhi

Rashmi Mishra, *PGT (English)*, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya,  
P.O. Kalamati, Sambalpur

## **MEMBER-COORDINATOR**

Meenakshi Khar, *Assistant Professor of English*, Department of  
Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi

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# Reading Skills

The Portrait of a Lady

*A Photograph*

“We’re Not Afraid to Die... if We  
Can All Be Together”

Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues

*The Laburnum Top*

*The Voice of the Rain*

The Ailing Planet: the Green  
Movement’s Role

*Childhood*

The Adventure

Silk Road

*Father to Son*

*Effective reading is receiving from others  
their ideas and feelings.*

Effective reading involves

- ❖ understanding the text
- ❖ talking about the text
- ❖ thinking about language
- ❖ working with words
- ❖ noticing form and patterns.



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# 1. The Portrait of a Lady

*Khushwant Singh*

**Notice these expressions in the text.**

**Infer their meaning from the context.**

- ❖ the thought was almost revolting
- ❖ an expanse of pure white serenity
- ❖ a turning-point
- ❖ accepted her seclusion with resignation
- ❖ a veritable bedlam of chirrupings
- ❖ frivolous rebukes
- ❖ the sagging skins of the dilapidated drum

My grandmother, like everybody's grandmother, was an old woman. She had been old and wrinkled for the twenty years that I had known her. People said that she had once been young and pretty and had even had a husband, but that was hard to believe. My grandfather's portrait hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing room. He wore a big turban and loose-fitting clothes. His long, white beard covered the best part of his chest and he looked at least a hundred years old. He did not look the sort of person who would have a wife or children. He looked as if he could only have lots and lots of grandchildren. As for my grandmother being young and pretty, **the thought was almost revolting**. She often told us of the games she used to play as a child. That seemed quite absurd and undignified on her part and we treated it like the fables of the Prophets she used to tell us.

She had always been short and fat and slightly bent. Her face was a criss-cross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere. No, we were certain she had always been as we had

known her. Old, so terribly old that she could not have grown older, and had stayed at the same age for twenty years. She could never have been pretty; but she was always beautiful. She hobbled about the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved in inaudible prayer. Yes, she was beautiful. She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, **an expanse of pure white serenity** breathing peace and contentment.

My grandmother and I were good friends. My parents left me with her when they went to live in the city and we were constantly together. She used to wake me up in the morning and get me ready for school. She said her morning prayer in a monotonous sing-song while she bathed and dressed me in the hope that I would listen and get to know it by heart; I listened because I loved her voice but never bothered to learn it. Then she would fetch my wooden slate which she had already washed and plastered with yellow chalk, a tiny earthen ink-pot and a red pen, tie them all in a bundle and hand it to me. After a breakfast of a thick, stale chapatti with a little butter and sugar spread on it, we went to school. She carried several stale chapattis with her for the village dogs.

My grandmother always went to school with me because the school was attached to the temple. The priest taught us the alphabet and the morning prayer. While the children sat in rows on either side of the verandah singing the alphabet or the prayer in a chorus, my grandmother sat inside reading the scriptures. When we had both finished, we would walk back together. This time the village dogs would meet us at the temple door. They followed us to our home growling and fighting with each other for the chapattis we threw to them.

When my parents were comfortably settled in the city, they sent for us. That was **a turning-point** in our friendship. Although we shared the same room, my grandmother no longer came to school with me. I used to go to an English school in a motor bus. There were no dogs in the streets and she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of our city house.

As the years rolled by we saw less of each other. For some time she continued to wake me up and get me ready for school. When I came back she would ask me what the teacher had

taught me. I would tell her English words and little things of western science and learning, the law of gravity, Archimedes' Principle, the world being round, etc. This made her unhappy. She could not help me with my lessons. She did not believe in the things they taught at the English school and was distressed that there was no teaching about God and the scriptures. One day I announced that we were being given music lessons. She was very disturbed. To her music had lewd associations. It was the monopoly of harlots and beggars and not meant for gentlefolk. She said nothing but her silence meant disapproval. She rarely talked to me after that.

When I went up to University, I was given a room of my own. The common link of friendship was snapped. My grandmother **accepted her seclusion with resignation**. She rarely left her spinning-wheel to talk to anyone. From sunrise to sunset she sat by her wheel spinning and reciting prayers. Only in the afternoon she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her creating **a veritable bedlam of chirrupings**. Some came and perched on her legs, others on her shoulders. Some even sat on her head. She smiled but never shooed them away. It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her.

When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell. But my grandmother could. She was not even sentimental. She came to leave me at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion. Her lips moved in prayer, her mind was lost in prayer. Her fingers were busy telling the beads of her rosary. Silently she kissed my forehead, and when I left I cherished the moist imprint as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between us.

But that was not so. After five years I came back home and was met by her at the station. She did not look a day older. She still had no time for words, and while she clasped me in her arms I could hear her reciting her prayers. Even on the first day of my arrival, her happiest moments were with her sparrows whom she fed longer and with **frivolous rebukes**.

In the evening a change came over her. She did not pray. She collected the women of the neighbourhood, got an old drum and started to sing. For several hours she thumped **the sagging**

**skins of the dilapidated drum** and sang of the home-coming of warriors. We had to persuade her to stop to avoid overstraining. That was the first time since I had known her that she did not pray.

The next morning she was taken ill. It was a mild fever and the doctor told us that it would go. But my grandmother thought differently. She told us that her end was near. She said that, since only a few hours before the close of the last chapter of her life she had omitted to pray, she was not going to waste any more time talking to us.

We protested. But she ignored our protests. She lay peacefully in bed praying and telling her beads. Even before we could suspect, her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers. A peaceful pallor spread on her face and we knew that she was dead.

We lifted her off the bed and, as is customary, laid her on the ground and covered her with a red shroud. After a few hours of mourning we left her alone to make arrangements for her funeral. In the evening we went to her room with a crude stretcher to take her to be cremated. The sun was setting and had lit her room and verandah with a blaze of golden light. We stopped half-way in the courtyard. All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. There was no chirruping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother's corpse off, they flew away quietly. Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin.

## Understanding the text ■

Mention

1. The three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad.
2. Three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school.

3. Three ways in which the author's grandmother spent her days after he grew up.
4. The odd way in which the author's grandmother behaved just before she died.
5. The way in which the sparrows expressed their sorrow when the author's grandmother died.

## Talking about the text

Talk to your partner about the following.

1. The author's grandmother was a religious person. What are the different ways in which we come to know this?
2. Describe the changing relationship between the author and his grandmother. Did their feelings for each other change?
3. Would you agree that the author's grandmother was a person strong in character? If yes, give instances that show this.
4. Have you known someone like the author's grandmother? Do you feel the same sense of loss with regard to someone whom you have loved and lost?

## Thinking about language

1. Which language do you think the author and his grandmother used while talking to each other?
2. Which language do you use to talk to elderly relatives in your family?
3. How would you say 'a dilapidated drum' in your language?
4. Can you think of a song or a poem in your language that talks of homecoming?

## Working with words

- I. Notice the following uses of the word 'tell' in the text.
  1. Her fingers were busy *telling the beads* of her rosary.
  2. I would *tell her* English words and little things of Western science and learning.
  3. At her age *one could never tell*.
  4. She *told us* that her end was near.

Given below are four different senses of the word ‘tell’. Match the meanings to the uses listed above.

1. make something known to someone in spoken or written words
  2. count while reciting
  3. be sure
  4. give information to somebody
- II. Notice the different senses of the word ‘take’.
1. to *take to* something: to begin to do something as a habit
  2. to *take ill*: to suddenly become ill
- Locate these phrases in the text and notice the way they are used.
- III. The word ‘hobble’ means to walk with difficulty because the legs and feet are in bad condition.

Tick the words in the box below that also refer to a manner of walking.

haggle	shuffle	stride	ride	waddle
wriggle	paddle	swagger	trudge	slog

## Noticing form

Notice the form of the verbs italicised in these sentences.

1. My grandmother was an old woman. She *had been* old and wrinkled for the twenty years that I *had known* her. People said that she *had* once *been* young and pretty and *had* even *had* a husband, but that was hard to believe.
2. When we both *had finished* we would walk back together.
3. When I came back she would ask me what the teacher *had taught* me.
4. It was the first time since I *had known* her that she did not pray.
5. The sun was setting and *had lit* her room and verandah with a golden light.

These are examples of the past perfect forms of verbs. When we recount things in the distant past we use this form.