

POORVI

Textbook of English for Grade 8



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NCERT

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FOREWORD

The National Education Policy 2020 envisages a system of education in the country that is rooted in Indian ethos and its civilisational accomplishments in all domains of human endeavour and knowledge, while at the same time preparing students to constructively engage with the prospects and challenges of the twenty-first century. The basis for this aspirational vision has been well laid out by the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 across curricular areas at all stages. Having nurtured students' inherent abilities, touching upon all the five planes of human existence, the *pañchakośas* in the Foundational and the Preparatory Stages have paved the way for the progression of their learning further at the Middle Stage. Thus, the Middle Stage acts as a bridge between the Preparatory and the Secondary Stages, spanning three years from Grade 6 to Grade 8.

The NCF-SE 2023, at the Middle Stage, aims to equip students with the skills that are needed to grow as they advance in lives. It endeavours to enhance their analytical, descriptive, and narrative capabilities, and to prepare them for the challenges and opportunities that await them. A diverse curriculum, covering nine subjects in three languages—including at least two languages native to India—Science, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Art Education, Physical Education and Well-being, and Vocational Education promotes their holistic development.

Such a transformative learning culture requires certain essential conditions. One of them is to have appropriate textbooks in different curricular areas as these textbooks will play a central role in mediating between content and pedagogy—a role that will strike a judicious balance between direct instruction and opportunities for exploration and inquiry. Among the other conditions, classroom arrangement and teacher preparation are crucial to establish conceptual connections both within and across curricular areas.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training, on its part, is committed to providing students with such high-quality textbooks. Various Curricular Area Groups, which have been constituted for this purpose, comprising notable subject-experts, pedagogues, and practising teachers as their members, have made all possible efforts to develop such textbooks. *Poorvi*, the English language textbook for Grade 8 is one of these. Its content comprises stories, poems, and narratives that ensure a reflection of their social, cultural, and geographical landscapes wherein students are sure to find traces of their lived experiences.

Poorvi also weaves into its contents snippets from the vast treasure-trove of Indian Knowledge Systems, India's artistic and cultural heritage, and embeds values alongside ecological sensitivity, gender equality, digital skills, etc. For all practical purposes, it has, to my mind, succeeded in its Curricular Goals: first, to foster natural curiosity among students through a proper selection of content, and second, develop among them the core competencies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing by intelligently designing various activities around them, thereby seamlessly integrating vocabulary and grammar within meaningful contexts.

However, in addition to this textbook, students at this stage should also be encouraged to explore various other learning resources. School libraries play a crucial role in making such resources available. Besides, the role of parents and teachers will also be invaluable in guiding and encouraging students to do so.

With this, I express my gratitude to all those who have been involved in the development of this textbook, and hope that it will meet the expectations of all stakeholders. At the same time, I also invite suggestions and feedback from all its users for further improvement in the coming years.

New Delhi
May 2025

DINESH PRASAD SAKLANI
Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

ABOUT THE BOOK

Poorvi, textbook of English for Grade 8, has been developed in alignment with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023. Language education is essential for effective communication, aesthetic expression, and appreciation. Reasoning and critical thinking are closely linked with language use, and these are valuable capacities to be developed. Language development plays an important role in the development of perceptual and practical concepts, and also enables us to check our experiences with others to ensure that we have a shared meaning emerging from these experiences. The textual material developed for the Middle Stage will take children well beyond the Preparatory Stage.

Curricular Goals, competencies, and learning outcomes have been the guiding principles in developing the textbook. The Curricular Goals (CG) cover a range of competencies. The NCF-SE 2023 has stated the following Curricular Goals:

- CG-1: Develops independent reading, comprehension, and summarising skills of a variety of texts (stories, poems, extracts of plays, essays, articles, and news reports).
- CG-2: Attains the ability to write about thoughts, feelings, and experiences of social events.
- CG-3: Develops the capacity for effective communication using language skills for questioning, describing, analysing, and responding.
- CG-4: Explores different literary devices and forms of literature.
- CG-5: Develops the ability to recognise basic linguistic aspects (word and sentence structure) and use them in oral and written expression.
- CG-6: Develops an appreciation of the distinctive features of the language, including its alphabet and script, sounds, rhymes, puns, and other wordplays and games unique to the language (pp. 245–246).

The Curricular Goals have been covered through a variety of themes and an array of activities. There are five thematic units that comprise stories, poems, conversations, and narrative and descriptive pieces. Themes, such as wit and wisdom, values and dispositions, mystery and magic, environment, and science and curiosity have been included. Cross-cutting themes, such as Indian Knowledge Systems, values, heritage, gender sensitivity, and inclusion have been integrated into all the units. Each unit has three literary pieces—story, poem, and conversation, or non-fictional writing. There are in-text questions, ‘Let us discuss’ to assess comprehension of the text. The end-of-the-text questions given in ‘Let us think and reflect’ are designed to encourage critical thinking, reasoning, responding, analysing, and more.

Unit 1—‘Wit and Wisdom’ celebrates intelligence, humour, and critical thinking. ‘The Wit that Won Hearts’ introduces students to the kingdom of Krishnadeva Raya and legendary courtier Tenali Rama known for his wit and problem-solving skills. The poem, ‘A Concrete Example’ by Reginald Arkell highlights irony and satire in everyday situations. A rock garden may be a thing of beauty for someone, and it may not catch the attention of someone else. The play, ‘Wisdom Paves the Way’ presents a thought-provoking scenario where different perspectives lead to unique solutions. It appreciates the role of wisdom, reasoning, and critical thinking in resolving conflicts.

Unit 2—‘Values and Dispositions’ emphasises that true strength lies in courage, kindness, and responsibility. ‘A Tale of Valour: Major Somnath Sharma and The Battle of Badgam’ teaches students the values of courage, duty, and patriotism, showing how selflessness and commitment to one’s country can make a lasting impact. The poem, ‘Somebody’s Mother’ by Mary Dow Brine, focuses on values of kindness, empathy, and the importance of helping others. It teaches that small acts of kindness can bring great comfort to those in need. ‘Verghese Kurien – I Too Had a Dream’ encourages young people to not only pursue personal success but also contribute to the greater good of the society, reinforcing the value of serving one’s community with honesty and perseverance.

Unit 3—‘Mystery and Magic’ highlights the power of intelligence, the wonders of creativity and the breathtaking marvels of nature. ‘The Case of the Fifth Word’ by Donald J. Sobol emphasises that keen attention to detail and critical thinking can help uncover hidden truths and solve mysteries. The poem, ‘The Magic Brush of Dreams’, revolves around creativity, kindness, and the power of art. The poem teaches that talent should be used for good, emphasising generosity and the impact of imagination in shaping the world. ‘Spectacular Wonders’, explores India’s unique and mysterious natural wonders, highlighting the enigmatic charm that each place unfolds.

Unit 4—‘Environment’ encourages students to nurture a bond with nature and express gratitude for the bountiful gifts it offers. ‘The Cherry Tree’ by Ruskin Bond is a story that emphasises the importance of nurturing and the rewards of perseverance. It also teaches us to appreciate the small miracles of life and value our deep connection with nature. The poem, ‘Harvest Hymn’ by Sarojini Naidu, reflects the hardwork of farmers and their deep faith in the land and the divine forces. It signifies the harmony between humans and nature, portraying the harvest as a sacred and joyous occasion. ‘Waiting for the Rain’, by Kamakshi Balasubramanian, is a story that captures the vagaries of nature, and its impact on farming. It also highlights the wisdom in understanding the natural cycle of renewal and balance.

Unit 5—‘Science and Curiosity’ sparks curiosity about the wonders of science, technology, and discovery. ‘Feathered Friend’ by Arthur C. Clarke explores companionship beyond human relationships through the story of a bird in space. The poem, ‘Magnifying Glass’ by Walter de la Mare, encourages students to explore perception and mystery. ‘Bibha Chowdhuri: The Beam of Light that Lit the Path for Women in Indian Science’ highlights renowned scientists and their contributions, promoting discussions on scientific advancements.

These literary pieces serve not only as sources of entertainment but also as repositories of valuable life lessons, fostering personal growth, and equipping children with skills to navigate social situations with confidence. By resonating with children’s daily experiences, the selected pieces promote positive values such as resilience, empathy, and emotional intelligence, thereby exerting a profound impact on their overall development.

The primary focus lies in cultivating competencies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing while concurrently developing vocabulary and grammar in context. Language learning truly comes to life when connected to the immediate environment of learners, allowing them to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences through experiential learning. All the activities are conveniently colour coded under headings, such as ‘Let us discuss’, ‘Let us think and reflect’, ‘Let us learn’, ‘Let us listen’, ‘Let us speak’, ‘Let us write’, and ‘Let us explore’. ‘Let us Explore’ extends learning beyond the text, staying within the unit’s theme. It aims to connect students with the Indian Knowledge System, fostering an appreciation for our rich heritage and culture, encouraging students to delve deeper, engage in meaningful discussions, and broaden their understanding. In-text activities and exercises at the end of each chapter are thoughtfully designed to be engaging, fostering joyful learning experiences while serving as tools for assessment and learning. Illustrations have been carefully crafted to depict the relevant context and enhance comprehension.

We sincerely hope that students will enjoy doing these activities, and develop language competencies.

KIRTI KAPUR
Professor of English, and
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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹**[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 ²[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)

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Constitution of India

Part IV A (Article 51 A)

Fundamental Duties

It shall be the duty of every citizen of India —

- (a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
- (b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
- (c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
- (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;
- (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
- (j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement;
- *(k) who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

Note: The Article 51A containing Fundamental Duties was inserted by the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 (with effect from 3 January 1977).

*(k) was inserted by the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 (with effect from 1 April 2010).

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CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part III (Articles 12 – 35)

(Subject to certain conditions, some exceptions
and reasonable restrictions)

guarantees these

Fundamental Rights

Right to Equality

- before law and equal protection of laws;
- irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth;
- of opportunity in public employment;
- by abolition of untouchability and titles.

Right to Freedom

- of expression, assembly, association, movement, residence and profession;
- of certain protections in respect of conviction for offences;
- of protection of life and personal liberty;
- of free and compulsory education for children between the age of six and fourteen years;
- of protection against arrest and detention in certain cases.

Right against Exploitation

- for prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour;
- for prohibition of employment of children in hazardous jobs.

Right to Freedom of Religion

- freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion;
- freedom to manage religious affairs;
- freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion;
- freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions wholly maintained by the State.

Cultural and Educational Rights

- for protection of interests of minorities to conserve their language, script and culture;
- for minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Right to Constitutional Remedies

- by issuance of directions or orders or writs by the Supreme Court and High Courts for enforcement of these Fundamental Rights.



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Poorvi

The textbook of English for Grade 8 is titled *Poorvi* after the Indian *rāga* 'Poorvi'. This *rāga* is said to promote harmony and serenity. It is associated with dusk, specifically sunset time (*Sandhi Prakash*). Each *rāga* in Indian music carries its own emotional significance and is symbolically connected to certain seasons, times of day, and moods. *Rāgas* are believed to evoke specific emotions in listeners.

Poorvi is an ancient and traditional Hindustani classical *rāga* that originated in eastern India. It is typically performed during the fourth *prahar* of the day, between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. It evokes a sense of calmness and contemplation in the journey of learners, symbolising a harmonious blend of traditional and modern learning.





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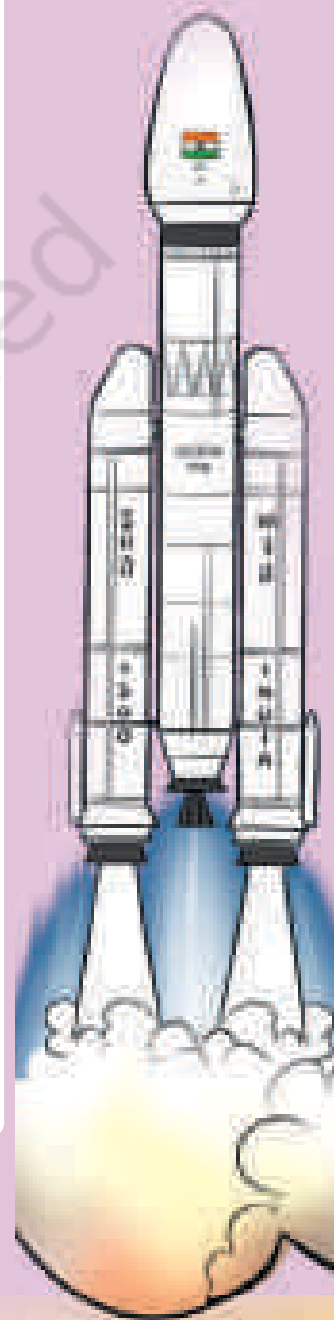
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Gandhiji's Talisman

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test:

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

M.K. Gandhi

