Theme: Family
Sub themes:
   Child Rights
   Understanding the problems of parentless children
   Values imparted by family
Learning outcomes:
The learner will be able to:
• read, comprehend and analyse a text critically.
• read and appreciate poems.
• read individually for information and pleasure.
• identify the theme, analyse the characters and write about them.
• comprehend words in a given context and use them appropriately.
• find out meanings of unfamiliar words with the help of a dictionary and use them in sentences.
• use vocabulary effectively in appropriate contexts.
• identify and list down poetic devices like imagery, rhyme, rhythm and tone of a poem.
• prepare a critical appreciation of the poem.
• construct discourses like review of the story, description, review, character sketch, letter to the editor, etc.
• prepare and publish a school magazine.
• use phrasal verbs in appropriate contexts.
• identify and use verb phrases in given contexts.
• use appropriate tense forms in suitable contexts.
• identify and frame affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences.

Introduction
As the title suggests, this unit focuses on the various shades of life. The society comprises of people from various walks of life, with different tastes, interests, attitudes, viewpoints, etc. Hence they respond to life and its challenges in different ways. The unit also addresses the importance of family
### Unit Frame

**Unit 1: Hues of Life**

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<th>Discourses/Activities</th>
<th>Language Elements</th>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>Short story</td>
<td>Word cards</td>
<td>read, comprehend and analyse a text critically.</td>
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<td><strong>Sub themes</strong></td>
<td>Poems</td>
<td>Use of tenses</td>
<td>read and appreciate poems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Child Rights</td>
<td>Character sketch</td>
<td>Kinds of sentences</td>
<td>read individually for information and pleasure.</td>
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<td>• Understanding the problems of parentless children</td>
<td>Story maps</td>
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<td>identify the theme, analyse the characters and write about them.</td>
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<td>• Values imparted by family</td>
<td>Story analysis</td>
<td>Elements of verb phrases</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Narratives</td>
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<td>find out meanings of unfamiliar words with the help of a dictionary and use them in sentences.</td>
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<td>Letter to the editor</td>
<td></td>
<td>use vocabulary effectively in appropriate contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of a poem</td>
<td></td>
<td>identify and list down poetic devices like imagery, rhyme, rhythm and tone of a poem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Time: 30 periods**

- identify and frame affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences
and family values in the evolution of an individual. The first text Vanka by
Anton Chekhov is a short story that highlights the idea that family ties are
the most important fabric of our lives. The family keeps us rooted to what we
believe in. Depicted also, is the innocence, the longing for a family and
the unrealistic promises made by the desperate. The protagonist, Vanka, is
an unhappy nine year old orphan who is apprenticed to a shoemaker. The boy
has only one wish, that is, to return to
his village, to his granddad. The Snake
and the Mirror by Vaikom Muhammed
Basheer is a humorous account of the
lonely life of a doctor and the incidents
that ensue when he encounters a snake
in his room. The protagonist’s reaction
is in sharp contrast to Vanka’s reaction
to the challenge that he has to face. The
poems in this unit are The Girl’s Garden
by Robert Frost and Mother to Son by
Langston Hughes. Robert Frost’s poem,
A Girl’s Garden tells the story of a girl
who asks her father for some land of her
own, to grow her own garden. The
poem extols all she went through for
her little plot, and how much it taught
her of life. Mother to Son by Langston
Hughes is a monologue that conveys
the idea of hope through simple
imagery. The speaker, a mother, tells
her son that though her life has had
many challenges, she has continued to
move forward, never giving up. She
uses imagery to advise her son to do
likewise.

Let’s begin

Titular Picture

The titular picture shows the different
‘faces’ of life. Man is a social being and
his interaction within his family and
society determines his attitude towards
life. Life has many shades to it and no
two individuals are alike. Interact with
the learners. The following questions
may be used.

- What do you see in the picture?
- What do the faces represent?
- What does the title ‘Hues of Life’ signify?
- Do you think all people react to
life’s problems in the same manner?
- How are their reactions different?
What makes them react differently?
- What role does family play in an
individual’s life?

Elicit free responses.

Let them give their personal opinions.

Consolidate the discussion by
highlighting the many hues of life we
see around us. Individuals differ and
their attitude towards life also differs.
Family plays an important role in a
person’s life. Family helps him to look
at life in a more positive and broader
perspective.

Now, lead the learners to the entry
activity through a simple game of
miming.

- Divide the class into groups.
• Provide each group with strips of paper (3/4 for each group) in which certain situations that we see in our daily lives are written.

For e.g.

1. A little girl helping an old woman to cross the road.
2. A master ill-treating a servant etc.

Each group can come forward and mime the situation written on the strip of paper given to them. The other groups try to identify the situation or quality showcased. Here, a few simple questions may be asked to elicit the required answer from the learners.

For e.g.:

• What is the situation presented?
• Can you identify the quality displayed by the characters?
• Which human value can you identify from this situation?

Write the elicited responses on the board.

Display the quotation by Mahatma Gandhi on the blackboard.

The learners may identify the drops of dirt that makes humanity impure from the qualities enlisted on the board.

Let the learners introspect and come up with at least one deed they have done or received that made a positive contribution to the society.

Use the questions in the textbook to sensitise the learners on the issues of child labour and the condition of children employed in child labour. Use newspaper clippings or video clippings to show how children of war-torn countries and poor countries are denied education and their rights.

Let them read the citation given by the Norwegian Nobel Committee to the two Nobel Laureates who shared the Nobel Peace Prize for the year 2014. The learners may share their ideas on how the two laureates proved that humanity exists on earth.

Highlight the point that age is not a factor in doing one’s bit for humanity.

Lead the learners to the short story *Vanka* by Anton Chekhov.

**About the author**

Anton Chekhov is a major Russian playwright and master of the modern short story. He is a literary artist of laconic precision who probed below the surface of life. He lay bare to the readers the secret motives of his characters. The highlight of Chekhov’s stories is that it lacks complex plots. Instead, he concentrates on the trivialities which create a special kind of atmosphere, which may, at times, seem haunting or lyrical. He is regarded as the outstanding representative of the late 19th century Russian realist school.

**About the story**

‘Come to me dear Grandad… I beg you for Christ’s sake take me away from here.’ This woeful cry of the nine year old orphan boy Vanka, sums up the story of his life. Written in 1886, the
story is set in Moscow, Russia. Vanka, a peasant boy was sent away from his village and apprenticed to the cruel shoemaker Alyakhin who constantly abuses and underfeeds him. The unhappy and abused Vanka longs for his life in the village with his grandfather Konstantin Makarich, his only living kinsman. The story focuses on his memories and his efforts to reclaim his past life. On Christmas eve, a time for redemption, the forlorn child sits down to write a letter to his dear old grandfather pleading with him to take him away. He writes, ‘I have no father and no mummy and you are all I have left’.

The dismal life of young Vanka represent the universal plight of orphans and the way they were treated by society then. ‘...and yesterday I had such a hiding. The master took me by the hair and dragged me out into the yard and beat me with the stirrup-strap...’ laments Vanka in his letter. Chekhov presents a time when poverty, slavery and unemployment prevailed. Life was a tale of untold miseries as Vanka puts it, ‘I have a miserable life worse than a dog...’ In fact it could be the social problems that forced the grandfather to send his grandson away. The story also shows the innocence of children who long for a family. All he has is the simple, happy times he spent with his grandfather. At the age of nine most children are spending their time playing with their friends, going to school, and having fun living their lives. All that Vanka has are memories of a loving family. Born out of these memories is a hope of living a better life in the company of his grandfather in the village. Very innocently he makes a lot of unrealistic promises to his grandfather. Little does he know that his grandfather is also a victim of the social system. Reminiscent memories of better days, vivid images of his grandfather, the dogs, and life in the village help him to fall asleep with an intense feeling of hope. The letter is simply addressed ‘To Konstantin Makarich’. The readers are left to wonder whether his cry for freedom will reach its objective. The emotional build up and the longing rests in the relationship that Vanka has with his grandfather. It is portrayed poignantly with memories that the two had with one another. Vanka reminisces of simple, but fond memories that are meant to be cherished. Being away from the warmth of his family and among the coldness of people who surround him causes the longing to grow up and this emotion is poured throughout the letter.

The style of Chekhov is simple, elegant and effective. The story shifts to and from the third person narrative to epistolary passages in the first person. Keeping to the age of Vanka the letter is overcrowded with ideas, fears, promises and hopes.
Anton Chekhov’s Vanka has inspired film makers too. The national award winning Malayalam film *Ottal* directed by Jayaraj was inspired by the story of Vanka. This film tells the story of a young boy and his relationship with his grandfather, his only living relative in the world. Vallyappachaayi, also called ‘Thaaravu Mappila’ and Kuttapayi are the two pivotal characters here and *Ottal* shows us the deep bond, love, friendship and the relationship that the old man share with the boy. As a flashback story, the film show the hardships and cruelty that the boy suffer later on but not on a detailed level and is conveying a strong message against child labour. The movie set in the scenic splendour of Kuttanad, also narrates how the boy, destined to work in a fireworks factory away from his dear ones, missed his childhood. ‘The film tries to present a handful of colourful visuals and thoughts regarding childhood’, the director said. He added that it was shocking to know that child labour was still a major concern and his film was a tribute to those who sacrifice their life in brick kilns and fire work factories. The film has won many awards both at the national and international levels.

The teacher is at liberty to break up the lesson into meaningful segments for effective transaction in class. Similarly, the teacher may adopt reading strategies that are suitable based on the potential of the learners and the learning environment in the class. Given here are only a few suggested strategies.

The lesson has been divided into four segments.

**Process**

**Part 1**

Before reading the teacher may draw the attention of the learners to the picture given on Page 11.

Let the learners predict what the story would be from the title, picture and the discussion.

- Ask the learners to close their text books.
- The teacher may now narrate the first two paragraphs of the story.
- Stop where the boy begins his letter.
- Based on their listening, the learners may complete the table given in groups.
- Let the groups present what they have understood in the form of a short narrative.

For e.g. The story is about a nine year old boy Vanka who has been apprenticed to a shoemaker. One Christmas Eve, when all others have gone to the church the boy sits down to write a letter to his grandfather. He seems to be extremely scared and worried, glancing anxiously at the door.

Let the groups predict what Vanka
would write in his letter. Draw the attention of the learners to the mental state of Vanka. You may ask the following questions.

- Why is the boy glancing anxiously at the door?
- Who is he writing to?
- What kind of relationship do you think he shares with his grandfather?
- What would be his thoughts as he is writing the letter?

**Part 2**

Let the learners discuss how they have interacted with elderly people.

Learners randomly speak out and the teacher writes the describing words on the blackboard.

Now, the teacher divides the learners into groups of 4 or 5 members.

- The handout given below is distributed among the groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An elderly man</th>
<th>My grandfather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical features</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old, weak, lean, grey haired, wrinkled etc.,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving, understanding, caring, jolly, cheerful,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>His activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking in the garden, chatting with other people of his age, helping grandchildren in their studies, talking about his past memories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the cues given to describe the elderly man the teacher asks the learners to complete the table.

Now, the teacher may ask them what they think about Vanka’s grandfather. Let them attempt to write a short description of him. Here, the student may find it difficult to put his/her ideas into words. It is at this point that they feel the need to read the paragraphs.

- Ask them to read paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 and find out how Vanka’s grandfather is.

**Reading Process**

- Let the learners read the above mentioned paragraphs individually.
- Let them sit in groups and share what they have understood.
- If a group finds it difficult to understand any particular portion, they may be encouraged to raise their doubts.
- The doubts may be discussed with other groups or the teacher may scaffold them by asking simple questions.

- Learners work in groups. They may fill a web diagram showing the qualities of Vanka’s grandfather. The teacher can draw a web diagram on the blackboard for this purpose.
Let the learners attempt the scaffolding questions 2 to 5 individually.

The teacher poses the questions, one by one, to the learners randomly.

Elicit the answers they have written.

Fix upon the most suitable answer.

Part 3

Now, lead the learners to paragraphs 6 to 9.

Let them read the paragraphs individually and complete Activity 2 in Let’s Revisit.

Follow the reading process given above.

Possible Answers to Activity 2

Alyakhin – The master took me by the hair and dragged me out into the yard and beat me with the stirrup-strap because by mistake I went to sleep while rocking their baby.

Master beats him with the first thing he finds.

One day the master hit me over the head with a last and I fell down.

The Mistress - ...she picked up the herring and rubbed my face with the head.

They give me bread in the morning and gruel for dinner and in the evening bread again, but I never get tea or cabbage soup.

Other apprentices – Make fun of me, they send me to the tavern for vodka and make me steal the master’s cucumbers.

Sit in groups and share what they have read. Discuss their doubts with other groups.

If necessary, scaffold their doubts by asking simple questions.

Now, the learners can go back to the presentation they made after the first two paragraphs of the story. Let them continue writing the narrative.

Random presentation in the class.

Let the learners attempt the scaffolding questions 6 to 10.

Discuss the answer in groups and present their findings. Fix upon the most suitable answer.

Let them attempt Activity 3 in Let’s revisit.

Learners may fill a table like the one given below. Teacher may draw the table on the board or provide handouts to the learners. Read the second part once again, identify the expressions that describe the village and Moscow and fill in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 3

Moscow is a big town. There are many gentlemen’s houses, lots of horses and no sheep. The dogs are not a bit fierce. The boys in Moscow, unlike the boys in the village don’t go about with the star at Christmas. The children are not allowed to sing in the church. There are so many shops in Moscow selling a variety of items, from fishing hooks to fish and even guns. The butcher’s shops also sell grouse and wood cock and hares.

Part 4

Let the learners predict what would happen to Vanka. Ask probing questions.

- Will Vanka complete the letter before the shoemaker returns?
- Do you think his grandfather will come to take him away?
- Why was Vanka sent to the shoemaker’s house at this tender age?
- Do you know of anyone in your neighbourhood who has to stay away from his parents in this manner?

Let the learners respond freely. Channelise the discussion to focus upon the issue of child rights and child labour.

Unit 1 - Hues of Life

What is their opinion about child labour?

Now, let them read paragraphs 10 – 15 of the lesson. Follow the process given in the earlier sections. Lead them to the scaffolding questions. Attempt the questions individually. The teacher poses the questions to the learners. Fix upon the most suitable answer.

Lead them to the narrative that they have written after the first two parts. Let the learners complete their narrative. Random presentation by groups.

Possible answers to the scaffolding questions:

1. Protagonist - Vanka Zhukov, Place – Alyakhin, the shoemaker’s house, Time – Christmas eve, Family – Grandad Konstantin Makarich, Mental state – sad and depressed, His actions – takes a bottle of ink and a pen from the cupboard, spreads out a crumpled sheet of paper and starts writing a letter.

2. Eel had a black coat and long weasel-like body. He was wonderfully respectful and insinuating. He turned the same appealing glance on friends and strangers alike, but he inspired confidence in no one. His docility was a cloak for the most Jesuitical spite and malice. He was extremely mischievous.

3. Yes. The setting shifts to the village of Konstantin Makarich.

4. Grandfather was a cheerful person who spent time fooling with the servants. He was either pinching a maid
or offering his snuffbox to women who would sneeze after taking a pinch. Then he would break out into jolly laughter on seeing them and comment, ‘Good for frozen noses’.

5. Dark night, smoke rising from the chimneys, trees silver with rime, the snow-drifts. The sky was sprinkled with gaily twinkling stars, and the milky way stood out as clearly as if newly scrubbed for the holiday and polished with snow.

6. Vanka led a miserable life at the shoemaker’s. He was ill-treated by the shoemaker and his wife. The other apprentices made fun of him. He was not given enough food and also had to take care of the shoemaker’s baby even at night. He couldn’t sleep properly and was punished cruelly by his master.

7. He would die if he is not taken back home by his grandfather. Life at the shoemaker’s had become miserable and unbearable.

8. He did not have boots and was afraid of the frost.

9. This statement reveals the irony of the situation. The boy works with the shoemaker but he is not provided with even the essentials to overcome the winter.

10. He promises to grind snuff for his grandfather, pray for him, go as a shepherd boy, clean his boots. He also promises to look after him when he grows up, won’t let anyone hurt him, and pray for grandfather’s soul when he dies.

11. Vanka cherishes the happy times that he spent with his granddad during Christmas. They would go together to get a Christmas tree for the gentry. He recollects with fondness how he chuckled, following the chuckle of the grandfather, the laughter of his grandfather on seeing Vanka shivering and a hare leaping over a snow-drift, swift as an arrow.

12. Miss Olga Ignatyevna, was Vanka’s favourite. She exhibited love and consideration for Vanka. She used to give him sweets, taught him to read, write and count to a hundred and dance to a quadrille.

13. When Pelageya his mother died, the orphaned Vanka was sent down to the back kitchen to his grandfather, and from there to Moscow.

14. The shoemaker and his wife treated him cruelly. They beat him all the time and he was not given proper food to eat that he remained hungry all the time.

15. Learners may respond freely. Let them justify their answer.

16. He dreamt of a stove. On the stove-ledge sat his grandfather, his bare feet dangling, reading the letter to the cooks.

17. Let the learners respond freely. They may justify their answer suitably.
Let’s Revisit

Activity 1

Vanka has very vivid and colourful memories of his Grandfather. According to him, Konstantin Makarich, his granddad, is a lively and agile person who has a smiling face and eyes bleary with drink. Vanka has very sweet memories of the days he spent with his grandfather in the village. He longs to get back to the village and live with his granddad who was a night watchman on the estate of Zhivarev. He could visualize his grandfather standing at the gate or stumping about in his felt boots, fooling with the servants or offering them snuff.

Let the learners respond freely. They may justify their answers suitably.

If the learners agree with Makarich’s decision to send Vanka away, they may justify themselves using the following points.

It was Makarich who had sent Vanka away, when Vanka’s mother Pelageya died. Konstantin Makarich was a night watchman at the estate of Zhivarev. Being an old man who lived in the kitchen of his master’s house he could not take on the responsibility of a young boy. He may have thought that the boy would have a better life in Moscow. Moreover, Konstantin Makarich was also a victim of the social situation that existed during those days. Poverty and slavery were common in those days.

Makarich must have been a helpless grandfather who could do nothing else but send the boy away. If No - It was Makarich who had sent Vanka away, when his mother Pelageya died. From Vanka’s memories of his grandfather we understand that he is a happy go lucky person who spends his time joking with the servants or sleeping in the kitchen. He does not seem to be a person who takes life seriously. He tries to run away from the harsh realities of life, finding comfort either by drinking or just fooling the servants. He cannot take up the responsibility of his grandchild and so sends him away to Moscow to a life of pain and sorrow. Even if life was poor in the village, at least the boy would be in the company of the only family that he had. But, Makarich is not willing to shoulder this responsibility.

(Activity 2 & 3 given along with reading process)

Activity 4

Main Characters – Vanka Zhukov, Konstantin Makarich, Alyakhkin the shoemaker.

Supporting characters – Pelageya, the shoemaker’s wife, Olga Ignatyevna.

Setting – The shoemaker’s house and the village.

Problem – Vanka Zhukov, the nine year old orphan, is forced to live a life of misery at the shoemaker Alyakhin’s house where he has been apprenticed.
He wants to get away from this dreadful life. He yearns for the happy life in the village.

Solution - He sends a letter to his grandfather in the village asking him to come and rescue him from Moscow. He writes the name of his grandfather on the envelope and posts the letter. The boy goes to sleep dreaming of a wonderful life in the village.

Activity 5

Let the learners attempt to complete the table individually. Share their answers in groups so that additions and corrections can be done. Now, let them write an analysis of the story incorporating the ideas in the table.

Let them assess what they have written using the checklist for review/analysis given below.

Refine what the learners have written.

Random presentation by groups.

Possible answers

Personality traits

Vanka – innocent, unhappy, orphan, yearns to live with his family

Grandfather – lively old man, cheerful and playful, does not take the responsibility of his grandson.

Alyakhin and his wife – cruel and selfish, ill treats the boy

Olga Ignateyvna – loving and understanding.

Theme – plight of the orphans and how they were treated, social issues like slavery, poverty, homelessness which create inequality.

Style - narrative style that shifts from first person to third person alternatively, simple language which is at times incoherent since the story is told from 9 year old Vanka’s point of view. He is not educated.

Point of view: Vanka

Conflict:

Internal Conflict

Internal conflict is concerned with the self-doubt or dilemma in the mind of the protagonist over the best way to achieve the story goal. It is the psychological struggle within the mind of the character, his emotions and impulses.

In Vanka, we see the struggle of a forlorn child who is caught between the sweet memories of his early childhood with his family and the plight of living with a heartless shoemaker. He wants to reclaim his past life. He is seen struggling to find words that will move his granddad. The big city of Moscow with its huge mansions and fast horses cannot replace the village.

External conflict

External conflict is the struggle between a character and an outside force such as another character, nature or the society.

The external conflict in Vanka is the struggle between his longing to live a
happy and carefree life with his family and the society’s cruel indifference to poor children. We see a struggle between the sweet innocence of the 9 year old orphan set against the harsh realities of poverty and slavery.

Screen the film ‘Ottal’ by Jayaraj. Let them compare the film with the story and fill the table given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vanka</th>
<th>Ottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visuals of the village and city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of the protagonist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for staying away from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with grandfather</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather’s occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather’s character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let the learners attempt a comparative review of the short story and the film focusing on the fact that despite of cultural differences, childhood innocence and family relationships are universal.

**Activity 6**

Read the story once again. Using the information from the web diagram prepared earlier and a further understanding of the text, let them attempt a character sketch of the grandfather.

**Possible answer**

Konstantin Makarich was a night watchman on the estate of Zhivarev. He was a small, lean, old man of about sixty five. He was a remarkably lively and agile man with a smiling face and eyes bleary with drink. During the daytime, he either slept in the back kitchen or sat joking with the cook and the kitchen maids. At night, he wrapped himself in a great sheepskin coat and walked round and round the estate sounding his rattle. He owned two dogs named Kashtanka and Eel. He would sometimes fool around with the servants and offer his snuffbox to the womenfolk. From Vanka’s memories of his grandfather, it appears that Konstantin Makarich is an amiable person who would rush to the rescue of his grandson when he receives the letter. But there are subtle hints in the story that it could be Makarich who sent Vanka away. Either he is a victim of the social system which handicaps him from taking care of his grandchild or he is too fun loving and frivolous a person that he was not ready to take up the responsibility of his grandchild.
Activity 7

Learners attempt to write on their own. Random presentation can be done in class. The teacher may even encourage the learners to present an alternate ending in the form of a skit.

Activity 8

Let the learners brainstorm the issue of child labour. Let them collect newspaper clippings on atrocities towards children, rights of children, problems due to lack of education, etc. Learners may be told to read from the newspaper clippings loudly. They can also narrate experiences of children in their neighbourhood engaged in child labour. Now, let the learners fill in the “W” chart given below.

- What is the issue?
- Why does this happen?
- Who is responsible?
- What are the consequences?
- What can be done to solve this issue?

Now, let them attempt to write the letter individually. Follow the features of a letter to the editor given in the appendix.

Possible Letter

The Editor
The Hindu
Ernakulam

15 June 20__

Sir,

Through the columns of your esteemed daily, I wish to voice my deep concern about children who are engaged in child labour. Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, denies them their right to education and impairs them physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.

Our country is home to many children who are forced to work in order to survive. There are many small scale industries in our neighbourhood that employ children below the age of 14. Long hours of toil in hazardous conditions snatch their childhood from these children. The eyes that should be filled with innocence, now looks up at one with misery writ large upon them. The fingers that should be turning the pages of the textbook are now numb handling crude machinery. The factory owners find cheap labour in children and the affluent class find these children as handy domestic help. What could be the reason for this injustice? Poverty, ignorance,
insecurity, large families, and the lure of an additional income for the family are all reasons why these children are forced into labour at such a young age. The government has made child labour punishable by law. The introduction of Right to Education Act makes education compulsory and free for children. In spite of all these measures taken by the Government, child labour still continues. This is because there is nobody to fight their cause.

Immediate steps must be taken by the government and other non governmental agencies to create awareness on the need for education. Stringent action must be taken against industry owners who employ children. I am sure that the readers rise to the occasion and each one will consider it their responsibility to save the future of our country.

Yours truly
Sd/
Name

Activity 9
Publishing a Class Magazine
You may follow the steps given below to publish a class magazine.

• Selection of the Editorial Board.
• Informing the class through a notice.
• Collection of materials.
• Editing
• Compilation and binding
• Publishing

The teacher selects an Editorial Board from among the students.

Editorial Board:  Student Editor
Teacher Editor
Member 1
Member 2
Member 3

• The student editor drafts a notice informing the class about the magazine and inviting articles. The notice must be displayed in the Class Notice Board.

• The teacher divides the class into groups. Each group may select a group leader.

• The topics are randomly given to the groups.

• The group leaders collect the articles and hands them over to the student editor as per the deadline mentioned in the notice.

• The articles are then sorted topic-wise.

• The student members of the editorial board go through the articles and select the best ones.

• The selected articles are now edited by the editorial board under the guidance of the teacher editor.
• Selected articles may be rewritten neatly.
• Articles are compiled and arranged in an attractive manner.
• The student editor prepares:
  ♦ Editor’s foreword
  ♦ Acknowledgement
  ♦ Content
• Learners may design a front cover and back cover.
• Give a suitable title for the magazine.
• Decide on the mode of presentation
  ♦ Manuscript
  ♦ Digital
  ♦ Print
Release the magazine in the school assembly.

Let’s learn more about words

Activity 1

Process
Divide the class into groups. Allot the words to the groups in such a way that each group gets a minimum of three words. Let the groups refer to a dictionary and prepare word cards like the one given in the text. The word cards can be displayed on the class bulletin board, one on each day. They may further select more words from the lessons and prepare similar word cards.

Activity 2

Process
Let the learners refer to a dictionary and find out more phrasal verbs using ‘put’.

Ask them to write sentences of their own using these phrasal verbs. To ensure that the learners have understood the meaning of the phrasal verbs, the teacher can conduct a short quiz. Sentences in which one word is underlined are written on strips of paper and kept in a bowl. One learner from each bench picks up a strip of paper. He or she will write, on the board, the sentence substituting the underlined word with a phrasal verb.

Possible answers to textual activities

Put off - to postpone, leave until a later time
The match was put off due to heavy rains.

Put up with - to tolerate
I can’t put up with him anymore. He’s driving me crazy.

Put down - to insult
One should try not to put others down publicly.

Put across - to communicate something
I was trying to put across my point of view.

Put out - to publish
They put out a newsletter every Friday which is very interesting.

Put back - to put something where it was previously
Please, put back the book if you have finished reading it.

Activity 3

Assign it as an individual activity.
Verify the answers in a pair group.
Provide help only if necessary.

a. distinctly
b. flickered
c. remarkably
d. adept
e. bleary
f. docility
g. insinuating
h. imploring
i. glorious

Let’s find out how language elements work

Activity 1

Process

• Divide the class into 2 groups.
• Let the learners revisit the story.
• The first group picks out the sentences describing the past life.
• The second group identifies the sentences describing the present life.
• Let each group read out the sentences they have identified one by one alternatively.
• When the first group reads out the sentence the members of the second group identifies the verb in it.
• The teacher can write it on the board. The same process is repeated with the second group.
• Now, all the verbs have been listed on the board in two columns.
• The teacher may draw the attention of the learners to the difference in the verb form used to denote past and present.

Possible answers

Past Present

Grandfather would give a chuckle. Miss Olga Ignatyevna used to give Vanka sweets. Vanka was sent to the back kitchen. It is killing me. I don’t get any sleep at all. They beat me all the time. I have such a miserable life. I am always hungry.

Activity 2

Process

Let the learners analyse the sentences given. Draw their attention to the punctuation marks used in the different sentences. Let the learners arrive at conclusions on the difference in the sentence given. Now, they can write two examples for the sentence types that they have identified.

Activity 3

This activity is intended to familiarize the learners with the contracted forms. Contraction (contracted forms) are short words formed from two or more words. The most common example is when we add ‘not’ to an auxiliary verb in negative sentences. But, contracted forms are by no means limited to the ones with not. Other words, such as ‘is’, ‘are’, ‘will’, are also often contracted. Contractions are mainly used in speech and informal writing. Although contracted forms may appear to be a simple language element, they
are often confusing to the learner and hence, he/she ends up using the wrong contraction. So, an interesting language game has been suggested to ensure that learners identify the correct contraction. The teacher is at liberty to improvise and use any other language game/activity to transact the concept.

**Process**

- Discuss the contracted forms in class.
- Use the questions given in the textbook for this purpose.
- Initiate the learners into the language game.

**Materials Required**

1. Flash cards
2. Smileys/emoticons
3. Chalk piece

Time taken: 10 - 15 minutes

- Teacher prepares flash cards with expressions and the contracted forms written on them.
- The flash cards are distributed randomly.
- One learner is selected to write the expression/contracted form on the blackboard.
- Ask one learner to read out the expression/contracted form he has in his flash card.
- The learner with the corresponding expression/contracted form reads out the same.

- If the expression and contracted form match, the teacher displays a smiling emoticon. But, if they do not match, then the teacher flashes a sad emoticon. The learners try once again.

- The correct expression and contracted form is written on the board by the selected learner.

- The activity may be continued till all the expressions and their contracted forms are identified.

- The learners may note down the enlisted expressions and their contracted forms in their notebooks.

**Possible answers**

1. shouldn’t
2. they’ve
3. let’s
4. couldn’t
5. who’s

**Contractions and possessive pronouns**

Contractions are often confused with possessive pronouns, because of identical pronunciation.

Look at the sentences given below. Which of them are correct?

Their sleeping in a tent today. (a)
They’re sleeping in a tent today. (b)
Has the lion lost its roar? (c)
Has the lion lost it’s roar? (d)
It’s me! (e)
Its me! (f)
The correct answers are: b, c, and e. ‘a’ and ‘e’ are contracted forms of the verb to ‘be’, c is a possessive pronoun.

The remaining sentences are incorrect because a possessive pronoun has been used instead of a contracted form, or vice versa.

The teacher may draw the attention of the learner to the above mentioned aspect of contracted forms.

**Activity 4**

This activity is intended to familiarise the learners with the affirmative and negative forms of sentences.

**Process**

Learners may read the sentences and identify the word that brings about the difference in meaning. (not).

- In order to change an affirmative sentence in the simple present tense into a negative sentence, we use ‘do not’ or ‘does not’ before the principal verb. Note that ‘do’ is used with ‘I’, ‘you’ and plural subjects. ‘Does’ is used with singular subjects.

- If the affirmative sentence contains the auxiliaries is/am/are, the negative sentence is formed by putting not after is/am/are.

- If the affirmative sentence contains the primary auxiliaries has/have, the negative sentence is formed by putting ‘do not’ or ‘does not’ before has/have.

- If the affirmative sentence contains a modal auxiliary verb (e.g. may, can, shall, will, should etc), the negative sentence is formed by putting ‘not’ after the modal auxiliary verb.

There are other words that can be used to convey a negative idea. You may refer to the textbook for more details.

Some more examples that the teacher may give in class:

1. There was scarcely any milk in the jug.
2. Nayana hardly eats anything in the morning.
3. Never have I encountered such a problem.
4. Neither group could give the right answer.

Now, the learners may attempt the activities given in the textbook individually.

**Possible answers**

**A**

1. I am not writing a letter to you.
2. The boys are not playing on the ground.
3. The students have not completed their work.
4. I did not visit my sister yesterday.
5. Amar does not want to become a pilot.
6. Some people do not drive recklessly.
B
1. Raghu is not reading a novel.
2. The woman did not carry a basket.
3. The problem was not very difficult.
4. The boy does not work hard.
5. It does not rain heavily.
6. Most of the students read textbooks at home.

Sentences may also be transformed from affirmative to negative without bringing about a change in the meaning.

Possible answers
1. The problem is not difficult. The problem is not easy.
2. Arun does not write fast. Arun is not a slow writer.
3. The water was not polluted. The water was not clean.

Activity 5
This activity familiarises the learners with the noun phrases, verb phrases and the elements of a verb phrase.

Follow the process given in the text. Let the learners identify the elements of the verb phrase individually and complete the table.

Possible answer

Let’s edit
Let the learners edit the given passage.

a. had
b. when
c. write
d. had lived
e. his
f. thinks
g. while
h. Vanka’s
i. misery
j. writes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb phrase</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Noun phrase</th>
<th>Adverbial phrase</th>
<th>Prepositional phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. played football on the ground</td>
<td>played</td>
<td>Simple past</td>
<td>football</td>
<td></td>
<td>on the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. was busy in the evening</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>Simple past</td>
<td></td>
<td>in the evening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. are dancing gracefully</td>
<td>are dancing</td>
<td>Present continuous</td>
<td></td>
<td>gracefully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. will have a party next weekend</td>
<td>will have</td>
<td>Simple future</td>
<td>a party</td>
<td>next weekend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. stores pickles in a big jar</td>
<td>stores</td>
<td>Simple present</td>
<td>pickles</td>
<td></td>
<td>in a big jar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Snake and the Mirror

About the author

Vaikom Muhammad Basheer is regarded as one of the most prominent literary figures in Indian Literature.

He was one of those outspoken figures who revolutionised Malayalam Literature, and thereby the World Literature itself with his dauntless sarcasm, satire, and black humour.

Often referred to as the Beypore Sultan (the king of Beypore) by his colleagues, he was one of the prominent figures behind the artistic, economical, and social reformation of the Kerala culture.

His novel Shabdangal (The Voices) was once banned due to its echo that cyclonised a once feudalistic society.

He is also regarded as the translators nightmare. This is mainly because of the colloquial touch he added to his writings, which ethnically speaking would lose its humor and meaning when translated to other languages.

He was the sufì among the writers and the greatest exponent of Gandhian Thought.

He was awarded with Padma Sri in 1982 for his overall contributions to the nation as a freedom fighter, writer, and as a political activist.

Language

Basheer is known for his unconventional style of language. He did not differentiate between literary language and the language spoken by the commons and did not care about the grammatical precision of his sentences. Initially, even his publishers were unappreciative his style, they edited out or modified conversations. Basheer was outraged to find his original writings transcribed into ‘standardized’ Malayalam, devoid of freshness and natural flow, and he forced them to publish the original one instead of the edited one.

Basheer’s brother Abdul Khader was a Malayalam teacher. Once while reading one of the stories, he asked Basheer, ‘where are Aakhyas and aakhyathas (related with Malayalam grammar) in this...?’. Basheer shouted at him saying that ‘I am writing in normal Malayalam, how people speak. and you don’t try to find your stupid ‘aakhya and aakhyada’ in this!’ This points out to the writing style of Basheer, without taking care of any grammar, but only in his own village language. Though he made funny remarks regarding his lack of knowledge in Malayalam, he had a thorough knowledge of Malayalam.

Basheer’s contempt for grammatical correctness is exemplified by his statement Ninte Ladukkoon Aakhyaadam! (Your ‘silly stupid’ grammar!) to his brother, who sermonizes him about the importance of grammar (Pathummayude Aadu).

Themes

An astute observer of human character, he skilfully combined humour and pathos in his works. Love, hunger and
poverty are recurring themes in his works. There is enormous variety in them – of narrative style, of presentation, of philosophical content, of social comment and commitment. His association with India’s independence struggle, the experiences during his long travels and the conditions that existed in Kerala, particularly in the neighbourhood of his home and among the Muslim community – all had a major impact on them. Politics and prison, homosexuality, all were grist to his mill. All of Basheer’s love stories have found their way into the hearts of readers; perhaps no other writer has had such an influence on the way an average Keralite looked at love. The major theme of all Basheer stories is love and humanity. In the story *Muebittu Kalikkarente Makal* (The Card Sharp’s Daughter), when Sainaba comes out of the water after stealing his bananas, Mandan Murhappa says only one thing: “Sainaba go home and dry your hair else you may fall sick.” This fine thread of humanism can be experienced in almost all his stories.

About the story

The story presents a contrast between dreams and reality. This contrast has been depicted in a humorous manner. The doctor had just started his practice. His earnings were therefore meagre. He lived in a small rented room, which was not electrified. He had only sixty rupees in his suitcase. Apart from a few shirts and dhotis, he had one solitary black coat. His house was full of rats. However, his dreams and ambitions were in contrast to this. He was a great admirer of beauty and he believed in making himself handsome. He laid great emphasis on the fact that he was unmarried and a doctor. He was too pleased with his appearance. He decided to shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look more handsome. The manner in which he decided that this decision is an ‘important’ one is quite funny. Later, he also made an ‘earth-shaking decision’ to always keep smiling in order to look more handsome. This contrast between the kind of person he was and the kind of person he wanted to be makes the story humorous.

He had thought about the kind of person he would want to marry. He wanted to marry a woman doctor who had plenty of money and a good medical practice because he did not have any of those. He wanted a fat wife so that whenever he would make a mistake his wife would not be able to catch him. However, the woman he married was a thin and slender person who could run like a sprinter. This contrast between the kind of wife he wanted and the kind of wife he ends up marrying adds to the humour of the story.

When he looked into the mirror, he was full of appreciation for his good looks.
He was a great admirer of beauty and believed in making himself look handsome. He took a close look at his face and decided that he would shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look even more handsome. Then, he looked into the mirror and smiled. He decided to keep smiling as he considered his smile very attractive. However, later when the snake was coiled around his arm, he turned into a stone. At this moment, he felt the presence of God near him. In his imagination, he tried to write ‘O God’ in bright letters. He felt pain in his left arm where the snake was coiled. He realized that if the snake struck him, then he did not even have any medicines in his room for the same. That was when he thought that he was a poor, foolish, and stupid doctor. In this way, his thoughts changed from calling himself an unmarried doctor who looked very handsome to calling himself a poor, foolish, and stupid doctor. This sequence of events also provided humour to the story.

**Process**

Lead the learners to the story. You may link the story with ‘Vanka’ using the following link talk.

**Link talk**

Vanka is a young boy who leads a miserable life laden with anxieties and worries. Though his future appears bleak, he lives in the hope of going back to his village and joining his grandfather. He lives in a world of imagination where he keeps all the pleasant memories alive despite all the unfavourable and painful situations he is in.

Blessed is an individual who has learned to smile away his pain.

Into the lonely and dull life led by a young doctor, comes a venomous and life threatening visitor – a snake. The seemingly dangerous situation of the snake coiling round the doctor’s arm gives him a shudder but his unflattering optimism combined with an unusual sense of humour helped him survive the ordeal.

Let the learners read the story individually.

Ask them to attempt the scaffolding questions.

**Possible answers**

1. The topic was related to snakes and whether anyone had ever had a snake coiled itself round the body.

2. A dangerous and poisonous cobra.

3. It was a familiar sound of something moving on the beams of the tiled roof of the house. The doctor thought it was the sound of rats running across the beams.

4. The following expressions justify the statement.
   • ‘...took a close look at my face in the mirror’
   • ‘I would shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look more handsome’.
5. The two important and earth shaking decisions that the doctor took were that he would shave daily and grow a thin moustache and he would always keep his attractive smile on his face to look more handsome.

6. No, he did not pay much attention to it as he thought that it was the familiar sound of the rats running across the beam.

7. A woman doctor who had plenty of money and a good medical practice. She had to be fat.

8. Something fell from the roof with a thud. He saw that it was a snake. The fat snake wriggled over the back of the chair and landed on his shoulder.

9. He did not jump nor did he tremble. He did not cry out also. He sat there holding his breath, like a stone image in flesh.

10. He did not have the time to react. The snake slithered along his shoulder and coiled round his left arm above the elbow. The hood was spread out and its head was hardly three or four inches from his face. He was so filled with fear that he just sat there holding his breath.

11. Rubber tube, leaden rod, human being.

12. He felt that he was stupid because, being a doctor he never thought of keeping some medicines at home in case an emergency like the one he was facing now came up.

13. The snake slithered down to the table and moved towards the mirror. That is when life returned to him and he was able to think clearly.

14. He wanted to get away from there as soon as possible. Moreover, the snake had slithered down his body. So, he wanted to have a bath to wash away all traces of the snake both from his body and mind. The snake did not harm him in anyway.

15. The thief had left behind his dirty vest. The vest was so dirty that even the thief did not feel like taking it. The doctor felt it insulting because it appeared as the thief wanted to tell the doctor that he had a better sense of cleanliness than the doctor himself.

**Let’s revisit**

**Activity 1**

**Process**

- Divide the class into three groups.
- Let the learners sit in groups. One learner from the group reads the story loudly. The learners can take turns within their group to read the story loudly.
- As they read the lesson the other members have to pick out sentences that tell about the condition of the doctor.
- The first group picks out sentences that show that the narrator was afraid of the snake. The second group picks out sentences that show that he was proud.
of his appearance and the third group picks sentences which show that he was no longer afraid of the snake.

**Possible answers**

**Was afraid of the snake**
I was turned to a stone.
I tried in my imagination to write in bright letters outside my little heart the words, 'O God'.
I sat there holding my breath.

**Was proud of his appearance**
It was an attractive smile.
I was after all a bachelor, and a doctor too on top of it.
I would shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look more handsome.

**Was no longer afraid of the snake**
I was suddenly a man of flesh and blood.

**Activity 2**

**Process**
- Let the learners remain in the same three groups.
- Each group can be assigned one aspect of the contrast.
- The learners read the story once again and pick out expressions from the story that bring out a contrast.
- Now, let them write short paragraphs on the use of contrasts.
- Each group presents what they have written.
- Editing

- Final presentation

A. (i) The kind of person the doctor is - The doctor had just started his practice. His earnings were therefore meagre. He lived in a small rented room, which was not electrified. He had only sixty rupees in his suitcase. Apart from a few shirts and dhotis, he had one solitary black coat. His house was full of rats.

(ii) The kind of person he wants to be - He was a great admirer of beauty and he believed in making himself handsome. He laid great emphasis on the fact that he was unmarried and a doctor. He was pleased with his appearance. He decided to shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look more handsome.

B. (i) The person he wants to marry - He wanted to marry a woman doctor who had plenty of money and a good medical practice. He wanted a fat wife so that whenever he would make a mistake his wife would not be able to catch him.

(ii) The person he actually marries - the woman he married was a thin and slender person who could run like a sprinter.

C. (i) His thoughts when he looks into the mirror - he was full of appreciation for his good looks and believed in making himself look handsome. He took a close look at his face and took the earth shaking decision that he would shave daily and grow a
thin moustache to look even more handsome. He also decided to keep smiling as he considered his smile very attractive.

(ii) His thoughts when the snake is coiled around his arm - He turned into a stone. At this moment, he felt the presence of God near him. In his imagination, he tried to write ‘O God’ in bright letters. He felt pain in his left arm where the snake was coiled. He realised that if the snake struck him, he did not even have any medicines in his room. He thought that he was a poor, foolish, and stupid doctor.

Activity 3

Process

Generate a discussion on the opinion of the learners about the story.

You may ask the following questions.

1. Do you have any personal experience of coming face to face with a snake?

2. Have you heard or read about similar experiences?

3. What is the general reaction of the people involved?

4. How did the doctor react?

5. Is the doctor’s reaction different or the same?

6. Do you think that the doctor’s experience is a real one?

Encourage the learners to express their opinion. Let them justify their opinion suitably.

In the light of the discussion, let the learners attempt to write a paragraph about the story giving reasons to support their answer.

A Girl's Garden

About the poet

Robert Frost was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco, where his father, William Prescott Frost Jr., and his mother, Isabelle Moodie, had moved from Pennsylvania shortly after marrying. After the death of his father from tuberculosis, he moved with his mother and sister, Jeanie, to Lawrence, Massachusetts. He became interested in reading and writing poetry during his high school years in Lawrence, enrolled at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1892, and later at Harvard University in Boston, though he never earned a formal college degree.


In 1895, Frost married Elinor Miriam White, whom he had shared valedictorian honors with in high school and who was a major inspiration for his poetry until her death in 1938. The couple moved to England in 1912, after
they tried and failed at farming in New Hampshire. It was abroad that Frost met and was influenced by such contemporary British poets as Edward Thomas, Rupert Brooke, and Robert Graves. While in England, Frost also established a friendship with the poet Ezra Pound, who helped to promote and publish his work.

By the time Frost returned to the United States in 1915, he had published two full-length collections, ‘A Boy’s Will’ and ‘North of Boston’ and his reputation was established. By the 1920s, he was the most celebrated poet in America, and with each new work—including ‘New Hampshire’, ‘A Further Range’, ‘Steeples Bush’, and ‘In the Clearing’, — his fame and honors (including four Pulitzer Prizes) increased.

Though his work is principally associated with the life and landscape of New England—and though he was a poet of traditional verse forms and metrics who remained steadfastly aloof from the poetic movements and fashions of his time—Frost is anything but merely a regional poet. The author of searching and often dark meditations on universal themes, he is a quintessentially modern poet in his adherence to language as it is actually spoken, in the psychological complexity of his portraits, and in the degree to which his work is infused with layers of ambiguity and irony.

In a 1970 review of ‘The Poetry of Robert Frost’, the poet Daniel Hoffman describes Frost’s early work as ‘the Puritan ethic turned astonishingly lyrical and enabled to say out loud the sources of its own delight in the world’, and comments on Frost’s career as the ‘American Bard’: ‘He became a national celebrity, our nearly official poet laureate, and a great performer in the tradition of that earlier master of the literary vernacular, Mark Twain.’

About Frost, President John F. Kennedy, said, ‘He has bequeathed his nation a body of imperishable verse from which Americans will forever gain joy and understanding.’

Robert Frost lived and taught for many years in Massachusetts and Vermont, and died in Boston on January 29, 1963.

About the poem

_A Girl’s Garden_ is a realisation of a little girl’s dream of planting a garden. The little girl yearns to make a garden of her own. The father finds a piece of land and asks the little girl to work all by herself on it. Accepting the challenge, she starts working earnestly in the hope of growing the garden of her dreams. The father in fact directs the girl into the path of self-discovery, teaching her the essence of living. Her encounter with the unexpected wilderness that bloomed in front of her eyes does not dishearten her. It in turn instils in her young mind a confidence to dream and make the dream come true. The alluring
wilderness that emerges in front of her eyes can be equated to the innocence of rural childhood.

Brilliant imagery and steady rhythm makes the poem a perfect example of how a story can be told effortlessly. The tone is soft and pensive expressing the calm innocence of the young girl. The garden, the reader realises is a teaching ground for the girl teaching her interesting facts of life.

**Process**

**Link talk**

The story ‘Vanka’ portrays the troubled childhood that Vanka had, burdened with restrictions owing to the fact that he was orphaned at a very young age. Whereas, in *A Girl’s Garden* the little girl enjoys the freedom and privileges of a rural childhood.

To introduce the poem in class you may initiate a discussion on gardening. You can ask the following questions.

- What do you do with the saplings and seeds you get from your school?
- Where do you plant them?
- Who helps you with the gardening?
- Do you water the plants every day?
- How do you take care of them?
- What do you feel when you see the saplings grow?

Now, let them watch the video of *A Girl’s Garden* in the music composed by Randell Thompson.

Let the learners read the poem individually.

They may sit in groups and share what they have understood.

Now, ask the scaffolding questions given alongside the poem.

The groups may present their answers. If there are questions which the learners find difficult to answer, the teacher may help by asking probing questions and channelise their thoughts in the required direction.

**Possible answers**

1. A young lady who tells the poet about a childlike thing she had done.

2. The expression suggests that her request was a very innocent one.

3. She asked her father to give her a garden plot to plant, tend and reap by herself. He readily agreed to give her the 'idle bit of walled off ground where a shop had stood'.

4. No. He wanted her to make the farm all by herself.

5. The father knew that working on the farm would make his daughter physically strong. It would give strength to her otherwise thin arms.

6. She wheeled the dung in a wheel barrow along a stretch of road to her farm. But, whenever she saw anyone she left her not nice load and hid. She planted one of each seed in her farm and begged them to grow.
7. The garden would not be good enough unless she plowed with her arm. She does not mind ploughing with her hands.

8. She does not have a professional or organized approach. She just plants one seed each of different plants haphazardly in her garden.

9. ‘ran away and left her not nice load’, ‘hid from anyone passing’, ‘planted one of all things’

10. Yes. Her crop was a miscellany.

11. The woman, as a little girl had a dream of growing a garden – a hill each of potatoes, radishes, lettuce, peas, tomatoes, beets, beans, pumpkins and even fruit trees. She works earnestly and takes pride in her accomplishment even though, her crops is a miscellany. Even as an adult she takes joy in reminiscing her experiences. The father plays the role of a mentor who initiates his daughter into the life that awaits her. The villagers humour her by accepting her actions.

Lead the learners to the textual activities.

Let's revisit

Activity 1

Process

Divide the class into four groups. Each group selects one of the ideas given in the activity. Let them read the poem once again. Initiate a discussion on the theme of the poem. Share the ideas in groups. Explain the theme of the poem with reference to the ideas given. Let each group present their findings in class.

Activity 2

Visual imagery is the use of vivid or figurative language to represent objects, action or ideas.

Process

The teacher can ask the learners to pick out the imagery and find out or draw suitable pictures to match the word.

Images – farm, garden plot, tend and reap, walled –off ground, stretch of road, not nice load, etc.

Activity 3

Process

Attempt to write individually the review of the poem by finding the answers to the questions given.

Lead the learners to the poem Mother to Son by Langston Hughes.

**Mother to Son**

**About the poet**

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born on February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. His parents divorced when he was a young child, and his father moved to Mexico. He was raised by his grandmother until he was thirteen, when he moved to Lincoln, Illinois, to live with his mother and her husband, before the family eventually settled in
Cleveland, Ohio. It was in Lincoln that Hughes began writing poetry. After graduating from high school, he spent a year in Mexico followed by a year at Columbia University in New York City. During this time, he held odd jobs such as assistant cook, launderer, and busboy. He also travelled to Africa and Europe working as a seaman. In November 1924, he moved to Washington, D. C. Hughes’s first book of poetry, The Weary Blues, (Knopf, 1926) was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1926. He finished his college education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania three years later. In 1930 his first novel, Not Without Laughter, won the Harmon Gold Medal for Literature.

Hughes, who claimed Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Carl Sandburg, and Walt Whitman as his primary influences, is particularly known for his insightful, colorful portrayals of black life in America from the twenties through the sixties. He wrote novels, short stories and plays, as well as poetry, and is also known for his engagement with the world of jazz and the influence it had on his writing, as in his book-length poem ‘Montage of a Dream Deferred’. His life and work were enormously important in shaping the artistic contributions of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Unlike other notable black poets of the period—Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Countee Cullen—Hughes refused to differentiate between his personal experience and the common experience of black America. He wanted to tell the stories of his people in ways that reflected their actual culture, including both their suffering and their love of music, laughter, and language itself.

About the poem

The simple and straightforward poem ‘Mother to Son’ is structured in the form of a conversation between a mother and her son. The mother with whom life has not been kind reminds her son not to turn his back on life that awaits him. The mother reminds the boy that life is not a crystal stair. On the other hand, it has ‘tacks and splinters’ in it. The mother has tread the unsuspecting dark patches courageously. She instils in her son the strength and courage by giving examples of her own perseverance.

The poem is written in free verse and has lyrical quality. Hughes repeats the line ‘It’s still going on’ to emphasise the mother’s expectation of her son. The poem is a monologue written in the Afro-American dialect. This lends a colloquial element to the poem which best suits the theme. The poem suggests the effects of oppression on the lives of the Afro-Americans. Although the advice has a universal appeal to it, it is the African American mothers message to her son not to succumb to the tyranny of the whites. Through simple imagery Hughes conveys the idea of hope. The poetic
devices involved in the poem is the extended metaphor of life being a staircase. The central image of the poem is the ‘crystal stair’. It echoes the Biblical story of Jacob’s Ladder. The stairway may be seen as a path to freedom and liberation which was the goal of the African Americans.

**Process**

Play the audio clipping of the recitation of the poem.

Let the learners listen to it two or three times to familiarize the dialect of the poem.

Ask them to read the poem individually.

**Possible answers**

1. Mother. Yes. She addresses her son.
2. The expression suggests that life is not a crystal stair.
3. No. ‘its had tacks in it and splinters and boards torn up’.
4. ‘Bare’ suggests scant furnishings. It could mean the stark poverty that they experienced in life.
5. No. Mother repeats ‘But all the time I’ve been a climbin on’.
6. ‘turning corners’ represent moments when life takes a different turn. ‘...don’t you set down on the steps’ suggests that he should not give up even if he finds life difficult. On the other hand he has to face the challenge.
7. Dark times are the very difficult moments of life when everything seemed bleak. She did not know how to help herself.
8. She advises her son not to give up or set down on the steps even if he finds the going difficult. She wants him to learn from her perseverance.
9. The poet wishes to impart the message that one has to display steady persistence to go up the stairway of life. Don’t ever think of giving up even if the obstacles are harsh. Move on with patience and resilience.

**Let’s Revisit**

1.d, 2.b, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b, 6.c, 7.a, 8.c, 9.d, 10.b

**Activity 1**

Let the learners respond freely.

The term extended metaphor refers to a comparison between two unlike things that continue throughout a series of sentences in a paragraph or lines in a poem. It is often comprised of more than one sentence and sometimes consists of a full paragraph.

‘All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts.’

*(Shakespeare’s* *As You Like It)*

Shakespeare has remarkably compared ‘the world’ to a ‘stage’ in the extract mentioned above.
Activity 2

1. The speaker uses a ‘stair-way’ metaphor to represent her life. She first tells her son, ‘Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.’ A crystal stair represents an imaginary path of ease—the crystal makes the climb smooth and comfortable. The stair this mother has ascended has had difficulties—‘tacks’ and ‘splinters’—it did not have carpet which would also make the walk easier on the feet. And as in life, there are twists and turns, the stairway the mother has climbed has had turns. But she makes the point that she never gives up, regardless of the difficulty: ‘I’ve been a-climbin’ on.’ And she is rewarded for her effort by reaching landings and turning corners; these places on the stairway represent real achievements she has made in her vigilant struggles.

2. The vernacular language gives the impression that the woman is less educated and probably from the countryside.

I’ve been climbin’ on
Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.
Cause you finds it’s kinder hard.

3. Hughes alludes to the Biblical imagery of Jacob’s Ladder by using the extended metaphor of a staircase. In addition, the imagery of darkness and light evokes periods of uncertainty in his mother’s life, which Hughes has reclaimed as a lesson for him in his own life. The use of imagery allows the reader to understand vividly the message contained in the lines of the poem. Hughes expressed a mother’s life with struggles and obstacles and the determination to overcome them. ‘Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair’ is clearly identified through the mother’s experiences of ‘tacks’, ‘splinters’ and ‘boards torn up’. She expresses her uphill battle in life in a descriptive tone. The reader can create visual circumstances to what the mother may have endured over her lifetime. One can imagine that the ‘landin’s and corners’ are satisfying points she has reached in life. The imagery used allows the interpretation of the mother’s persistence to succeed through life by not giving up.

Activity 3

The learners may read the Malayalam poem written by Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan.

Let them work in groups and identify the thematic parallels between the two poems.

Random presentation in class.