



Unit

2

Words and Deeds



*Keep your thoughts positive
because your thoughts become your words.
Keep your words positive
because your words become your behaviour.*

- Mahatma Gandhi

About the Unit

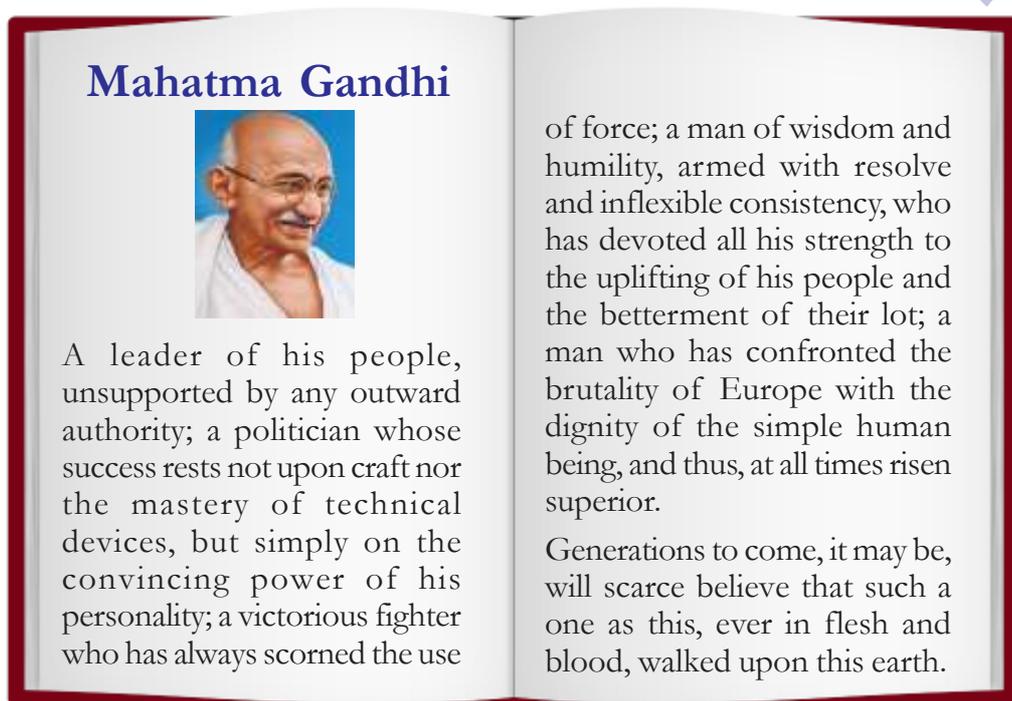
The theme of this unit is the necessity of the symbiotic relationship between words and deeds. The unit aims at inculcating the right values through a few examples. It consists of the essay 'And Then Gandhi Came' by Jawaharlal Nehru; the story 'The Price of Flowers', written by Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, and translated by Lila Ray; and the poem 'Death the Leveller', by James Shirley.

The texts and the activities are designed to help the learners imbibe the values of good citizenship. They enable them to acquire a strong linguistic foundation that will improve their application of the language in other contexts.

Let's begin:

- Deeds must be an execution of words. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, was true to his words in his deeds. His life was, in fact, his message.

In 1939, Albert Einstein wrote thus about Gandhiji, on his seventieth birthday:

**Let's discuss**

- What impression of Gandhiji do you get from the brief description given above? Discuss.
- What kind of a 'fighter' is Gandhiji?
- 'One must practise what one preaches'. How far is the statement true of Mahatma Gandhi?

I. Read and reflect:

Jawaharlal Nehru writes about the timely arrival of Gandhiji to Indian politics, when the country was in dire need of such a leadership. Gandhiji was like a beam of light that removed the darkness. Jawaharlal Nehru makes a right assessment of Gandhiji in his 'Discovery of India'. Read the excerpt.

AND THEN GANDHI CAME

Jawaharlal Nehru

....World War I ended at last, and the peace, instead of bringing us relief and progress, brought us repressive legislation and martial law in the Punjab. A bitter sense of humiliation and a passionate anger filled our people. We had become a derelict nation. Yet what could we do, how to change this vicious process? We seemed to be helpless in the grip of some all-powerful monster; our limbs were paralysed, our minds deadened. Large numbers of people, cut off from the land and incapable of any kind of manual or technical work, joined the swelling army of the unemployed, and helpless, hopeless, sank ever deeper into the morass. They did not know where to look, for neither the old nor the new offered them any hope.

- What is referred to as the 'all powerful monster'?

- What was the impact of the First World War?

What could we do? How could we pull India out of this quagmire of poverty and defeatism? Not for a few years of excitement and agony and suspense, but for long generations our people had offered their 'blood and toil, tears and sweat.' And this process had eaten its way deep into the body and soul of India, poisoning every aspect of our life....

And then Gandhi came. He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths; like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes; like a whirlwind that upset many things, but most of all the working of people's minds. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language.

- What does Nehru mean by 'And then Gandhi came'...?

'Get off the backs of these peasants and workers', he told us, 'all of you who live by their exploitation; get rid of the system that produces this poverty and misery'. Political

freedom took a new shape then and acquired a new content. Much that he said we only partially accepted or sometimes did not accept at all.

- What was the essence of Gandhiji's teaching?

But all this was secondary. The essence of his teaching was fearlessness and truth, and action allied to these, always keeping the welfare of the masses in view. The greatest gift for an individual or a nation, so we had been told in our ancient books, was *abhaya*

- What does the word 'abhaya' mean?

(fearlessness), not merely bodily courage but the absence of fear from the mind. The dominant impulse in India under British rule was that of fear – pervasive, oppressing, strangling fear; fear of the army, the police, the widespread secret service; fear of the official class; fear of laws meant to suppress and of prison; fear of the landlord's agent; fear of the moneylender; fear of unemployment and starvation, which were always on the threshold. It was against this all-pervading fear that Gandhiji's quiet and determined voice was raised: Be not afraid.

- What did Gandhiji exhort the people to do?

Was it so simple as all that? Not quite. And yet, fear builds its phantoms which are more fearsome than reality itself, and reality, when calmly analysed and its consequences willingly accepted, loses much of its terror.

So, suddenly, as it were, that black pall of fear was lifted from the people's shoulders, not wholly of course, but to an amazing degree. As fear is close companion to falsehood, so truth follows fearlessness. The Indian people did not become much more truthful than they were, nor did they change their essential nature overnight; nevertheless, a sea change was visible as the need for falsehood and furtive behaviour lessened. It was a psychological change, almost as if some expert in psycho-analytical methods had probed deep into the patient's past, found out the origins of his complexes, exposed them to his view, and thus rid him of that burden.

- What did Gandhiji do to remove fear from the minds of the people?

There was the psychological reaction also, a feeling of shame at our long submission to an alien rule that had degraded and humiliated us, and a desire to submit no longer, whatever the consequences might be. We did not grow much more truthful perhaps than we had been previously, but

- Why was Gandhiji compared to a psychologist?

Gandhi was always there as a symbol of uncompromising truth to pull us up and shame us into truth.

What is truth? I do not know for certain, and perhaps our truths are relative and absolute truth is beyond us. Different persons may and do take different views of truth, and each individual is powerfully influenced by his own background, training, and impulses. So also Gandhi. But truth is, at least for an individual, what he himself feels and knows to be true. According to this definition, I do not know of any person who holds to the truth as Gandhi does. That is a dangerous quality in a politician, for he speaks out his mind and even lets the public see its changing phases.

- What, according to Gandhiji, was truth?

Gandhi influenced millions of people in India in varying degrees. Some changed the whole texture of their lives, others were only partly affected, or the effect wore off; and yet not quite, for some part of it could not be wholly shaken off. Different people reacted differently and each will give his own answer to this question.

- How did Gandhiji influence the people of India?

His call of action was two-fold. There was, of course, the action involved in challenging and resisting foreign rule; there was also the action which led us to fight against our own social evils. Apart from the fundamental objective of the Congress – the freedom of India – and the method of peaceful action, the principal planks of the Congress were national unity, which involved the solution of the minority problems, and the raising of the depressed classes, and the ending of the curse of untouchability.

- What was the two-fold action involved in Gandhiji's exhortation?

Realizing that the main props of British rule were fear, prestige, the co-operation of the people, and certain classes whose vested interests were centred in British rule, Gandhi attacked these foundations. Titles were to be given up and though the title-holders responded to this only in small measure, the popular respect for these British-given titles disappeared. New standards and values were set up and the pomp and splendour of the viceregal court and the princes suddenly appeared supremely ridiculous. Rich men

- What was the visible change in the value system of the country?

were not so anxious to flaunt their riches; outwardly at least, many of them adopted simpler ways, and in their dress, became almost indistinguishable from humbler folk.

He sent us to the villages, and the countryside hummed with the activity of innumerable messengers of the new gospel of action. The peasant was shaken up and he began to emerge from his shell. The effect on us was different but equally far-reaching, for we saw, for the first time as it were, the villager in the intimacy of his mud-hut, and with the stark shadow of hunger always pursuing him. We learnt our Indian economics more from these visits than from books and learned discourses. The emotional experience we had already undergone was emphasized and confirmed, and henceforward, there could be no going back for us to our old life or our old standards.

What was the idea of India which he was setting out to mould according to his own wishes and ideals?

'I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony.... There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs.... Women will enjoy the same right as men.... This is the India of my dreams.' Proud of his Hindu inheritance as he was, he tried to give to Hinduism a kind of universal attire and included all religions within the fold of truth. He refused to narrow his cultural inheritance. 'Indian culture,' he wrote, 'is neither Hindu, Islamic, nor any other, wholly. It is a fusion of all.' Again he said: 'I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other peoples' houses as an interloper, a beggar, or a slave.' Influenced by modern thought currents, he never let go of his roots and clung to them tenaciously.

It is not surprising that this astonishingly vital man, full of self-confidence and an unusual kind of power, standing

- What was the influence of Gandhiji in the villages?

- What was the India of Gandhiji's dream?

- What, according to Gandhiji, was the essential culture of India?

for equality and freedom for each individual, fascinated the masses of India and attracted them like a magnet. He seemed to them to link up the past with the future and to make the dismal present appear just as a stepping-stone to that future of life and hope.... Thus he effected a vast psychological revolution not only among those who followed his lead but also among his opponents and those many neutrals who could not make up their minds what to think and what to do.

(Adapted)

(An excerpt from Jawaharlal Nehru's 'The Discovery of India')

- What was the psychological revolution that Gandhiji brought about?

Glossary:

agony (n)	: extreme physical or mental pain
derelict (adj)	: not cared for
dismal (adj)	: gloomy
flaunt (v)	: to show something you are proud of to others
furtive (adj)	: secret
interloper (n)	: intruder
monster (n)	: a creature that is very ugly and frightening
morass (n)	: a complicated situation that is difficult to escape from
phantom (n)	: frightening vision
prop (v)	: support
quagmire (n)	: a difficult and dangerous situation
repressive (adj)	: controlling people by force
strangle (v)	: to kill by pressing on the throat
threshold (n)	: door step

About the Author



Jawaharlal Nehru (14 November 1889 - 27 May 1964) was the first Prime Minister of India. Jawaharlal Nehru promoted democracy, socialism, secularism and unity, while adapting modern values to Indian conditions. Nehru was a prolific writer in English and wrote a number of books, such as *The Discovery of India*, *Glimpses of World History*, and *An Autobiography*. In 1955, Nehru was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour.

Activity I (Note making)

Make a note of the above passage. Read the passage again and complete the following.

- **The uncertain condition of India**
 - humiliation
 -
 -
 -
- **The arrival of Gandhiji**
 - saw political freedom taking a new shape
 - removed the black pall of fear
 -
 -
 -
- **His teachings and methods**
 - fearlessness
 - truth
 -
 -
 -
- **His two-fold action**
 - challenging and resisting foreign rule
 -
 - minority problem
 -
 -
- **The moulding of India, according to Gandhiji's wishes and ideas**
 - even the poorest shall feel that it is their country
 - all communities shall live in perfect harmony
 -
 -
- **The amazing qualities of Gandhiji**
 - full of self confidence
 - unusual kind of power
 -
 -

Have you completed the note? Now, prepare a **summary** of the passage.

Activity II (Think and write)

- How did Gandhiji enlighten the freedom fighters? What kind of a leadership did Gandhiji take? What was the effect of his leadership?

Answer in a **paragraph** of about 100 words.

Activity III (Speech)

- In connection with Gandhi Jayanthi, your school is organizing a programme to propagate the relevance of Gandhian values in the present day. Prepare and deliver a **speech** before the class.

Hints

- Peace
- Fearlessness
- Truthfulness
- Influence
-
-
-

Tips for public speaking

- body language/posture
- eye contact
- voice modulation
- pause
- gesture
- pronunciation
- logical development
- clarity of presentation
- illustrations and examples
- comprehensiveness of content

Activity IV (Group discussion)

'Women will enjoy the same right as men...

This is the India of my dreams', Gandhiji said.

There is a role for each individual citizen, society and political party to ensure equal rights to women. Conduct a **group discussion** on the topic.

Activity V (Letter to the editor)

Here is the sample of a letter to the editor expressing an individual's concern over a common issue. Examine it carefully.

A Letter to the Editor

Sender's address → From
Nandini P.
Nilakkal House
MRA - 347, Jawahar Lane
Bangalore -3

Date → 15 June 2014

Addressee → To
The Editor
The Xanadu
Hyderabad

Salutation → Sir,

Reason for writing the letter → I am writing this letter to express my concern about the article, 'English should not be taught up to Class X' (May 25th), by Mr. Santha Rao. I wonder what made him write such an article. How can one ignore the role of English in a fast developing world? From his article, I understand that he has some hidden agenda. In this fast developing world, even an ordinary person thinks about giving better education to his or her children. English is being taught in the *Saksharatha* classes as well. The medium of instruction for various courses at a higher level of education is English. I strongly believe that English is the only global language and the language of science and technology. It should be taught right from the lower classes.

Feelings and arguments →

Suggestion / opinion →

Subscription → Yours truly
(Sd/-)
Nandini P.

- Now, refer to three national dailies of a week, and collect reports on instances where women are deprived of their rights, and analyse how the issues related to women are presented.

Write a **letter to the editor** of a newspaper, about the way in which women's issues are presented.

Note : For the management of space, the editor may edit your letter, omitting the address and other unnecessary details. But when you draft a letter to the editor, you should write your full name and address.

Activity VI (Concord)

- Look at the following sentence from the given passage.
'Different people react differently and each gives his/her own answer to the question.'

Here, 'each' agrees with a singular verb.

Generally, a singular subject agrees with a singular verb and a plural subject agrees with a plural verb. However, a deeper understanding of agreement (concord) will help us to write correctly when certain nouns, phrases or combinations of nouns come in the subject position.

Language Tips

- When a singular subject and a plural subject are joined by either...or, neither...nor, etc., the verb agrees with the subject nearer to it.
e.g. Ram or his brothers go home every month.
- When two subjects are joined by 'as well as,' 'rather than,' 'more than,' and 'as much as,' the verb agrees with the first subject.
e.g. The girls, as well as their teacher, have left.
- When two subjects are joined by 'with,' 'along with,' 'together with,' 'in the company of,' 'in addition to,' 'besides,' 'accompanied by,' etc., the verb agrees with the first subject.
e.g. My friend, with all his students, has arrived.
- One of/each of/everyone of/either/neither of + plural noun (pronoun) carries a singular verb.
e.g. One of the players was selected for the national team.
- When *every* or *each* is used with two singular subjects connected by *and*, we use a singular verb.
e.g. Every school and college has a playground.
- A (good/great) deal (of) + singular noun + singular verb.
e.g. A good deal of time was wasted on this case.
- When 'one' means 'anyone', 'everyone', it is called the 'indefinite one.' The indefinite one is not usually replaced by any other pronoun.
e.g. One should do one's duty for one's country.
- Expressions like 'five pounds', 'ten rupees', 'two weeks', 'three miles', etc. are singular when they are thought of as indicating a single amount, period or distance.
e.g. Five rupees is not a big sum.
Three weeks is not a long time.

- 'A lot (of)' takes a singular verb when it denotes amount, and a plural verb when it denotes number.
e.g. A lot of money is spent on construction.
A lot of petitions have been received.
- Nouns like 'furniture, machinery, equipment, traffic, luggage, crockery, cutlery, clothing', etc. are called class collectives. Though plural in meaning, they are singular in form, and are followed by singular verbs.
e.g. The furniture was bought from Italy.
- Plural words and phrases used as the titles of books take singular verbs.
e.g. *Great Expectations* is one of Dickens' great novels.
- The determiners 'this' and 'that' go with singular nouns, and 'these' and 'those' with plural nouns.
e.g. This girl speaks English better than these boys.

Choose the correct alternative.

1. Either Rajesh or his friends _____ come. (has, have)
2. Neither of us _____ coffee. (likes, like)
3. The boy, along with the tourists, _____ gone. (has, have)
4. Five miles _____ not a short distance. (are, is)
5. Everyone of you _____ to attend the meeting. (have, has)

Correct the following sentences.

1. Each of employees are working hard.
2. One of the students are absent today.
3. Neither Lal nor his relatives has arrived.
4. One of us have brought a globe.
5. Neither the man nor his wife are very careful.
6. The books placed on the table needs binding.
7. There is a lot of people waiting outside.
8. The police are closely watching all his movements.
9. The price of vegetables are going up.
10. Keep all the luggages in the cloak room.

Activity VII (Wordfinder)

- Look at the following sentence from the passage:

Gandhiji was 'like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes....'

Do you know the exact meaning of the word 'pierce'?

Let's see how the meaning of this word is given in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

pierce/piːs; *AmE* pɪrs/ verb **1~ (through) sth** to make a small hole in sth, or to go through sth, with a sharp object: [VN] *The arrow pierced his shoulder.* t *He pierced another hole in his belt with his knife.* t *to have your ears/nose pierced* (= to have a small hole made in your ears/nose so that you can wear jewellery there) t (*figurative*) *She was pierced to the heart with guilt.* t [V] *The knife pierced through his coat.* **2~ (through) sth** (*literary*) (of light, sound, etc.) to be suddenly seen or heard: [VN] *Sirens pierced the silence of the night* t *Shafts of sunlight pierced the heavy mist.* [also V] **3~ (through) sth** to force a way through a barrier: [VN] *They failed to pierce the Liverpool defence.* [also V]

- What are the items given in this entry?
 - Spelling
 - Pronunciation /...../
 -
 -
 -
- The meaning of the word 'pierce' in this context is the second one given in the dictionary i.e., 'to be suddenly seen or heard'. You can also take note of the sentence given after the meaning.

We can make use of a dictionary to check the

- spelling
- meaning
- word stress
- derivatives
- pronunciation
- usage
- word class
- phrasal verbs

A word has a variety of meanings - literal, contextual and so on. It is the context that determines the exact meaning of a word.

I. The words given below are taken from the passage.

Refer to a dictionary and find out the meaning and the parts of speech of the following words and make your own sentences.

Word	Part of speech	Meaning	Sentences
convince		
pervasive		
attires		
dismal		
vicious		

II. Read and reflect:

The bonds of human relationship are very strong. They are so complex that it is difficult for us to explain. Words and deeds have a soothing effect and they cement the bonds of relationship. Here is a story about the impact of words. Read on.

THE PRICE OF FLOWERS

Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay

It was nearly one o' clock and I was feeling extremely hungry. So, I made my way slowly to a vegetarian restaurant which was not far away, in St. Martin's Lane. Lunch hours in London restaurants were not so crowded in those days.

I found not more than three or four hungry people scattered around the room. I chose a table, seated myself and opened the newspaper.

A waitress came up and waited politely for my order. I raised my eyes from the paper, glanced at the menu and told her what I required. 'Thank you, sir,' she said and went briskly and noiselessly away.

At that moment, my attention was drawn to a table not far from mine. A young English girl was sitting there. She had been watching me with interested surprise but turned her eyes away as soon as I looked at her.

The girl was thirteen or fourteen years old. Her clothes betrayed her poverty. Her hair hung in a heavy stream down her back. Her eyes were large. They had a sad expression. I watched her when she was not looking so that she would not notice. My lunch was served as she was finishing hers. The waitress brought her the bill. Bills are paid at the desk as one goes out. The desk is near the door.

- Why was the narrator's attention drawn to the English girl?

The girl stood up. My eyes followed her. As she paid her bill, she asked the cashier in a low voice, 'Please, Miss, can you tell me if that gentleman is an Indian?'

- What is your impression of the girl?

'I think so,' the cashier answered.

'Does he come here all the time?'

'Perhaps not. I do not recall having seen him before.'

'Thank you,' said the girl and looked at me once more with a startled air and went out.

It surprised me. Why? What was the matter? Her interest in me aroused my interest in her. When I had finished my lunch, I asked the waitress, 'Do you know the girl who was sitting over there?'

- How do you know that the girl was interested in knowing the identity of the narrator?

'No, sir, I do not know her, to speak of. I've noticed she has lunch here on Saturdays.'

'Doesn't she come on any other day?'

'I never see her on other days.'

'Have you any idea who she is?'

'Perhaps she works in a nearby shop.'

'How do you know?'

'Saturday is pay day. That is when she comes. On other days, she may not be able to afford lunch. Perhaps, she does not earn very much.'

- What do you understand about the probable financial condition of the girl?

I was moved by what she said.

The curiosity I felt about the girl persisted. Who was the child? Why had she inquired about me? Was some mystery the cause of her interest? Her poverty-stricken, sad and anxious figure took possession of my thoughts. On Sundays, all London shops are closed. So, I set out to look for her after breakfast, on Monday morning. I looked into the shops on the streets near St. Martin's Lane, and especially, the shops on the Strand, but I found no trace of the girl.

- Why was the narrator curious about the girl? What did he do to meet her?

The week passed. Saturday came again. I presented myself at the vegetarian restaurant once more. As I entered, I saw her sitting at the same table as before. She was eating. I walked up and took the chair opposite hers, saying, 'Good afternoon!'

- Why did the narrator go to the restaurant again?

'Good afternoon, sir,' she responded hesitantly.

By making one brief remark after another, I was able, slowly, to start a conversation. At last she asked, 'Are you an Indian?'

'Yes.'

'Excuse me, are you a vegetarian?'

'Why do you ask that?'

'I have heard that most Indians are vegetarians.'

'How is it that you know anything about India?'

'My elder brother is in India. He is a soldier.'

'I am not much of a vegetarian,' I answered her question, 'but I enjoy a vegetarian meal, now and then.' The girl seemed disappointed.

I learned that her only guardian was this elder brother. She lived with her old widowed mother.

'Do you hear from your brother?'

'We have not had a letter from him for a long time. My mother is very worried. People tell her that India is full of tigers and snakes and fevers. She is afraid something has happened to him. Is it true, sir, that India is full of tigers and snakes and fevers?'

• What impression did the girl have about India?

'No,' I smiled, 'how could people live there if it were?' The girl sighed softly. 'Mother says she would like to ask an Indian about these things if she can find an Indian,' the girl looked at me with eyes full of entreaty.

I understood how she felt. She wanted me to see her mother, but she did not have the courage to ask me to accompany her home. A keen desire to meet this poor anxious mother took hold of me. I had not had the opportunity to visit an impoverished English home. I wished to see how the poor lived in this country, to know what they think.

'Will you introduce me to your mother some time? Would you like me to accompany you home? I can go some day.'

The girl's eyes brimmed with gratitude. 'Thank you ever so much!' she said. 'It is so kind of you! Can you come now?'

'With pleasure.'

'It will not interfere with anything else you have to do?'

'No, no, not at all. This afternoon is entirely my own.'

The girl was delighted. We finished our lunch and got up together.

As we walked, I asked her, 'May I know your name?'
'My name is Alice Margaret Clifford.'

'Would you mind walking?' she asked.

'Not at all,' I answered, 'if it is not difficult for you.'

'No, I walk home every day.'

I asked the girl, 'Do you come this way often?'

'Yes,' she answered, 'I work as a typist in the Civil Service stores. Every afternoon, I come home this way. Today is Saturday, so I am off early.'

'Shall I call you Miss Clifford or Alice?'

'I am not grown-up yet. You may call me what you like. I am usually called Maggie.' She laughed.

'Are you very anxious to grow up?'

'Yes.'

'Tell me why.'

'When I grow up, I shall be paid more for my work. My mother is old.'

- Was Maggie satisfied with her job? If not why?

'Is the work you do to your liking?'

'No. The work is very mechanical. I want work that will make me use my head, brain work. Like the work of a secretary.'

- What do you understand by 'brain work'?

We crossed the bridge and arrived in Lambeth. It is a poor neighbourhood. 'If I ever become a secretary,' Maggie said, 'I shall take mother away from here.'

'Did your father call you Maggie or Magsy?'

'When he was very affectionate he called me Magsy. How did you know?'

'Yes, yes,' I answered mysteriously, 'we are Indians, you know. We know about the future and all kinds of magic.'

'That is what I have heard,' she said.

'Indeed?' I was surprised. 'What have you heard?'

'I have heard that there are many people in India who have occult powers. They are called yogis. But you are not a yogi.'

'How do you know that I am not a yogi, Maggie?'

'Yogis do not eat meat.'

'Is that why you asked me in the beginning whether I am a vegetarian or not?'

- Why did Maggie ask the narrator whether he was a vegetarian?

She smiled without answering.

We had reached a narrow doorway. Maggie took a thin latch key out of her pocket and opened the door. She entered and said, 'Please come in'.

When I was inside, Maggie closed the door. She went to the foot of the stairs and, raising her voice a little, called, 'Mother, where are you?'

'I am in the kitchen, child,' the answer came from below.

'Come down.'

It is necessary to explain here that London streets are above ground. Kitchens are often below street level.

Maggie looked at me questioningly, 'Do you mind?'

'Not in the least. Come on.' I said.

Together we descended the stairs to the kitchen.

'Mother,' said Maggie from the doorway, 'an Indian gentleman has come to see you.'

'Where is he?' the old woman asked eagerly.

With a smile I stepped into the kitchen behind Maggie. She introduced us. 'This is Mr Gupta, mother,' she said, 'Mr Gupta, my mother.'

- Why did Mr Gupta go to Maggie's house?

'How do you do?' I said and held out my hand.

'Excuse me, my hands-' she said, holding them out for me to see. They were covered with flour. 'Today is Saturday,' she explained, 'I am making cakes. People will come to buy them this evening. They'll be sold on the streets tonight. This is the way we make our living - lots of trouble!'

- What do you understand about the living conditions of Maggie and her mother?

Saturday night is a time of festivity in poor neighbourhoods.

All sorts of things are sold from countless lighted pushcarts. The streets are more crowded than on any other day. Saturday is the day the poor are able to spend a little, for they receive their weekly wages.

- Why is Saturday special to Maggie and her mother?

Ingredients for cake making, flour, sugar, fat, raisins, eggs

and so forth were set out in readiness upon the dresser. Several freshly baked cakes in tins were also there.

'Sitting in such a poor kitchen will not be very pleasant for you, will it?' Mrs. Clifford said. 'I have almost finished my work. Maggie, take him into the sitting room, I'll come in a minute.'

'No, no,' I protested, 'I can sit here well enough. The cakes you make are nice ones, I must say.'

Mrs. Clifford thanked me with a smile.

'What kind of a country is India, sir?' asked Mrs. Clifford, as she resumed her cooking.

'A beautiful country.'

'Safe to live in?'

'Certainly. But not cold like this country. It is somewhat hot.'

'Aren't there too many snakes and tigers? Don't they kill people?'

• How did Mr Gupta describe India to Mrs. Clifford?

'Don't believe that,' I laughed. 'Snakes and tigers keep to the jungles. They get killed themselves if they come too close to places where people live.'

'And fevers?'

'In some places in India, there is more fever than in others. It is neither the same everywhere nor the same all the year around.'

'My son is in the Punjab. He is a soldier. What kind of a place is the Punjab?'

'The Punjab is a fine place. There is little fever there. It is very healthy.'

'I am glad to hear it,' Mrs. Clifford said.

Her baking was finished. 'Maggie,' she said, 'take Mr. Gupta upstairs, I'll wash my hands and bring tea.'

Maggie showed the way to their sitting room and I followed. The furniture was cheap and there was not much of it. The carpet was old, torn in places. But everything was extremely clean. Maggie drew the curtains back and opened the windows. There was a glass bookcase. I stood in front of it.

Mrs. Clifford came in carrying the tea tray, a few minutes

later. All trace of the kitchen had vanished from her person.

As we drank tea, I talked about India. Mrs. Clifford showed me a photograph of her son. It had been taken before he left. His name was Francis or Frank. Maggie brought out a book of pictures he had sent her for her birthday. There were many pictures of Simla and the surrounding mountain country. On the inside page was written, 'To Maggie, on her birthday, from her loving brother Frank.'

• Who is Francis? What do you know about him?

'Maggie,' said Mrs. Clifford, 'show Mr Gupta the ring.'

'Has your brother sent you a ring?' I asked her. 'Let me see what kind of a ring it is.'

'It is a magic ring,' Maggie explained. 'A yogi gave it to Frank.'

She brought it and asked, 'Can you see the past and the future in it?'

I had heard a lot about crystal gazing. A crystal was set in the ring. I took it up and examined it.

'When Frank sent the ring,' Mrs. Clifford said, 'he wrote that if you concentrate on a distant person as you gaze into it, you will be able to see him and what he is doing. This is what the yogi told Frank. Maggie and I have concentrated upon it, again and again, because we have not had any news of Frank for a long time. But we have not been able to see anything. Why don't you try? You are a Hindu. You may be able to do it!'

I realised that superstition was not confined to India. I did not have the heart to tell the mother and daughter that the ring was nothing much, brass with a piece of ordinary glass stuck into it. They believed their Frank had sent them a new and miraculous thing from a distant land, a dream India. How could I shatter their faith?

• What is your opinion about superstitions? Do you believe in any?

Urged by Mrs. Clifford and Maggie, I took the ring into my hand and stared at it intensely for a long time. 'I cannot see anything,' I exclaimed at last, giving up.

The mother and daughter were disappointed. To change the subject, I said, 'Here is a violin. It is yours, isn't it,

Maggie?'

'Yes,' Mrs. Clifford answered, 'Maggie plays quite well. Maggie, please play something for us.'

'Oh, Mother!' Maggie looked at her in protest.

'Maggie,' I pleaded, 'please play something! I am very fond of the violin. I have a sister at home about your age. She used to play for me.'

'The way I play is not at all worth listening to,' Maggie said.

My entreaties at last persuaded her to play. 'I do not know many pieces,' she said. 'What would you like to hear?'

'Shall I choose something? All right, then, give me your music. Let me see what you have.'

Maggie brought out an old music case bound in black leather. I opened it. Most of the pieces were light airs like, 'Good-bye Dolly Grey,' 'Honeysuckle and the Bee', etc. There were a few really good, though old-fashioned ones, things like 'Robin Adair', 'Annie Laurie', 'The Last Rose of Summer,' etc. There were several Scotch songs. So I selected 'The Blue Bells of Scotland' and handed Maggie the music. Maggie played and I hummed the tune to myself.

When the song was over, I praised her playing lavishly as I thanked her. 'Maggie has never had the opportunity to study,' Mrs. Clifford said. 'She has learned what she knows by herself. If our circumstances ever improve, I shall arrange for her to have lessons.' On my way back, I was filled with astonishment. The incident touched me very deeply.

Three months passed. I visited Maggie and her mother several times, at their home, and took Maggie to see the Zoo once. She rode the elephant 'Indian Rajah,' like all the other boys and girls. How delighted she was!

But no news had come from her brother. Urged by Mrs. Clifford, I went to India House, one day, and made inquiries. I was told the regiment to which Frank belonged was fighting on the Northwest Frontier. Mrs. Clifford became extremely worried when she heard it. One day, I

- Describe the incident which touched the narrator deeply.

received a postcard from Maggie. She wrote:

'Dear Mr Gupta,

My mother is very ill. I have not been able to go to work for a week. We shall be extremely grateful if you take the trouble to come to see us.

- Why was Maggie unable to go to work?

Maggie'

I had told the family with whom I lived about Maggie and her mother. At breakfast, I spoke of the letter.

My hostess said, 'When you go, take some money with you. The girl has not been able to go to work for a week. She had not received any pay. It is probable that they are hard up.'

After breakfast, I took some money and set out for Lambeth. I knocked at the door. Maggie opened it.

- Why did Mr Gupta take some money with him when he went to see Mrs. Clifford?

She was looking much pulled down. Her eyes were hollow and ringed. 'Oh, thank you, Mr Gupta!' she exclaimed when she saw me. 'It is so kind of you.'

'How is your mother, Maggie?' I asked.

'She is sleeping now. Her condition is very serious. The doctor says it is aggravated by her anxiety over Frank. There is no news from him yet. She may not live.'

I tried to console Maggie, drying her eyes with my handkerchief. Maggie controlled herself with an effort and said, 'I have a request to make of you, Mr. Gupta.'

'What is it, Maggie?' I asked.

'Come into the sitting room and I'll tell you,' she answered.

We tiptoed carefully into the sitting room lest the sound of our footsteps should disturb the sick woman.

I turned when I reached the centre of the room, and remained standing there. 'What is it, Maggie?' I repeated my question.

- Why did Mr Gupta and Maggie tiptoe into the sitting room?

Maggie gazed up into my face with beseeching eyes. I waited. Then, she covered her face with her hands and wept silently.

I was in a fix. What could I say to console this child? Her brother was fighting on the Frontier. Only God knew whether he was alive or dead. Her mother was the only

person she had on earth. If she lost her, what would happen? Where in London could this girl, on the threshold of adolescence, go?

I pulled her hands away from her face. 'Maggie, tell me what you wish me to do. If there is anything I can do to help you, I shall not hesitate.'

'Mr Gupta,' the girl said, 'I do not know what you will think of the request I am going to make. Please forgive me if it is very, very wrong.'

'What is it? What do you wish to ask?'

'All day yesterday, Mother kept saying that if Mr Gupta would come and gaze into the crystal, he might learn something about Frank. Mr Gupta is a Hindu, she said. If only he would come, she said. That is why I wrote to you.'

'If you want me to try once more, go and bring me the ring, Maggie. Of course I'll do it.'

'But if you don't see anything again this time?' I understood what Maggie meant. I was silent.

'Mr Gupta, I have read in books that Hindus are extremely truth-loving. If you could bring yourself to tell Mother only once, after looking into the crystal, that Frank is all right, that he is alive – will it be too much of a lie? Will it be very, very wrong?' As she spoke, tears streamed from her eyes.

- What request did Maggie make to Mr Gupta?

I thought it over. I am not very virtuous. I have done my sinful things. So I decided to do this. It would be the least of my offences. 'Please, Maggie, don't cry. Where is the ring? Let me take a good look at it this time. If I do not see anything I shall do as you suggest. God will forgive me if it is wrong.'

- Why was the crystal ring so special to Mrs. Clifford?

Maggie brought me the ring. I took it and said, 'See if your mother is awake.'

Fifteen minutes passed before Maggie came back. 'Mother is awake,' she said. 'I have told her you are here.'

'May I see her now?'

'Please come.'

I approached the mother's bedside. The ring was in my hand. Wishing her a good morning I said. 'Mrs. Clifford,

your son is alive. He is well.'

The old woman raised her head a little off the pillow. 'Did you see that in the crystal?' she asked.

- What made Mrs. Clifford recover?

'Yes, Mrs. Clifford,' I answered without any hesitation, 'I have seen it.'

Her head dropped back. Tears of happiness welled from her eyes. She whispered faintly. 'God bless you! God bless you!'

Mrs. Clifford recovered.

It was almost time for me to return to my country. I wished to go to Lambeth to say good-bye to Maggie and her mother. But the family was in mourning. Frank had been killed in the fighting on the Frontier. A month ago, Maggie had sent me a card with a black border. I calculated from the date and found that Frank had been dead some days when I told his mother he was alive and well. I felt ashamed to face Mrs. Clifford. So I wrote a letter to them, announcing my departure and bidding them good-bye.

- Why was Mr Gupta ashamed to face Mrs. Clifford?

The morning of my last day in London dawned. I was to leave before night. As I was breakfasting with the family, there was a knock at the door. A minute or two later, the maid came in and announced, 'Please Mr Gupta, Miss Clifford has come to see you.'

My breakfast was unfinished. Maggie had come to say good-bye. Lest she be late for office because of me, I took the permission of my hostess and got up from the table. Maggie was standing in the hall. She was wearing black. I took her into the adjoining library and made her sit down.

'Are you leaving today?' she asked.

'Yes, Maggie, today is the day of my departure.'

'How long will it take you to reach your country?'

'A little more than two weeks.'

'In what part of the country do you live?'

'I have entered the Punjab Civil Service. I shall not know exactly where I am posted until I arrive there.'

'Is the Frontier very far from there?'

'No, not very.'

'Frank is buried at Fort Monroe, near Dera-Ghazi-Khan.'
The girl's eyes were filled with tears as she spoke.

'When I go to that part of the country, I shall visit your brother's grave and write to you.'

'It won't be troublesome for you? Or inconvenient?' Maggie asked.

- What was the promise given to Maggie?

'Why should it be? Dera-Ghazi-Khan is not very far from where I shall be. It will certainly be possible for me to go there someday. I'll write and tell you about it.'

Maggie's face was filled with gratitude. As she thanked me, her voice choked. She took a shilling out of her pocket and put it down on the table in front of me, saying, 'Please buy flowers with this shilling when you go, and lay them on my brother's grave for me.'

- Why did Maggie give a shilling to Mr Gupta?

In my emotion, I lowered my eyes. The child had earned the shilling with so much toil! I felt like returning it to her, explaining that in our country flowers grow in great profusion and do not have to be purchased.

But I reconsidered. Why should I deprive her of the joy this sacrifice would give her? All that this shilling could have given her she was foregoing for the love of her brother. The joy of doing it was beyond all price. The grief in her heart would be eased a little. What good would it do to deprive her of it? I picked up the shilling.

- Explain the reason why Mr Gupta accepted the shilling.

'Maggie,' I said, 'I shall use this shilling to buy flowers and put them on your brother's grave.'

Maggie stood up. 'How can I thank you?' she said. 'Now it is time for me to go to work. Good-bye, remember to write.'

I got up and took her hand in mine. 'Good-bye, Maggie, God bless you,' I said and pressed her hand to my lips. Maggie left. I wiped a tear or two from my eyes and went upstairs to pack my bags.

(Adapted)

(Translated from Bengali by Lila Ray)

About the Author

Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay (1873-1932) was one of the best short story writers in Bengali literature. He was also a novelist. His short stories are mainly based on real-life situations and his characters belong to the middle class families. Their hopes and aspirations, joys and sorrows are woven finely into his stories.

Glossary: _____

aggravate (v)	:	worsen
besech (adj)	:	showing that you want something very much (of a look, a tone of voice, etc.)
betray (v)	:	reveal
entreaty	:	a serious and often emotional request
Lambeth	:	a suburb of London
music (n)	:	(here) a book with printed notes of music

Activity I (Read and respond)

1. 'It is neither the same everywhere nor the same all the year round in India.' Why?
2. Why did the narrator decide to take the shilling given by Maggie?
3. What is the role of faith in the story?

Activity II (Discussion)

- Discuss the significance of the title 'The Price of Flowers'. You may also suggest alternate titles to the story.

Activity III (Character sketch)

- Pick out the words used by the author to describe the character of Maggie.

Establish the above points with the help of related evidence from the text, and **sketch the character** of Maggie.

Appearance

- thirteen years old
- anxious figure
- large eyes
-
-
-

Qualities/traits

- hard-working
- disciplined
- polite manners
-
-

Attitude towards others

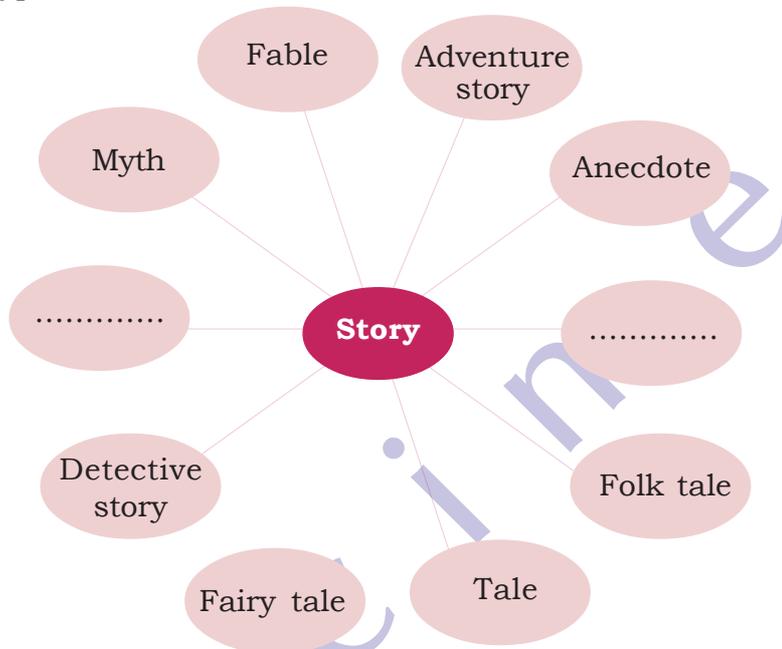
- respectful
- caring
-
-
-

Your opinion about the girl

-
-
-
-

Activity IV (Web diagram)

- The following **web diagram** shows different types of stories. Add more types to it.



- Now, match the following with the help of a dictionary.

A	B
1. Story	a. a very old traditional story from a particular place, that was originally passed on to people in a spoken form
2. Anecdote	b. a story from ancient times, especially one that was told to explain natural events or to describe the early history of a people
3. Tale	c. an imaginative story, especially one that is full of action and adventure
4. Folk tale	d. a description of events and people that the writer or the speaker has invented in order to entertain people (adventure story, detective story, love story)
5. Fable	e. a story about magic or fairies, usually meant for children
6. Fairy tale	f. a traditional short story that teaches a moral lesson, especially one with animals as characters
7. Fiction	g. an interesting or amusing story about a real person or event
8. Myth	h. a type of literature that describes imaginary people and events

Which category, does the story 'The Price of Flowers' belong to? Discuss.

Activity V (Write-up)

- 'I want work that will make me use my head, brain work.'

How far can you relate this statement to your life? What kind of profession do you like? Why? Prepare a **write-up**.

Activity VI (Letter)

- 'When I go to that part of the country, I shall visit your brother's grave and write to you.' A few weeks after the narrator's departure, Maggie receives a letter from him. What might be the content of the letter? Draft a **letter**, assuming that you are the narrator.

Activity VII (Role-play)

- Maggie reads the letter. She cannot sleep for many days. Imagine that one day, Mr Gupta receives a call from her. What would she say? Discuss with your friend, and prepare a likely conversation between them. **Enact the scene** by taking up different roles.

Activity VIII (Review)

- Read the story 'The Price of Flowers' again and discuss the following with your friends.
- the theme
 - style of narration
 - language
 - impact of words and expressions
 - location
 - characterisation
 - dialogues
 - the opening and the ending of the story

Now, attempt a **critical review** of the story.

Activity IX (Reporting)

The following sentences are from the story 'The Price of Flowers'. Read them.

She asked, 'Are you an Indian?'

'Yes.'

'Excuse me, are you a vegetarian?'

'Why do you ask that?'

'I have heard that most Indians are vegetarians.'

'How is it that you know anything about India?'

'My elder brother is in India. He is a soldier.'

The very next day the narrator told his friend about the girl and their conversation.

Read and find out how he presented it.

The girl **asked** me **whether** I **was** an Indian.

I answered in the affirmative.

Then she **asked** me politely **if** I **was** a vegetarian.

I **enquired** why she **asked** that.

She **said (that)** she **had** heard that most Indians **were** vegetarians.

I further **asked** her how it **was** that she knew anything about India.

She **replied** that her elder brother **was** in India and added that he **was** a soldier.

- What differences do you notice between direct speech and reported speech? Discuss.

Note 1 : If the reporting verb is in the simple present tense or present perfect, the tense in the direct speech can be retained.

e.g. It is said that the earth moves around the sun.

Shakespeare has said that one may laugh and laugh and yet be a villain.

Note 2 : The context of the conversation should be borne in mind while reporting it. The reporting verbs and adjectives may be selected accordingly.

e.g. The convict : Yes, yes, I'll lie down.

The convict agreed that he would lie down.

- Now, rewrite the following sentences in reported speech.

'Shall I call you Miss Clifford or Alice? '

'I am not grown-up yet. You may call me what you like. I am usually called Maggie.' She laughed.

'Are you very anxious to grow up?'

'Yes.'

'Tell me why.'

'When I grow up, I shall be paid more for my work. My mother is old.'

'Is the work you do to your liking?'

'No. The work is very mechanical. I want work that will make me use my head, brain work. Like the work of a secretary.'

III. Read and enjoy:

Deeds speak louder than words. Good deeds will be remembered for ever. Here is a poem which tells us about the glory of deeds. Read on.

DEATH THE LEVELLER

James Shirley

THE glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against Fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill:
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds;
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

About the Author

James Shirley, (1596-1666), is known as the last of the Elizabethans. He was a prolific writer for the stage. He also published four small volumes of poems and plays.

'Death the Leveller' is a funeral song. However, it appeals to the reader to think about human actions. The central idea of the poem is the vanity and impermanence of earthly glory and power. Death knows no distinction, and carries off all alike - high and low, rich and poor, strong and weak - reducing them all to dust. It is only the memory of the good deeds done during our lifetime that will remain for ever.

Your teacher will help you to listen to the recitation of the poem.

Glossary: _____

altar (n)	: a holy place in a church or temple
blood (n)	: family origins
captive (n)	: kept as a prisoner or in a confined space
crooked (adj.)	: dishonest
laurels (n)	: a bush with dark smooth shiny leaves; also, represents honour and praise
sceptre (n)	: the ornamental rod of a king, a symbol of power
scythe (n)	: a tool with a long handle and a slightly curved blade, used to cut grass or grain
spade (n)	: a garden tool with a broad metal blade and a long handle
stoop (v)	: surrender
tame (v)	: control
tumble	: fall down

Activity I (Read and respond)

1. Why does the poet think that the glories of our blood and state are shadows?
2. What do 'sceptre and crown', and 'scythe and spade' stand for and what do they symbolize?
3. Why does the poet say that 'there is no armour against fate'?
4. 'Some men with swords may reap the field'. What does this mean?
5. What is the fate of the men with swords who hope to reap the field?
6. What does 'Death's purple altar' refer to?
7. What does the phrase 'victor-victim' mean?
8. What can survive death? What are the things that blossom in the dust? Why?
9. Why is Death called the Leveller?

Activity II (Read and reflect)

- Elaborate the ideas in the following lines:
- (i) Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.
 - (ii) The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against Fate;

- The following words are taken from the poem. Parse them with the help of a dictionary.

armour	:noun...	wither	:
but	:	tame	:
murmuring	:	stoop	:
boast	: verb	crumble	:
where	:	reap	:
cold	:	boast	:
sweet	:	bleeds	:

Activity III (Analysis)

- Examine the rhyme scheme of the poem. What effect does it produce?

Couplet : A couplet consists of two lines of poetry that rhyme with each other and are of the same length.

e.g. 'Sceptre and crown

Must tumble down,'

Can you identify more couplets from the poem?

Figures of speech:

Personification — a figure of speech in which human qualities are attributed to inanimate objects. e.g. O wild west wind!

Metaphor — a word or expression used to describe somebody/ something in a way that is different from its normal use. One is identified with the other.

e.g. O, my love is a red, red rose (metaphor)

O, my love is like a red, red rose (simile)

Metonymy — when one thing is mentioned instead of another with which it has become closely associated, because of a recurrent relation in common experience.

e.g. 'the crown' stands for a king

'Hollywood' for the film industry

Oxymoron — when two terms which, in ordinary usage, are contraries are used together.

e.g. pleasing pains, loving hate; I burn and freeze.

Identify the figure of speech in 'Death lays its icy hand on kings:'

Pick out examples of metaphor, metonymy and oxymoron in the poem.

Discuss the poetic effect of these figures of speech.

Activity IV (Appreciation)

Men are mortal. Triumph and failures are a part and parcel of life. However, we have to think of the consequences of our action before we do something. The effect of our mistaken deeds cannot often be rectified.

.....

Think and add your views.

- Now attempt an **appreciation** of the poem. What should be included in it?
 - introduction
 - brief summary
 - poetic devices
 - message
 - your opinion
 -

Activity V (Collection)

- Collect articles, biographies, poems, memoirs, etc., on great people like Mahatma Gandhi and Abraham Lincoln, and prepare a **Class Magazine**.

The major learning outcomes of this unit are listed below.

Thematic outcomes

Students demonstrate the ability to

- maintain the unity between words and deeds.
- uphold the importance of values in life.
- realise the role of each individual to enrich the culture of India.
- appreciate literature.
- develop an empathetic attitude.

Linguistic outcomes

Students demonstrate the ability to

- use correct subject-verb agreement in discourses.
- use reported speech in various contexts.
- use dictionary reference skills.
- prepare and deliver speeches.
- participate in Group Discussions.
- draft different types of letters.
- prepare an appreciation of poems / short stories.
- make notes and summarise passages.