



UNIT 4

ENVIRONMENT

THE CHERRY TREE



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Let us do these activities before we read.

- I Work in pairs and answer the questions that follow. Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.
1. Have you ever used a seed or a sapling to grow a plant?
 2. What kind of care did the plant need? Who helped you with it?
 3. How did you feel when you saw the plant grow?
- II What kind of trees do people plant in their homes? Why is it important to plant trees?
- III Name some fruit trees that grow in your region. What type of conditions help these fruit trees to grow?





Let us read

I

One day, when Rakesh was six, he walked home from the Mussoorie bazaar eating cherries. They were a little sweet, a little sour; small, bright red cherries, which had come all the way from the Kashmir Valley.

Here in the Himalayan foothills where Rakesh lived, there were not many fruit trees. The soil was stony, and the dry cold winds **stunted** the growth of most plants. But on the more sheltered slopes there were forests of oak and deodar.

Rakesh lived with his grandfather on the **outskirts** of Mussoorie, just where the forest began. His father and mother lived in a small village fifty miles away, where they grew maize and rice and barley in narrow terraced fields on the lower slopes of the mountain.

stunted: stopped
(from growing to
the usual size)

outskirts: the
areas that form
the edge of a
town or city

But there were no schools in the village, and Rakesh's parents were keen that he should go to school. As soon as he was of school-going age, they sent him to stay with his grandfather in Mussoorie.

He had a little cottage outside the town.

Rakesh was on his way home from school when he bought the cherries. He paid fifty paise for the bunch. It took him about half-an-hour to walk home, and by the time he reached the cottage there were only three cherries left.

'Have a cherry, Grandfather,' he said, as soon as he saw his grandfather in the garden.

Grandfather took one cherry and Rakesh promptly ate the other two. He kept the last seed in his mouth for some time,

rolling it round and round on his tongue until all the **tang** had gone. Then he placed the seed on the palm of his hand and studied it.

‘Are cherry seeds lucky?’ asked Rakesh.

‘Of course.’

‘Then I’ll keep it.’

‘Nothing is lucky if you put it away. If you want luck, you must put it to



some use.’ ‘What can I do with a seed?’

‘Plant it.’

So Rakesh found a small space and began to dig up a flowerbed.

‘Hey, not there,’ said Grandfather. ‘I’ve sown mustard in that bed. Plant it in that shady corner, where it won’t be disturbed.’

Rakesh went to a corner of the garden where the earth was soft and **yielding**. He did not have to dig.

He pressed the seed into the soil with his thumb and it went right in.

Then he had his lunch, and ran off to play cricket with his friends, and forgot all about the cherry seed.

When it was winter in the hills, a cold wind blew down from the snows and went whoo-who-who in the deodar trees, and the garden was dry and bare.

In the evenings Grandfather and Rakesh sat over a charcoal fire, and Grandfather told Rakesh stories—stories about people

tang: a strong, sharp taste

yielding: giving way under pressure



who turned into animals, and ghosts who lived in trees, and beans that jumped and stones that wept—and in turn, Rakesh would read to him from the newspaper, Grandfather's eyesight being rather weak. Rakesh found the newspaper very dull—especially after the stories—but Grandfather wanted all the news...

They knew it was spring when the wild duck flew north again, to Siberia. Early in the morning, when he got up to chop wood and light a fire, Rakesh saw the V-shaped formation streaming northward, the calls of the birds carrying clearly through the thin mountain air.

One morning in the garden he bent to pick up what he thought was a small twig and found to his surprise that it was well rooted. He stared at it for a moment, then ran to fetch Grandfather, calling, 'Dada, come and look, the cherry tree has come up!'

'What cherry tree?' asked Grandfather, who had forgotten about it. 'The seed we planted last year—look, it's come up!'

Rakesh went down on his **haunches**, while Grandfather bent

haunches: sit on the feet with legs bent

peered down: looked carefully or with difficulty

almost double and **peered down** at the tiny tree. It was about four inches high.

'Yes, it's a cherry tree,' said Grandfather. 'You should water it now and then.'

Rakesh ran indoors and came back with a bucket of water.

'Don't drown it!' said Grandfather.

Rakesh gave it a sprinkling and circled it with pebbles.



‘What are the pebbles for?’ asked Grandfather.

‘For privacy,’ said Rakesh.

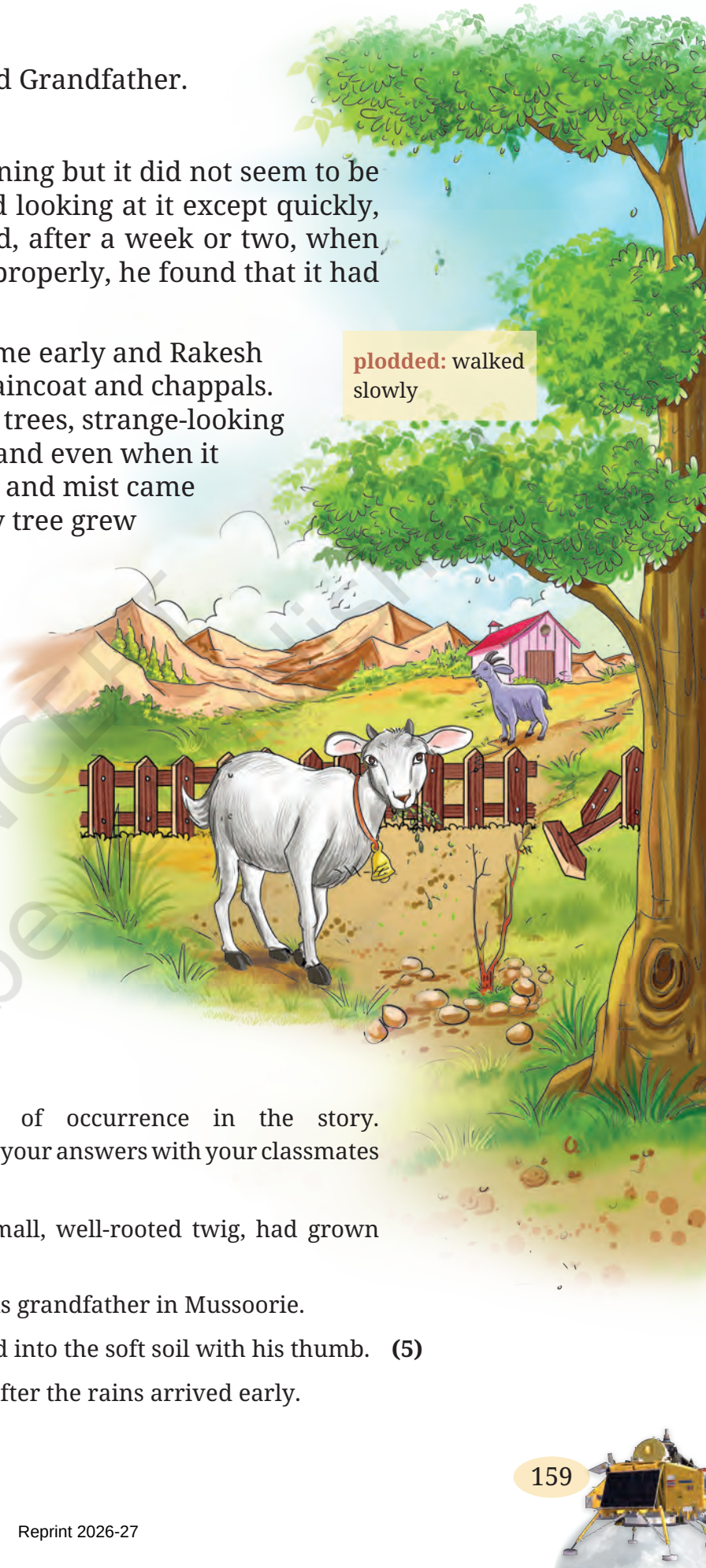
He looked at the tree every morning but it did not seem to be growing very fast, so he stopped looking at it except quickly, out of the corner of his eye. And, after a week or two, when he allowed himself to look at it properly, he found that it had grown—at least an inch!

That year the monsoon rains came early and Rakesh **plodded** to and from school in raincoat and chappals. Ferns sprang from the trunks of trees, strange-looking lilies came up in the long grass, and even when it wasn’t raining the trees dripped and mist came curling up the valley. The cherry tree grew quickly in this season.

plodded: walked slowly

It was about two feet high when a goat entered the garden and ate all the leaves. Only the main stem and two thin branches remained.

‘Never mind,’ said Grandfather, seeing that Rakesh was upset. ‘It will grow again, cherry trees are tough.’



Let us discuss

I Arrange the events in order of occurrence in the story. Two have been done for you. Share your answers with your classmates and the teacher.

1. Rakesh discovered that the small, well-rooted twig, had grown into a cherry tree.
2. Rakesh was sent to live with his grandfather in Mussoorie.
3. Rakesh pressed the cherry seed into the soft soil with his thumb. (5)
4. The cherry tree grew quickly after the rains arrived early.





5. Rakesh bought a bunch of cherries and ate most of them.
6. A goat entered the garden and ate all the leaves of the young cherry tree.
7. Rakesh's parents grew maize, rice, and barley in a village. (1)
8. Rakesh sprinkled water on the cherry tree and surrounded it with pebbles.
9. Grandfather told Rakesh that cherry trees were tough.
10. Rakesh kept rolling the last cherry seed in his mouth.

II Do you think the cherry tree would survive? Why do you think so?

II

Towards the end of the rainy season new leaves appeared on the tree. Then a woman cutting grass **scrambled** down the hillside, her **scythe** swishing through the heavy monsoon **foliage**. She did not try to avoid the tree: one sweep, and the cherry tree was cut in two.

When Grandfather saw what had happened, he went after the woman and scolded her; but the damage could not be repaired.

'Maybe it will die now,' said Rakesh.

'Maybe,' said Grandfather.

But the cherry tree had no intention of dying.

By the time summer came round again, it had sent out several new shoots with tender green leaves.

Rakesh had grown taller too. He was eight now, a sturdy boy with curly black hair and deep black eyes. Blackberry eyes, Grandfather called them.

That monsoon Rakesh went home to his village, to help his father and mother with the planting and ploughing and

scrambled:

moved quickly and with difficulty

scythe:

a tool with a long, sharp, curved blade with a long handle

foliage: green leaves



sowing. He was thinner but stronger when he came back to Grandfather's house at the end of the rains to find that the cherry tree had grown another foot. It was now up to his chest.

Even when there was rain, Rakesh would sometimes water the tree. He wanted it to know that he was there.

One day he found a bright green **praying-mantis** perched on a branch, peering at him with bulging eyes. Rakesh let it remain there; it was the cherry tree's first visitor.

praying-mantis: an insect

The next visitor was a hairy caterpillar, who started making a meal of the leaves. Rakesh removed it quickly and dropped it on a heap of dry leaves.

'Come back when you're a butterfly,' he said.

Winter came early. The cherry tree bent low with the weight of snow. Field-mice sought shelter in the roof of the cottage. The road from the valley was blocked, and for several days there was no newspaper, and this made Grandfather quite **grumpy**. His stories began to have unhappy endings.

In February it was Rakesh's birthday. He was nine—and the tree was four, but almost as tall as Rakesh.

One morning, when the sun came out, Grandfather came into the garden to let some warmth 'get into my bones,' as he put it. He stopped in front of the cherry tree, stared at it for a few moments, and then called out, 'Rakesh! Come and look! Come quickly before it falls!'

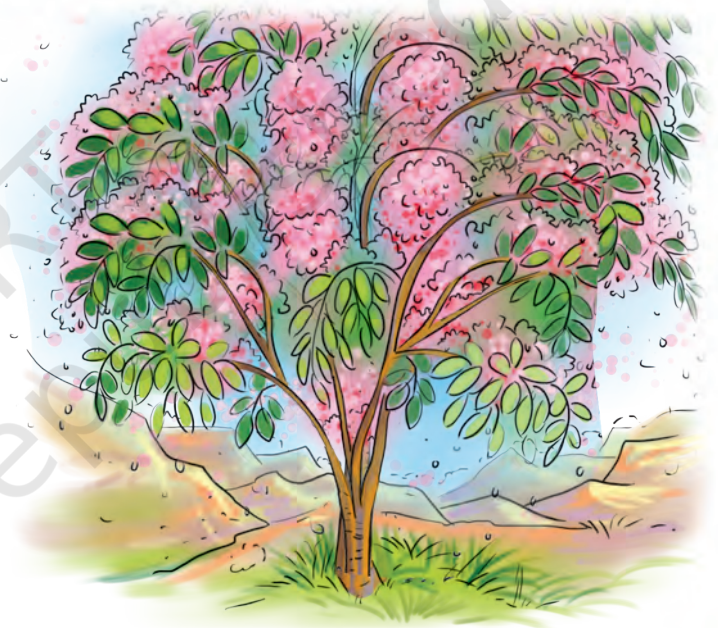
Rakesh and Grandfather **gazed** at the tree as though it had performed a miracle. There was a pale pink blossom at the end of a branch.

grumpy: bad-tempered

gazed: looked at something for a long time with admiration

The following year there were more blossoms.

And suddenly the tree was taller than Rakesh, even though it was less than half his age. And then it was taller than Grandfather, who was older than some of the oak trees.



But Rakesh had grown too. He could run and jump and climb trees as well as most boys, and he read a lot of books, although he still liked listening to Grandfather's tales.

In the cherry tree, bees came to feed on the nectar in the blossoms, and tiny birds pecked at the blossoms and broke them off. But the tree kept blossoming right through the spring, and there were always more blossoms than birds.

That summer there were small cherries on the tree. Rakesh tasted one and spat it out.

'It's too sour,' he said.

'They'll be better next year,' said Grandfather.

But the birds liked them—especially the bigger birds, such as the bulbuls and scarlet minivets—and they **flitted** in and out of the foliage, feasting on the cherries.

On a warm sunny afternoon, when even the bees looked sleepy, Rakesh was looking for Grandfather without finding him in any of his favourite places around the house. Then he looked out of the bedroom window

and saw Grandfather **reclining** on a cane chair under the cherry tree.

'There's just the right amount of shade here,' said Grandfather. 'And I like looking at the leaves.'

'They're pretty leaves,' said Rakesh. 'And they are always ready to dance, if there's a breeze.'

After Grandfather had come indoors, Rakesh went into the garden and lay down on the grass beneath the tree. He gazed up through the leaves at the great blue sky; and turning on his side, he could see the mountains striding away into the clouds.

flitted: flew quickly

reclining: lying back



He was still lying beneath the tree when the evening shadows crept across the garden. Grandfather came back and sat down beside Rakesh, and they waited in silence until the stars came out and the **nightjar** began to call. In the forest below, the crickets and **cicadas** began tuning up; and suddenly the trees were full of the sound of insects.

‘There are so many trees in the forest,’ said Rakesh. ‘What’s so special about this tree? Why do we like it so much?’

‘We planted it ourselves,’ said Grandfather. ‘That’s why it’s special.’

‘Just one small seed,’ said Rakesh, and he touched the smooth bark of the tree that he had grown. He ran his hand along the trunk of the tree and put his finger to the tip of a leaf. ‘I wonder,’ he whispered. ‘Is this what it feels to be God?’

nightjar: a bird

cicadas: insects known for their loud distinctive calls, especially during evenings

RUSKIN BOND



Let us discuss

I Complete the table given below based on your understanding of Part II of the story. One example has been done for you. Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

Cause	Effect
1. A woman cut the cherry tree while cutting grass.	(i) Grandfather scolded the woman.
2.	(ii) Rakesh was thinner but stronger when he came back.
3. A hairy caterpillar started eating the leaves of the cherry tree.	(iii)
4.	(iv) Rakesh and Grandfather gazed at the tree as though it was a miracle.
5. Rakesh tasted one of the small cherries during summer.	(v)

Let us think and reflect

I Read the given extracts and answer the questions that follow.

1. "Have a cherry, Grandfather," he said, as soon as he saw his grandfather in the garden.

Grandfather took one cherry and Rakesh promptly ate the other two. He kept the last seed in his mouth for some time, rolling it round and round on his tongue until all the tang had gone. Then he placed the seed on the palm of his hand and studied it.

"Are cherry seeds lucky?" asked Rakesh.

"Of course."

"Then I'll keep it."

"Nothing is lucky if you put it away. If you want luck, you must put it to some use."

- (i) Substitute the underlined phrase with a correct word from the extract.

The Kho-kho captain changed her strategy quickly and without delay when a new player came in from the opposing team.

- (ii) What does Rakesh's action of rolling the cherry seed in his mouth most likely suggest about his mood at that moment?
- A. He is feeling impatient and restless.
B. He is enjoying the taste and the moment.
C. He is bored and has nothing better to do.
D. He is thoughtful and feeling playful.
- (iii) Complete the following sentence suitably with reference to Rakesh and his grandfather.

Rakesh's decision to plant the seed shows that _____.
(he respects and values his grandfather's advice/he has a close bond with his grandfather and a willingness to learn from him)

- (iv) How does the grandfather's advice reflect his view about luck and effort?

2. *Winter came early. The cherry tree bent low with the weight of snow. Field-mice sought shelter in the roof of the cottage. The road from the valley was blocked, and for several days there was no newspaper, and this made Grandfather quite grumpy. His stories began to have unhappy endings.*

In February it was Rakesh's birthday. He was nine—and the tree was four, but almost as tall as Rakesh.

- (i) Complete the following sentence suitably.

The phrase '*field-mice sought shelter in the roof of the cottage*' suggests that _____.

- (ii) What can be inferred about the cherry tree's toughness from the line, '*The cherry tree bent low with the weight of snow*'?
- A. The weight of the tree was more than the snow.
B. The tree could withstand harsh weather.
C. The tree was growing close to the ground.
D. The snow gave support to the tree.
- (iii) How did the early winter affect Grandfather's mood and storytelling?

- (iv) Complete the sentence by choosing the correct option.

The comparison of Rakesh's age to the cherry tree's age symbolises _____. (the tree's growth paralleling Rakesh's own development/the tree standing as a dear one on Rakesh's birthday)

II Answer the following questions.

1. Why did Rakesh's parents send him to Mussoorie?
2. Why did Rakesh let the praying-mantis remain on the branch of the cherry tree?
3. How is life in the Himalayan foothills described in the story?
4. What might Rakesh mean when he says, "*Is this what it feels to be God?*" at the end of the story?
5. How does the writer describe the relationship between Rakesh and his grandfather?
6. What can you infer about the connection between humans and nature based on the story?
7. Imagine Rakesh reflects on his wonderful experience of watching a seed being transformed into a full-grown cherry tree. Write how he must have felt.



Let us learn

I Each word list has one word that does not match with the other words. Identify the odd word. One example has been done for you.

1. chop, trim, slice, mince

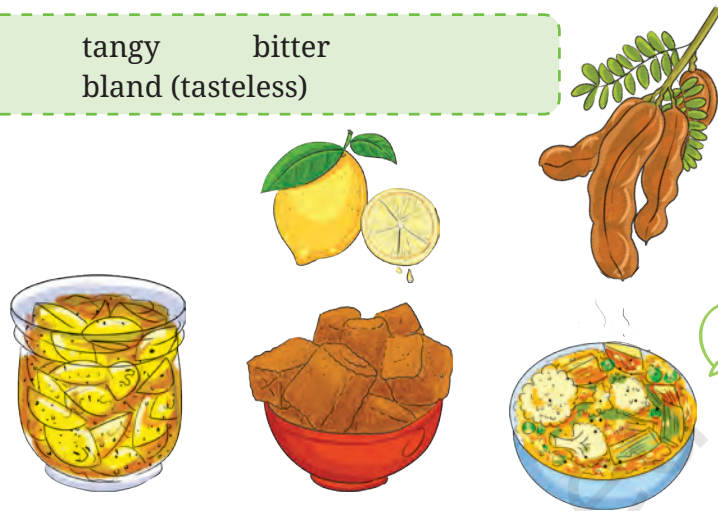
(‘chop’, ‘slice’ and ‘mince’ are words used for cutting with a knife; whereas ‘trim’ is to cut a part with a pair of scissors)

2. plodded, galloped, scrambled, trudged
3. tender, delicate, soft, smooth
4. stared, peered, pecked, gazed
5. growing, blossoming, progressing, planting

II Choose the most suitable taste words given in the box below and write against the food items that follow.

sweet	sour	tangy	bitter
spicy	salty	bland (tasteless)	

1. tamarind
2. jaggery
3. neem leaves
4. paneer (cottage cheese)
5. lemon
6. pickle
7. a dish of vegetables



Now, use any five taste words and make sentences of your own.

III Choose the correct antonyms for the textual words given below from the box. There are two extra words that you will not need.

growing	ordinary	unprotected	cheerful	hard
wide	fasting	shaky	fussing	coldness

1. tender		5. feasting	
2. sturdy		6. grumpy	
3. narrow		7. sheltered	
4. warmth		8. special	

IV Read the following lines from the text and underline all the verbs and identify the form of tense.

1. Rakesh was on his way home from school when he bought the cherries.
2. Rakesh was looking for Grandfather without finding him in any of his favourite places around the house.
3. Rakesh and Grandfather gazed at the tree as though it had performed a miracle.

The forms of tenses in the given statements are Simple Past Tense (1 and 3), Past Progressive Tense (2), and Past Perfect Tense (3).





Now, fill in the blanks with the correct form of Simple Past, Past Progressive, or Past Perfect Tenses of the verbs given in brackets. One example has been done for you.

(i) I was sitting (sit) with my grandparents in the garden, sharing the wonderful memories from my childhood. As we (ii) _____ (talk), I (iii) _____ (realise) how much wisdom they (iv) _____ (impart) to me over the years. While I (v) _____ (listen) to their stories for hours together, I (vi) _____ (remember) the times we (vii) _____ (spend) together planting flowers and learning about life. By the time I left, the sun (viii) _____ (set), and I (ix) _____ (feel) a deep sense of gratitude for the bond we (x) _____ (nurture) through love, care, and countless memories.

V Study the punctuation marks in the following sentences from the text.

- *“Hey, not there,” said Grandfather, “I’ve sown mustard in that bed. Plant it in that shady corner; where it won’t be disturbed.”*
- *When Grandfather saw what had happened, he went after the woman and scolded her; but the damage could not be repaired.*
- *She did not try to avoid the tree: one sweep, and the cherry tree was cut in two.*

Punctuation refers to the symbols used in writing to clarify meaning and separate sentences and their components. Proper punctuation ensures the clarity and flow of a text, guiding readers through its structure.

Here are some of the most common punctuation marks:

- Full stop (.)—ends a declarative sentence

For example: She went to the store.

- Comma (,)—separates components in a list, clauses, or phrases within a sentence

For example: We bought apples, oranges, and bananas.

- Question Mark (?)—ends a direct question

For example: Where are you going?

- Exclamation Mark (!)—indicates strong emotion or emphasis

For example: Watch out!

- Colon (:)—introduces a list, explanation or elaboration

For example: He had one goal: win the race.

- Semicolon (;)—connects closely related independent clauses or separates complex list items

For example: She likes reading; he prefers writing.

- Apostrophe (')

✓ In contractions—He's (He is), they'll (they will), I'm (I am)

✓ To show possession—Jagan's book, the girls' toys

✓ If the noun ends in -s, add only the apostrophe—Manas' car

- Quotation Marks (" ")—enclose direct speech or quotations

For example: She said, "I'm happy."

- Dash (– or —)—adds emphasis or separates related thoughts

For example: He was late—again.

- Capitalisation Rules

✓ Names of people and places—Priya, India

✓ Days, months, festivals—Monday, December, Diwali

✓ Titles with names—Dr. Sneha, Mr. Patel

✓ Deities and holy books—God, the *Quran*, the *Bhagawad Gita*

✓ First person pronoun—I

✓ Adjectives from proper nouns—Indian, American

✓ Geographical features, races, religions, languages—the Himalayas, Hindu, French

✓ Titles of books, poems, or plays—*Malgudi Days*, *The Road Not Taken*, *Good Heavens*, etc.

Now, punctuate the following paragraph appropriately.

every sunday roshni would visit her grandparents house on their farm
 come sit grandpa would say patting the bench on their porch
 roshni loved these moments where the world slowed down and stories
 flowed like magic grandma would bring tea her eyes twinkling with joy
 im excited to hear about your younger days the adventures the lessons
 and the memories roshni said eagerly
 grandpa smiled softly his wrinkled hands resting on the cane ah the old
 days... when everything was simple and happiness was all we had
 roshni could feel the warmth of those memories he sat in silence bound
 not by words but by a timeless bond





Let us listen

I You will listen to a conversation between a son and his mother. As you listen, select four true statements from 1–7 given below. (Transcript for teacher on page 201)

1. The mother encouraged her son to deliver a presentation on the Chipko Movement.
2. The son was surprised to know about the Appiko Movement.
3. The son agreed that the Chipko Movement was about people uniting to make an impact.

4. The mother expressed a desire to share more details about Saalumarada Thimakka.
5. The mother was curious to hear about Saalumarada Thimakka.
6. The mother and son were in disagreement about the work of Jadav Payeng.
7. The son found the information on Jadav Payeng wonderful.



Let us speak

A **syllable** is a single, unbroken vowel sound in a word. Some words have only one syllable. Some have two and some more than two. For example, the word ‘tree’ has one syllable.

The word ‘cherry’ has two syllables—che-rry. (Here the hyphen is used to mark the gap between the two syllables.)

A syllable can also be called a ‘beat’ because you can clap out the ‘beats’ in the word.

I Work in pairs. Read aloud the following words from the text. Write the number of syllables in each word. Check your answers with your classmates and teacher.

mountains	grandfather	tender	disturbed
caterpillar	Himalayan	performed	intention
slope	newspaper	favourite	

Now, read the words aloud again with the beats. Check if the number of syllables matches with the number of beats.

II Speak about Van Mahotsav Diwas and its significance. Before you speak in the class or assembly, prepare yourself on the following points:

- When is it celebrated?
- Who celebrates it?
- Why is it celebrated?
- How is it celebrated?
- What is the message it conveys?



Let us write

An **article** is a piece of writing on a specific topic. It showcases independent opinions expressed by a writer. Articles are published in newspapers, newsletters, magazines, journals, and online portals.

Let us understand how to draft an article for a school magazine.

Remember to

- write the heading or title at the top,
- write the name of the writer below it as a byline, and
- follow the correct layout.
 - ✓ Paragraph 1: Give a brief introduction of the topic or issue. Focus on the main idea of the paragraph.
 - ✓ Paragraph 2: Elaborate by giving facts and advantages.
 - ✓ Paragraph 3: Include consequences and disadvantages.
 - ✓ Paragraph 4: Provide suggestions. End with a word of hope, a word of caution or a call for action.



Now, complete the article for a magazine on 'Trees–Our Lifeline'. Use the words and phrases given in the box below.

absorb carbon dioxide	Moreover, our planet	reduces pollution
Additionally	would stop existing	ensures a better future
climate control	Trees–Our Lifeline	To conclude
If trees were not there		

(i) _____ -by _____ (write your name and class)

Trees are essential for life on Earth. Without them, life as we know (ii) _____. This is the reason why trees are our lifeline.

Trees provide us with food, shelter, and even medicine. Trees

(iii) _____ and release oxygen, helping us breathe. This process also

(iv) _____ and keeps the environment clean. (v) _____,



trees give us fruits, nuts, and other foods. Trees also help in (vi) _____ and prevention of soil erosion. (vii) _____, the air would be polluted, and we would struggle to breathe. (viii) _____ would be barren, lacking food, shelter, and life-giving greenery. (ix) _____, trees are true friends. Protecting and planting trees (x) _____ for everyone on Earth. Therefore, we must act now to protect and plant more trees, preserving Earth's green lifeline for future generations.



Let us explore

I Did you know that the banyan tree is the National Tree of India? Our country has age-old banyan trees. Some of them are:

1. The Great Banyan, located in Shibpur, Howrah, near Kolkata.
2. Dodda Aalada Mara, located in Kethohalli village, near Bengaluru.
3. Thimmamma Marrimanu, in Anantapur District in Andhra Pradesh. It was recorded as the largest tree specimen in the world in the Guinness Book of World Records in 1989.

II Kailash Sankhala, 'The Tiger Man of India', was an Indian biologist and conservationist. He carried out a census of the tigers in India in 1971. Later, because of his studies, he was appointed the first director of Project Tiger—an initiative to prevent the extinction of the Indian Tiger. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1992.

Now, find more information about such Indian environmentalists and share with your classmates.

Rakesh saw the *V-shaped formation of wild ducks flying northward*. Did you know?

There is a reason that these birds fly in this V-shaped formation. The birds position themselves to fly just behind and to the side of the bird in front (V-shape), timing their wing beats to catch the uplifting wind currents. This helps them fly long distances easily and save their energy too.

