

## NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

### UNITS 4–7



#### The Ashes That Made Trees Bloom

- ❖ A Japanese story — underscores values such as honesty, compassion, diligence, etc. with a hint of magical realism. The spirit of the dog is the old couple's make-believe determination to get past personal setbacks and begin anew.
- ❖ Activity II under 'Working with Language' is about the use of articles. The following explanatory notes may be useful.
  - the indefinite article 'a' is used before a singular countable noun when it is used for the first time. When the same item is referred to again, the definite article 'the' is used before it.
  - 'the' is also used before an adjective like 'poor' or 'rich' to refer to the whole class.
    - the poor and the weak
    - the rich and the prosperous
    - the down-trodden
- ❖ Articles used in connected sentences are better understood than when used in isolated examples. Here is an additional exercise. Use 'a'/'an'/'the' appropriately.

My neighbour is moving into \_\_\_\_\_ new house next month. He is taking some furniture from \_\_\_\_\_ old house, and is also buying some new furniture because \_\_\_\_\_ new house is bigger than \_\_\_\_\_ old house.

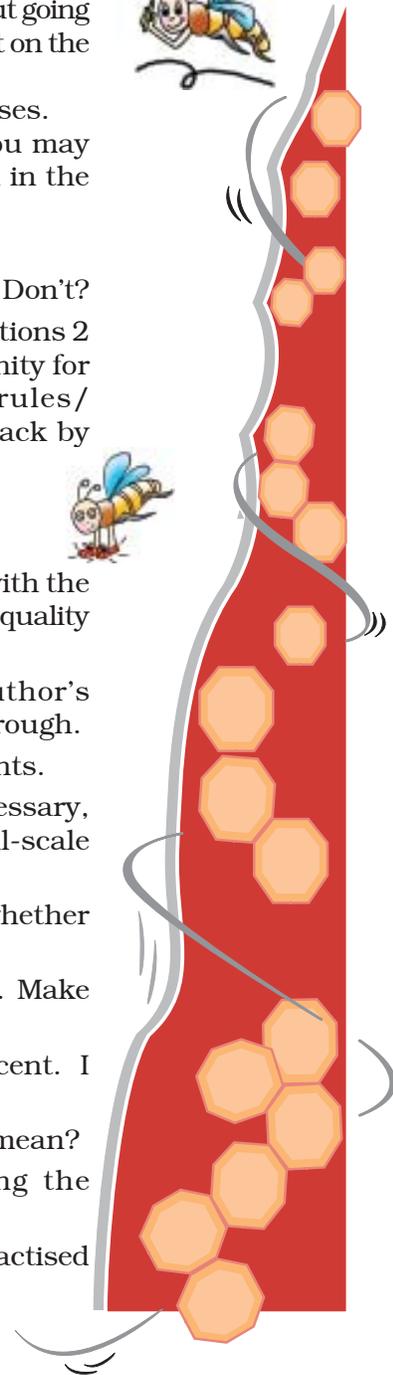


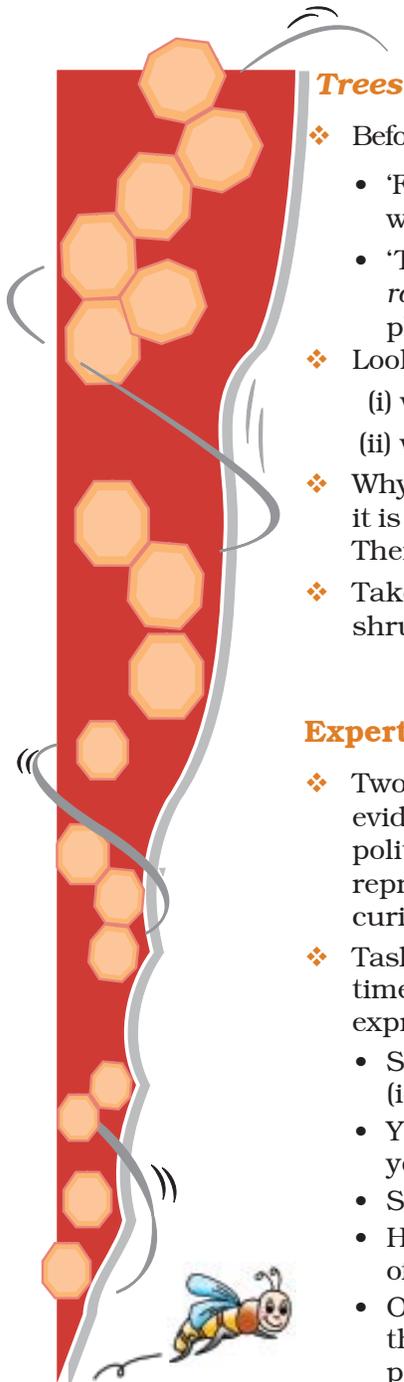
### Chivvy

- ❖ Groups of children jointly discuss the question without going through the Introduction (Ask the question or write it on the blackboard).
- ❖ Spend a few minutes to find out their real responses.
- ❖ Let them now read the Introduction silently. You may ask the following questions about the joke given in the Introduction.
  - What was the child's name?
  - If it was Michael, why did he say it was Michael Don't?
- ❖ Children will be keenly interested to discuss questions 2 and 3 in particular. Here is an excellent opportunity for them (a) to assess the practical value of rules/prescriptions, and (b) to get a bit of their own back by laying down instructions for grown-ups.

### Quality

- ❖ A story about dedication to work of high quality with the passion of an artist and the eventual loss of art and quality in a world of competition and consumerism.
  - ❖ Re-read and discuss episodes where the author's admiration for Mr Gessler and his craft comes through.
  - ❖ Using simple language, discuss the following points.
    - Production of goods on a large scale is necessary, though it goes against the interests of small-scale industry.
    - It is necessary to maintain quality of goods whether they are produced on a big or small scale.
  - ❖ Explain 'accent' with reference to spoken language. Make a distinction between 'accent' and (word) 'stress'.
    - Mr Gessler speaks English with a German accent. I speak it with an Indian accent.
- What does 'with a German/Indian accent' really mean?
- Minimal pairs to be said clearly maintaining the distinction between the two vowel sounds.
  - The sound 'sh' as in *shine*, *ashes* and *fish* to be practised carefully in the activity under 'Speaking'.





### Trees

- ❖ Before reciting the poem, explain the phrase 'to rake this fall'.
  - 'Fall' (in American English) means the same as autumn, when trees shed their leaves.
  - 'To rake' is to sweep or put away. (It is quite a job to *rake* heaps of dead leaves day after day to keep the place clean.)
- ❖ Looking at trees shedding their leaves,
  - (i) what will "mothers" want to do ?
  - (ii) what will "fathers" want to do ?
- ❖ Why has 'timber' been written as TIMBER-R-R ? (Perhaps it is related to the act of chopping down trees for timber! There may be other ideas in children's minds.)
- ❖ Take children round to show them different trees and shrubs growing in the vicinity.



### Expert Detectives

- ❖ Two detectives in the making with a talent for spotting evidence, more imaginary than incriminating, against a polite recluse with a health problem, Nishad and Maya represent a special dimension of the children's world of curiosity and creativity.
- ❖ Tasks 1 and 3 under 'Working with Language' merit more time and attention. Ask children to separate idiomatic expressions with 'tip' from its non-idiomatic uses.
  - She has the entire chemistry book *at her finger tips*. (idiomatic : knows it thoroughly)
  - You don't have to go to the Beauty Parlour to clean your *finger tips*. (non-idiomatic)
  - She is an artist *to her finger tips*. (in every way)
  - His name is on *the tip of my tongue*, but I just can't think of it. (almost but not quite spoken or coming to mind)
  - Over a hundred thefts are reported every month, but that's just the *tip of the iceberg*. (small but evident part of a bigger but hidden problem)



- Her greater experience *tipped the scale/balance* in her favour, and she got the job. (became the deciding factor in her favour)
- ❖ Draw children's attention to some of the following uses of 'break'.
  - break the law: do something unlawful
  - break the journey: halt temporarily
  - break ... serve/service: win a game (tennis, etc) when the opponent is serving
  - break down: start crying (humans); cease to function (machines)
  - break into: enter stealthily

Now give children *a break*. Switch over to another task after a short *break*.

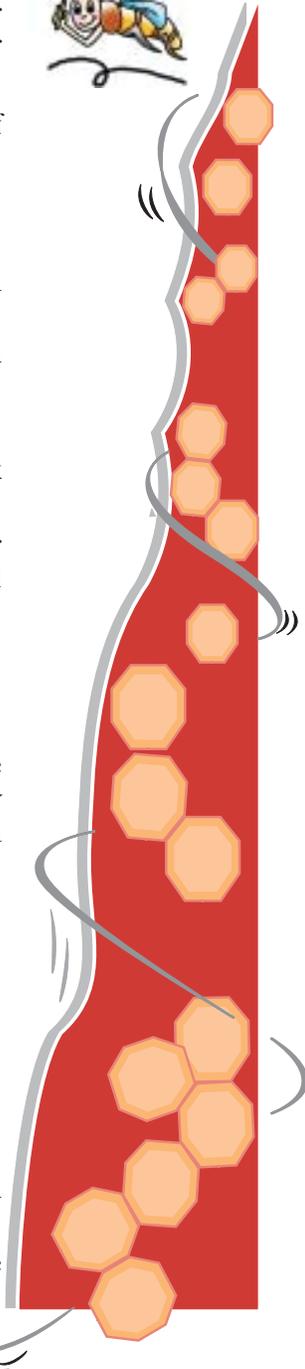
- ❖ Children will be keenly interested to play detectives under 'Speaking'. Prepare them for this activity with care and necessary caution.

### **Mystery of the Talking Fan**

- ❖ Discuss the points given at the beginning of the poem.
- ❖ After completing the exercises, children may try the following activity. Ask them to rearrange the lines below (write them on the blackboard first) so that it reads like a poem. The first line is the opening line.

Once there was a talking fan,  
Could with confidence scan  
And the way it talked, no man  
The message of the talking fan.  
However quiet, crazy or wild,  
Or woman or child,

- ❖ Draw children's attention to the rhyming words in re-ordering lines.
- ❖ Provide simple stanzas from other poems for the same activity for further practice.





### The Invention of Vita-Wonk

- ❖ A fantasy depicting children's fanciful wishes/ideas. Wonka-Vite, an exotic potion invented by Mr Willy Wonk, enables people to become old, older, oldest at will. He is now trying to invent something of counter effect.
- ❖ The piece is short, and need not take up more than two periods for both parts. Names of people, plants and other items may be difficult to pronounce, but the weirdness of the recipe speaks for itself.
- ❖ Activities that follow are numerous and of different types, and it is expected that they will evoke the desired response. Spend sufficient time on each activity under 'Speaking and Writing'.
- ❖ Recipe for *Easy Palak-Dal* may actually be tried at home. Children should be encouraged to bring other recipes, preferably area-specific, from home.
- ❖ A recipe can also be used to demonstrate the use of the passive voice in class.

### Dad and the Cat and the Tree

- ❖ In the lines that come after

The Cat gave a yell  
And sprang to the ground,  
Pleased as Punch...

there are five words beginning with the letter S. Each refers to the cat. Find these words.

- ❖ Draw children's attention to the vertical arrangement of the last five words of the poem. Does the vertical order suggest something? Does it remind them of the tree in which Dad is stuck?
- ❖ Dad in this poem is somewhat like Uncle Podger in Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*. Read aloud an appropriate excerpt from the book and discuss who creates greater confusion — Dad or Uncle Podger. Highlight parallels between them.

