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THE National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy of Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in languages, Professor Namwar Singh and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor R. Amritavalli for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are

grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, materials and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinements.

New Delhi 20 December 2005 Director National Council of Educational Research and Training





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2021–22





Foreword ..... iii

Notes for the Teacher  $\dots$  1 Units 1-3

1. The Fun They Had ..... 5 Isaac Asimov

The Road Not Taken ..... 15 Robert Frost

- 2. The Sound of Music ..... 17
  - I. EVELYN GLENNIE: Deborah Cowley
  - II. BISMILLAH KHAN



Wind ..... 30 Subramania Bharati

3. The Little Girl ..... 32 Katherine Mansfield

> Rain on the Roof ..... 41 Coates Kinney

Notes for the Teacher  $\dots$  43 Units 4–7

4. A Truly Beautiful Mind ..... 46

The Lake Isle of Innisfree ..... 54 William Butler Yeats

5. The Snake and the Mirror ..... 56 Vaikom Muhammad Basheer



A Legend of the Northland ..... 65 Phoebe Cary



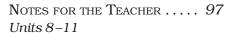


6. My Childhood ..... 68 A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

> No Men Are Foreign ..... 80 James Kirkup

7. Packing ..... 82 Jerome K. Jerome

The Duck and the Kangaroo ..... 94 Edward Lear



Reach for the Top ..... 99

 I. SANTOSH YADAV

 II. MARIA SHARAPOVA



On Killing a Tree ..... 110 *Gieve Patel* 

9. The Bond of Love ..... 113 Kenneth Anderson

> The Snake Trying ..... 125 W. W. E. Ross

10. Kathmandu ..... 127 Vikram Seth

> A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal ..... 136 William Wordsworth

11. If I Were You ..... 138 Douglas James