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Textbook in English for Class VIII



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NCERT

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

ISBN 978-81-7450-821-8

First Edition

February 2008 Phalguna 1929

Reprint Edition

January 2009 Pausa 1930

January 2010 Magha 1931

January 2011 Magha 1932

January 2012 Magha 1933

December 2012 Agrahayana 1934

October 2013 Asvina 1935

December 2014 Agrahayana 1936

December 2015 Agrahayana 1937

December 2016 Pausa 1938

January 2018 Magha 1939

December 2018 Agrahayana 1940

January 2019 Pausa 1940

August 2019 Bhadrapada 1941

PD 530T RPS

© National Council of Educational
Research and Training, 2008

₹ 65.00

Printed on 80 GSM paper with
NCERT watermark

Published at the Publication Division
by the Secretary, National Council of
Educational Research and Training,
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi
110016 and printed at Swan Press,
308 & 309, Sector-7 Manesar,
Gurugram - 122 050 Haryana

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Foreword

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-centered 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 committee 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
30 November 2007

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

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◆ Acknowledgements ◆

The National Council of Educational Research and Training is grateful to Professor M.L. Tickoo, formerly of the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, and the Regional Language Centre, Singapore, for going through the manuscript and making valuable suggestions. Special thanks are due to Professor R. Amritavalli for specific suggestions in addition to overall monitoring and assistance as Chief Advisor.

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Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders. We apologise for some omissions, and will gratefully acknowledge them as soon as they can be traced.

Our special thanks are due to Dr. Meenakshi Khar, DEL and Prof. Kirti Kapur, DCS, NCERT for developing the content.

Special thanks are also due to the Publication Department, NCERT, for their support. NCERT also acknowledges the contributions made by Parash Ram Kaushik, *Incharge*, Computer Station; Mohmad Harun and Arvind Sharma, *DTP Operators*; Neena Chandra and Hari Darshan Lodhi *Copy Editor* and Mathew John, *Proof Reader*.

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- (c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
- (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;
- (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
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