

KALEIDOSCOPE

Textbook in English (Elective)
for Class XII



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NCERT

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**OFFICES OF THE PUBLICATION
DIVISION, NCERT**

NCERT Campus
Sri Aurobindo Marg
New Delhi 110 016

Phone : 011-26562708

108, 100 Feet Road
Hosdakere Halli Extension
Banashankari III Stage
Bengaluru 560 085

Phone : 080-26725740

Navjivan Trust Building
P.O.Navjivan
Ahmedabad 380 014

Phone : 079-27541446

CWC Campus
Opp. Dhankal Bus Stop
Panihati
Kolkata 700 114

Phone : 033-25530454

CWC Complex
Maligaon
Guwahati 781 021

Phone : 0361-2674869

Publication Team

Head, Publication Division : *M. Siraj Anwar*
Chief Editor : *Shveta Uppal*
Chief Business Manager : *Gautam Ganguly*
Chief Production Officer : *Arun Chitkara*
Editor : *M.G. Bhagat*
Production Assistant : *Sunil Kumar*

Cover and Layout

Joel Gill

Illustrations

Joel Gill and Nidhi Wadhwa

FOREWORD

The National Curriculum Framework, 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 on 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.

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, material 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 Chairmanship 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 refinement.

New Delhi
20 November 2006

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

A NOTE FOR THE TEACHER

The selections for the Class XII Elective English Textbook, *Kaleidoscope*, are representative of Literature in English and fall into the following genres—fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry.

There are three short stories and two long ones in the fiction section representing contemporary writers from five cultures: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, James Joyce, Bi Shu-min, Isaac Singer and Joseph Conrad. The stories deal with fantasy and reality, alienation, a mother's sensitivity and the problem of choice in personal life.

Thematic variation is also found in the six pieces included in the non-fiction. George Bernard Shaw's essay on *Freedom* deals with the individual and society, with a companion piece by J.Krishnamurti on discipline and individual freedom. Virginia Woolf's essay, *The Mark on the Wall*, demonstrates the stream of consciousness technique. D.H Lawrence talks of the significance of the Novel as a literary form. Excerpts from *Film-making* by Ingmar Bergman, detailing film-making as a creative art is followed by an excerpt from an interview of Umberto Eco. *The Argumentative Indian* by Amartya Sen is based on the famous dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The last piece by Isaac Asimov correlates the *Universe of Science Fiction* to accounts of mythical superhuman beings in the *Pre-scientific Universe* that served to fulfill the same emotional needs as science fiction does.

Two plays find a place in the selection—*Chandalika* by Tagore brings out the intense conflict in the mind of a sensitive untouchable girl. The excerpt from Girish Karnad's *Broken Images* reflects the ambiguities in the mind of a writer who has unexpectedly acquired fame.

Of the eight poems, four are from the classical tradition—Donne, Milton, Blake and Coleridge. The other four are established poets, closer to contemporary times—Yeats, A.K. Ramanujan, Emily Dickinson and Kamala Das. There are two poems each by Blake and Milton. Learners may be encouraged to notice, in each pair of poems, the symmetry and/or contrast in themes and language. In an attempt to introduce learners to Blake as the first

multi-media artist, his engraved illustrations with the poems inscribed in his own handwriting have been reproduced.

The collection seeks to offer a balanced representation of the classical literary tradition, literary genres and contemporary themes to appeal to the modern sensibility and develop in young readers a taste for good reading and an appreciation of the nuances of language.

The exercises following the texts are based on insightful reading and literary appreciation. There is no separate textbook on Phonology and Grammar. Every unit, however, has a section on phonetic and grammatical patterns drawn from the texts.

Three plays and a collection of short stories are recommended for additional reading. Two plays are by contemporary Indian playwrights—*Dance Like a Man* by Mahesh Dattani and *Doongaji House* by Cyrus Mistry and the third is Bertolt Brecht's *Life of Galileo*. Garcia Gabriel Marquez' *Strange Pilgrims: Twelve Stories* is a delightful short story collection that would appeal to young adults.

TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON, ADVISORY GROUP FOR TEXTBOOKS IN LANGUAGES

Professor Namwar Singh, *formerly Chairman*, School of Languages,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

CHIEF ADVISOR

R. Amritavalli, *Professor*, Central Institute of English and
Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad

CHIEF COORDINATOR

Ram Janma Sharma, *Head*, Department of Languages, NCERT,
New Delhi

MEMBERS

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Irene Duarte Dias, *Teacher*, Pawan School, Dharwad, Karnataka

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N. Khan, *Reader*, Department of Languages, NCERT, New Delhi

Pema Eden Samdup, *Lecturer*, School of Humanities, IGNOU, New Delhi

P.N. Singh, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Malgodam Road, Gazipur

S.C. Dubey, *Professor*, Department of English, University of Allahabad,
Allahabad

Usha Satishchandra, *Principal*, Apollo Convent, Banshankari III Stage,
Bangalore

Vandana R. Singh, *Senior Lecturer*, Department of English, Government
College for Girls, Sector-XI, Chandigarh

V. D. Singh, *Professor (Retd. CIEFL)*, 'Harsha' 1-JA-10, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur

MEMBER-COORDINATOR

Varada M. Nikalje, *Lecturer*, Department of Languages, NCERT,
New Delhi

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