

Unit 2

A LETTER TO GOD

Theme: Faith, culture and values

Learning Outcome:

The Learner

- Reads and appreciates stories and poems given in the Reader.
- Understands the theme of the given story and poem.
- Narrates events and completes the given story.
- Writes a personal letter appropriate to the context, following a particular format.
- Prepares a newspaper report.
- Identifies different expressions used in a story/poem.
- Identifies describing words and uses them before head words.
- Uses 'I wish' to express a strong wish.
- Uses appropriate degrees of describing words to compare two objects/persons.
- Combines sentences using 'when' and 'because'.

- Edits a passage which has errors.
- Undertakes simple projects on words related to farming.

Introduction

The entry to this unit is a poem in which a girl speaks to the clouds emerging in the sky.

The main reading text is a story written by Gregorio Lopez Fuentes. It is a story about a man who has unfailing faith in God. He tries to carry a correspondence with God.

The text for Extended Reading is the letter written by Jawaharlal Nehru to his daughter Indira Priyadarshini. His faith in certain values is very much evident in the letter. The poem 'I Wrote Myself A Letter' is about a man who wrote a letter to himself, but only to find that he has not learned to read it.

Entry poem

Let the learners read the poem 'Clouds' written by Christina Rossetti.

Meet the poet

Christina Rossetti was born on December 5, 1830, in London,

Unit Frame

Unit 2:A Letter to God

Time: 26 to 30 periods

Concept/Skill	Discourses/Activities	Language Elements	Learning Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of faith, values and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story • Poem • Letter • Report • Expressions which appeal to the senses • Identify describing words and use them before head words • Identify different occupations • Express a strong wish using 'I wish I had' • Use degrees of describing words and compare two objects or persons • Combine sentences using 'when' and 'because' • Set up a mock post office in the classroom • Edit a passage which has errors • Undertake simple project on farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjectives- degrees of comparison. • 'I wish I had' • Conjunction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads and enjoys the humour in the story 'Letter to God' and the poem 'I wrote myself a Letter' given in the Reader. • Develops a sense of values and culture through reading 'Birthday Letter'. • Narrates the events and completes the given story. • Writes a personal letter appropriate to the context, keeping the format. • Prepares a newspaper report. • Identifies different expressions used in a story/poem • Identifies describing words and use them before head words. • Uses 'I wish' to express a strong wish. • Uses degrees of describing words and compare two objectives / persons. • Combines sentences using 'when' and 'because'. • Edits a passage with errors. • Undertakes simple projects on words related to farming:

England. She was the youngest daughter of Gabriele Rossetti, an Italian-born poet and scholar who fled to England in 1824 because of his



support for Italian revolutionary nationalism. Her mother, Frances Polidori, was the daughter of another Italian exile, Gaetano Polidori.

Rossetti is best known for her ballads and her mystic lyrics. Her poetry is marked with symbolism and intense feeling. Rossetti's best-known work, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, was published in 1862. This collection established Rossetti as a significant voice in Victorian poetry. *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems*, appeared in 1866 followed by *Sing-Song*, a collection of verse for children in 1872 (with illustrations by Arthur Hughes).

The poem

The girl in the poem speaks to the clouds moving in the sky. She speaks to them as she speaks to her friends. She believes that the clouds can hear what she says. She is sure that the clouds will respond to her questions. The teacher may ask questions to help learners understand the poem better.

- Where does the poet see the white sheep?
- What happens when the wind stops?
- What happens when the wind blows?

- What does the girl finally ask the clouds?

The teacher may drive home the point that the girl treats the clouds as if they are alive. Children speak to living and non-living things without any discrimination.

The story 'A Letter to God' tells about an innocent farmer who has absolute faith in God. He believes that God will listen to his prayers. Thinking that God will respond to him, he writes a letter to God. God is like a friend to him.

Meet the Author

Gregorio López Fuentes (November 17, 1897- December 10, 1966) was a Mexican novelist, poet and journalist. He was one of the leading chroniclers of the Mexican Revolution.



In his youth he spent much time in his father's general store, where he met many farmers and labourers of the region, whose lives he would later describe with deep insight. His first success *Campamento* (1931, 'Encampment') was followed by several others dealing with aspects of the Revolution, including *Tierra* (1932; 'Earth'), a novel about the Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata; *Mi general!* (1934; 'My General!'), a work on the lives of generals after the Revolution; and *El indio* (1935; 'The Indian') his most celebrated work, a fictional study of the life of Mexico's indigenous people.

A Letter to God

The Pleasure of Rain

The picturesque details of Lencho's village is described in this part of the story. Learners will be able to catch the excitement of Lencho awaiting the rain and feeling the pleasure of rain on his body. So it will be fine if this part of the story is presented in the class. This will create an urge in the learners to read the rest of the story. After the narration a few simple interaction questions can also be asked. For instance,

- Who is the main character in this story?
- What is Lencho waiting for?
- Where does the story take place?

Then, let the learners sit in groups and follow the processes of reading.

A Night of Sorrows

- Follow the process of reading.
- Highlight the disappointment of Lencho as the hailstorm destroys all the crops, through teacher talk.
- The processing of the newspaper report in the 'Let's write' section can be attempted at this point.

Processing a Report

A newsreport will contain the five W's (What was the event, Where did it happen, When did it happen, Who were involved, and Which was the most important event or Which would make

news if there were more than one event) and one H (How did it happen).

The teacher talk to process the newspaper report may be as follows.

- What are the features of a news report?
- What makes it different from other discourses?

Let the learners analyse a few news reports and identify their salient features.

- A news report has a heading.
- The place of occurrence is given in the beginning.
- The event should be clear from the first two or three sentences itself.
- Comparatively less important details are given towards the end.
- Style of reporting varies from newspaper to newspaper.
- Every newspaper has its own version of the event.

Writing news report

Before starting to write, the following areas are to be clarified.

- Where did the event take place? (Name of place)
- When did it take place?
- What is the main event?
- How did it happen?
- What are the details of the event?
- Who are the persons involved in the event?

Process

- Let them write the news report individually.
- Let them refine their works in groups.
- Let the groups present their news reports.
- Present the teacher's version of the report.
- Select one or two group products for editing.
- Compile the products into a Big Book.
- The individual works may be included in the learners' portfolio.

Sample newsreport

HAILSTORM DESTROYS CROPS

Veracruz, July 13: A hailstorm destroyed the crops of the entire Veracruz valley last evening. Farmers were praying for rain but it came as a hailstorm. Lencho, the leading farmer alone suffered a loss of at least 200 pesos. The district collector visited the valley late in the evening.

At the Post Office

- The focus of this part of the story is Lencho's letter to God.
- 'Because of the hailstorm you sent, everything is lost', says Lencho in his letter to God. Lencho is justifying his demand for money.

Highlight this point through teacher talk.

- After processing the reading, draw the attention of the learners to the

sentence, 'What faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter.'

- Pose a few questions like:

What does the postmaster mean by this?

Why does the postmaster think like that?

- You may now attempt Activity 6.

Scaffolding Questions

Scaffolding questions to support reading are given in the Reader. You can modify them or frame new questions to ensure better comprehension. You are free to adopt strategies dealt in the prior unit to suit your learners.

Anyhow, let the learners read the story first and clarify their ideas in groups.

Some passages can be narrated in the whole class.

Note

Decide on:

- which passage (or part of a passage) you will present.
- which part or passage will the learners read by themselves.
- if you think your learners can read the whole story by themselves, let them do so.

God Replies

- The focus of this part of the story is Lencho's second letter to God.
- The narrative and the postmaster's reply to Lencho's second letter can be processed after reading this section.

Processing a narrative

- Fix the first event- 'Lencho reached home'.
- Elicit other events by negotiating with the learners and list them in a chart.
- Develop the first event into a meaningful part of a narrative. For this you may need to ask questions like the following.
 - Where does the event take place?
 - Who are the characters involved ?
 - What do they speak?
 - What do they see/smell/hear? (sensory perceptions)
 - How does nature reflect their mood?
- Write the answers to these questions on the BB and link them properly.
- Assign the other events to the groups.
- In the groups let them attempt the task individually and then refine their work seeking help from within the group and present them.
- Present the teacher's version.
- Edit one or two group products.
- Let the learners include their individual works in their portfolios.

Processing the letter

The postmaster writes a reply to Lencho after reading his second letter to God.

You may interact with the learners using the questions given below.

- Who writes the letter?
- Who is it addressed to?
- What will be the content of the letter?
- How will the postmaster begin the letter?
- What will he tell Lencho?
- What will be the mood of his letter?
- Will he tell Lencho how he got the money he had sent him?
- Will the postmaster be angry to Lencho?
- '...the post office employees are a bunch of crooks'. How will the postmaster respond to this statement written by Lencho?
- Won't he be annoyed on reading Lencho's letter?

Sample Letter

Veracruz
23/7/1950

My dear Lencho,

First of all, I appreciate your faith in God. It was I who sent you 70 pesos. I collected it from my friends in the post office. Do not think that we are a bunch of crooks. We could collect only that much. Was it helpful to you? I am sorry that I put the signature of God. Please do not misunderstand me. Actually I was helping you. Go on with your cultivation. You will get a nice harvest. May God bless you.

With love

Postmaster

Reviewing the Story

You have processed the reading passages. Now, let's go through the review questions given in the Reader. They help us to lead the learners to read between the lines and beyond the lines. You can frame more questions to serve the purpose.

For e.g. The first question, 'What would be the postmaster's feeling when he read Lencho's second letter?' can be made clear by asking some more questions like:

- Will he be angry?
- Will he be surprised? Why do you say so?

The second and the fourth questions given will help the learners go beyond the story and link current social issues to it. You can lead the learners to reflect on social evils and natural calamities, the beauty of expressions etc. You can try a few more review questions other than the ones given in the Reader.

Sample

The field was white, as if covered with salt 'What does the writer want to tell us through this expression?

Here snow is compared to salt. Usually land covered with snow is a thing of beauty. But why is it compared to salt? Here the writer focuses on the corrosive nature of salt. Salt destroys crops.

Do not expect the learners to write the review of the story. Oral presentation is commendable and should be done first.

Use of Multimedia

You can search in YouTube for a slide show of the events of the story. Show relevant parts after collaborative reading. The captions of the slide show may be slightly different. Yet it is worth showing. Try preparing your own slide show in the order of the events in the story to make the class more interesting. You may also add small narratives in your slides.

Community picture

Arrange a big canvas and let each learner add at least one detail of Lencho's village or the events that took place in the village. Let all the learners contribute to complete the picture. Keep on talking to them while they draw. Attempt a running commentary of the event like:

'Siju and Dinu are coming. They are drawing _____ .

Give them a clap _____ etc.

Lastly let the learners attempt a description of the full picture.

Extended Reading: Birthday Letter

Aims:

- To foster reading habits in children.
- To introduce famous pieces of literature.
- To improve and assess reading comprehension.

Process

Individual reading proceeding to collaborative reading.

- Let the learners read the passage individually at first and then in groups.
- Let the groups present the ideas they have gathered from their reading.
- You can contribute to their presentation.
- The second and third paragraphs of Nehru's letter may be a bit difficult for the learners to understand. So you may narrate it in the class.

Do not compel the learners to learn the meaning of all the words given in the glossary.

- 'How well I read' aims to assess reading comprehension.
- Let the learners correct their work in groups.

Poem - I Wrote Myself A Letter

Meet the poet

Kenn Nesbitt was born on February 20, 1962 in Berkeley California, USA and grew up in Fresno and San Diego. He is well known as *a writer of humorous poetry for children*. *My Hippo Has the Hiccups* and *Revenge of the Lunch Ladies* are his most popular works.

His first children's poem, 'Scrawny Tawny Skinner', was written in 1994 after having dinner with a friend whose 4-year-old daughter did everything she could to get out of eating her dinner.

Shortly after that, he wrote two more poems, 'My Foot Fell Asleep' and 'Binkley'. During 1995 and 1996, he wrote about three or four poems a year

including 'You Can Never Be Too Careful' and 'A Melancholy Tale'. In 1998, he published his first collection of poetry, entitled *My Foot Fell Asleep*. He published a sequel called *I've Seen My Kitchen Sink* in 1999 and a third book, *Sailing Off to Singapore*, in 2000. *The Aliens Have Landed at Our School!* was published by Meadowbrook Press in 2001.



His first collection of poems about school, 'When the Teacher Isn't Looking: and Other Funny School Poems' was published by Meadowbrook Press in 2005.

Nesbitt's writing often includes imagery of outrageous happenings, before ending on a realistic note. Being children's poems, many make fun of school life.

On June 11, 2013 he was named Children's Poet Laureate by the Poetry Foundation. He also frequently visits schools to give poetry performances and workshops to students.

For more materials and details visit 'KennNesbitt's poetry4kids.com'

About the poem

The poem 'I Wrote Myself A Letter' speaks about a person, who is craving to receive a letter from somebody. But unfortunately he is not getting any. So he wrote a letter to himself and posted it. He was very anxious to get it. He tore the envelope and pulled the letter out as

soon as he got it. But the funny thing was that, he was unable to read it. He confesses that he couldn't understand what was in it although he himself had written the letter. What the curious is that the content of the letter is not disclosed anywhere in the poem!

Processing the poem

Teacher talk: We have already seen a letter written by Lencho to God. Lencho wrote the letter out of sheer helplessness. We have seen another letter written by Jawaharlal Nehru to his daughter, Indira.

Nehru's letter gave a lot of hope and inspiration to Indira. Now, let's see what a man wrote to himself.

Process

- Let the students read the poem individually.
- Let them share the ideas they got in small groups.
- Give them a chance to raise their doubts regarding theme, expressions etc. in the whole class.
- Lead a discussion so as to clear their doubts.
- Explore the possibilities of reciting the poem in the class.

The questions given in the Reader may help you to analyse the poem. You can frame more questions to ensure better comprehension and analysis.

For example:

- Why does the poet say 'I couldn't wait to get it'?

- The poet was excited to get the letter. Do you have any such experience?
- Can you guess the content of the letter written by the poet?

The following tasks may also be attempted on the poem.

I. The poet wrote a letter to himself. The funny thing is that when he got it, he was unable to read it. Let the learners collect such funny poems and present them in the class.

II. Look at the following stanza.

I wrote myself a letter.

I mailed it right away.

And, sure enough, the carrier,
delivered it today.

The word 'away' in the second line rhymes with the word 'today' in the fourth line. Let the students find out other rhyming pairs in the poem.

III. Let the learners write simple funny poems on select topics on their own.

Language activities

The language activities in this unit are presented with a view to sensitising the learners to specific features of the English language.

The activities are presented in meaningful contexts. You need not teach the rules of the language to analyse the targeted language element presented in the context. The learners are expected only to develop a good awareness of the language elements, which in turn will help them to construct the targeted

discourses as learning progresses. The possibilities of extending these activities can be explored by finding slots from other meaningful contexts. Proper interactions to lead the learners to the activities are crucial.

Activity 1

Adding beauty to language: sensory perceptions

Aims:

- To give insight into figurative language.
- To identify words that add beauty to narratives/writings.

Materials required: Reader

Process

- Teacher reads out the introductory part.
- Teacher clarifies the task.
- Learners go through the text and find out similar expressions.
- They write the expressions in their notebook.
- Teacher can contribute missing expressions if any.

Activity 2

Aim: To identify describing words and use them appropriately.

Materials required: Reader

Process

- Write the expressions given (a good harvest, new coins, a strong wind) on the B B.

- Initiate a discussion on the function served by the underlined words. (We can see the underlined words describe the head words. We call them adjectives. But there is no need to mention the term to your learners at this stage.)

The teacher may ask:

- Which are the headwords in the word pyramid?
- Which words describe the head words?

Let the learners write such words in the relevant column of the given table.

Let them find more such headwords and describing words.

Activities 3, 4 & 5

On occupations

Aim:

- To bring home the idea that all professions are noble and worthy.

Materials required:

Pictures of different occupations to make an album.

Process

Ask the learners to read the poem and identify different occupations

- Let them list out different occupations in their notebook.
- Now you may ask the question: "What do you wish to be when you are grown up?"
- Accept all answers and ask 'Why?'

- Before proceeding to Activity 4, let the learners go through the pictures first. Then, let them read the names of occupations given in the box, identify them and write them below each picture.
- Proceed to Activity 5.

Activity 6

Aim:

To familiarise the learners with the expression 'I wish I had', to express a strong wish.

Strategy

- Read aloud the introductory part.
- Clarify the doubts.
- Invite the learner's attention to the contexts given.
- Let them complete the sentences individually.
- Let them refine it in groups, if necessary.

Activity 7

Aim:

- To assess whether the learners know the degrees of comparison
- To provide chances to use them in meaningful contexts

Process

- Invite the learner's attention to the introductory part.
- If needed, read it aloud and clarify their doubts.

- Let the learners work individually.
- Support weak learners with specific interactions.
- Let them refine it in groups.
- Edit their work.

Activity 8

Aim:

- To assess the learners' ability to read pictures and speak about them in English.
- To assess their ability to complete sentences using 'because'
- To enhance logical thinking.

Materials: Reader

Process

- Read aloud the introductory part and clarify their doubts.
- Draw their attention to the written part and the picture part of the activity.
- The first part shows what happened. The picture gives the reason as to how it happened.
- Draw their attention to the examples given in the introductory part.
'I am late, because I missed the bus'
- Expressions like – 'It rained' (1) 'the nurse gave an injection' (picture 2) and 'A dog chased me' (picture 3) are to be elicited through proper interaction.
- You may ask questions like:

- What do you see in the picture?
- What is the boy doing? (for picture 1)
- What is the nurse doing? (for picture 3)

Activity 9

Aims:

- To check the ability to use 'when' and to give more chances to use it.
- To state sequences of events.
- To promote logical thinking.

Materials : Reader

Strategy

- Invite the learners' attention to the first sequence of pictures.
- Let them analyse the pictures and understand the ideas.
- Make them read and analyse the questions and answers given along with the picture.
- Make sure that the learners are able to describe the pictures.
- Support the slow pace learners with more specific questions.
- Let learners write the answers to the questions given.
- Modify the answers while they are in groups.
- Edit the group work in negotiation.

Activity 10

The School Post Office

Aim:

- To provide opportunities to the

learners use language in meaningful situations

- To provide chances to use language in a free and fearless atmosphere.
- To enhance writing skills.

Materials required: Cardboard, marker pen, glue, etc.

(You may attempt this as an activity of the English club.)

Process

- Let the learners visit a post office.
- Lead a discussion on the employees in a post office, name boards seen there, counters etc.
- Develop a concept map on post office.
- Let the learners sit in groups.
- Assign different jobs like setting the counters, post box, name boards, etc. to each group
- Let the learners take turns and enact the roles of employees.
- Each learner can write letters.
- The postmaster and other employees sort the letters and the postman distributes them.
- You can also write letters to some of the learners.
- The learners prepare replies, buy mock stamps, affix stamps and post them.
- Edit samples.

Editing

- Let the learners read the passage.
- You may clarify their doubts.
- Draw their attention to the underlined words.
- Lead a discussion on why they are underlined. The corrections are:

Begin- began (give options)

In-into (check whether they have the feeling of error)

Was -were (give options)

On the branches sat - sat on the branches (do not give options- check their sense of word order)

Wing-wings (give options)

Project work

The project has two parts. In the first part, the learners have to develop a concept map on the theme, 'farming'.

- Supply the learners with picture charts, pamphlets on farming, agricultural journals, advertisement of agricultural equipments etc.
- Let them gather words from the material provided and complete the word-web.
- Conduct a visit to a nearby farm or show a documentary on farming.
- Let them write about the farming activities.

Process the pages 'I can' and 'My learner can' judiciously.