UNIT 3  FROM A COCOON WITH HOPE

Structure
3.0  Objectives
3.1  Reading comprehension: From a Cocoon with Hope
3.2  Grammar: Simple Past Tense
3.3  Writing: Writing a Report
3.4  Listening and Speaking
3.5  Speaking
3.6  Suggested Readings
3.7  Let Us Sum Up
3.8  Answers

3.0  OBJECTIVES

This Unit will enable you to:
• read a report and understand its main points;
• comprehend new lexical items using cues from within the text;
• make inferences from the text;
• evaluate a situation and provide personal opinion;
• look for patterns and generalize;
• use the simple past tense to report events of the past; and
• report the development of a new technique/method or way of thinking in a cohesive manner.

3.1  READING COMPREHENSION: FROM A COCOON WITH HOPE

Activity 1
1. Name a few projects undertaken by the government to protect the flora and fauna of India.
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2. Give reasons why wildlife like tiger, the hornbill, the rhinoceros etc. are becoming less. Pick the reasons from those given:
   i)  Cutting down of forestland
   ii)  People’s greed for parts of the body of animals which fetch a high price
   iii)  People’s desire to use a part of the animal’s body for self decoration or for rituals
   iv)  Disease and lack of food
   v)  Poaching for food or for trophies

Discuss them with your study partner.

Now read this passage and answer the questions given after it.

The frail man who won India her freedom preached non-violence. To Gandhiji though, non-violence, or ahimsa, was a way of life. He wore ‘ahimsa’ leather
sandal and promoted ‘ahimsa’ silk; the former made from the hide of cows that had died a natural death. He also hoped that the Indian silk industry would use only those cocoons whose worms had already matured into moths and flown out into the world, not boiled to death for the sake of the rich yarn known all over the world as a symbol of India.

Some years ago, APCO (Andhra Pradesh Handloom Weavers’ Cooperative Society) in Hyderabad first realized the value of ahimsa silk when its best silk had to be rushed to a high profile visitor. Mrs. Janaki Venkatraman, wife of the then President of India, Mr. R. Venkatraman, who wanted to buy beautiful silk but would do so only on one condition- the silk should have been woven without killing the silkworm before it turned into a moth.

Stumped by the request, the then APCO manager, a non-technical person, rushed to his technical assistant, Mr. Kusuma Rajaiah, who confirmed that the process of procuring silk is a violent one. In fact, one silk saree can mean up to 50,000 silkworms. The irony is that the very cocoon, created by nature to safeguard the growing insect, is made up of the fine silk thread that can be spun into lustrous silk yarn. Just seven days before maturity, the cocoons are collected, put into heat chambers, and treated at 70°C – 90°C for three to four hours, thus killing the insect and making the cocoon pliable for spinning.

Over the decades, since Gandhiji first promulgated the idea, there have been movements within the Khadi cottage industry and institutions such as Kalashetra in Tamil Nadu to actually popularize this form of silk, where only those cocoons are used that have been discarded by the resident silkworm. At Kalashetra, the traditional art and craft institution begun by the famous danseuse and activist Mrs. Rukmini Devi Arundale, there is a half-a-century old weaving centre, which produces traditional Kalashetra sarees in cotton and ahimsa silk.

As often seen with alternative methods that are eco-friendly and which require new technology or way of thinking, the costs are high. It is easy to produce a single saree but mass production requires bulk procurement of the special cocoons. The process was exhausting and it was only in January 2001 that Mr. Rajaiah managed to purchase 105 kg cocoons from the Sericulture Federation in Hyderabad. Funds were also a problem. So Mr. Rajaiah mobilized the funds from his Provident fund and personal savings. After much persuasion, the Indorama mills at Raipur, Chattisgarh agreed to spin this silk. Finally, in Nalgonda district, Andhra Pradesh, 30 samples of ahimsa silk sarees were ready for market trial.

Many experts from the textile industry supported the concept. Mr. N V R Nathan, Director, NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology), Hyderabad is one amongst them. He feels that “forbearance, compassion, a vegetarian diet, avoiding injury, and avoiding killing are the five concepts of ahimsa, or non-violence, and ahimsa silk sarees fall under these principles.” Also, ahimsa silk is as good as any other silk in quality.

Of course ahimsa silk is costlier than ordinary silk, simply because when the moth leaves home it punctures the cocoon and this breaks the silk thread. During the spinning process, cocoons without the moth lead to a lot of wastage. From an ordinary cocoon, 80% of the thread can be procured as yarn, but from an empty one, this goes down to an abysmal 16%. The finished saree reflects this cost and is one - and - half times costlier than a regular silk saree. “Too little a price to pay, as compared to what it saves,” says Mrs. Menaka Gandhi, a well-known animal rights activist and a minister in the present government. However, to make it accessible to the ordinary customer on the street, there is a need to work on not just bringing the cost down, but also on spreading awareness about the good deeds s/he does by buying such a saree.

(A Long Report in the Journal of TerraGreen, by Suvira Srivasta)

TerraGreen, Internet)
Check Your Progress 1
Read the passage given complete the sentences given below. Select the most appropriate phrase from those given.

1. Gandhiji preferred to wear ahimsa leather because
   i) it was processed in a natural way.
   ii) it did not require the killing of cows.
   iii) it was made in Gandhi Ashram.
   iv) it was soft and did not hurt the feet.

2. Silk is usually prepared by
   i) unwinding the cocoons after the adult moth has flown out.
   ii) boiling empty cocoons after the adult moth has flown out.
   iii) by using the broken thread of the cocoon after the moth had flown out.
   iv) boiling the cocoons along with the worms a few days before they fly out.

3. The idea of non-violent methods of making silk was first spread by
   i) Gandhiji
   ii) Mrs. Janaki Venkatraman
   iii) Mrs. Rukmini Arundale
   iv) Mr. Rajaiah

4. Ahimsa silk is different because of the way
   i) its patterns are designed.
   ii) its yarn is obtained.
   iii) it is marketed.
   iv) it is worn.

5. Ahimsa silk is costlier because
   i) all the machines used in making it are new.
   ii) there are very few people making it.
   iii) the yarn obtained from the punctured cocoon is very little.
   iv) it is needs special care to store it.

6. Ahimsa silk is valuable because
   i) the thread obtained from the discarded cocoons is broken.
   ii) it upholds the value of life.
   iii) so many great minds attempted to popularize it.
   iv) new technology is used to make it.

Check Your Progress 2
1. Ahimsa silk is a beautiful concept but it is not easy to make and popularize. State four reasons why?
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2. Mention two places where *ahimsa* silk is being made.

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3. What is the irony in the life of a silk worm?

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**Vocabulary**

**Check Your Progress 3**

Find words from the passage which mean the same as the following:

1. Someone who is not very strong
2. The skin of an animal which can be used for making leather
3. Thread for making cloth or knitting
4. Stumped
5. Announced something publicly and make it widely known
6. A large mass of something
7. Self control, kindness and forgiveness which is shown to someone who has done something wrong
8. Easily available

**3.2 GRAMMAR: SIMPLE PAST TENSE**

Look at the following sentences from the passage:

1. The frail man who won India her freedom preached non-violence.
2. He wore ‘ahimsa’ leather sandals and promoted ‘ahimsa’ silk.

The simple past tense is used to express an action which took place in the past and is completed by the time of speaking.

You can change regular verbs into the past tense by adding –ed to the base form. For example, *preached, promoted*.

But there are many verbs which do not follow this pattern. You cannot add –ed to their base form. They are called irregular verbs, e.g. *won, wore*.

**Check Your Progress 4**

1. Pick out ten more irregular verbs from the reading passage.

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2. Fill in the blanks with appropriate verbs given in the brackets:

That night our mother ..........(go) to the shop and .................(not) come back. What ............(happen)? I don’t know.
When the sun ..........(be) going down our grandparents ..........(come).
Someone from the village had told them that we children ..........(be) alone, our mother had not come back. They ..........(take) us back to their house. We ..........(stay) a long time in our grandparent’s place. Our mother never ..........(return).

**3.3 WRITING: WRITING A REPORT**

**Check Your Progress 5**

1. Read the points given in the box and write a report on how the residents of a colony got together and made their colony beautiful. Write the report in the past tense. You may use non-finites like ‘overflowing bins’, ‘foraging stray animals’ or ‘stinking environment’ etc.
The Environment

Defence Colony has dirty look with bins overflowing
marriage parties arranged in the lawns and parks
the area left unclean after the party attract crows and stray animals
no place to sit or get fresh air
feel the need for greening neighbourhood
Residents’ Welfare Association holds meetings
asking for suggestions, volunteers
decision not to allow any marriage parties in parks
develop lawns and flowerbeds
invest in grass, manure, seeds and gardening equipment
liaison with the municipal committee for water connection to park
employ full time gardeners
need for contribution, initial cost to be rather high
luke warm response in the beginning
go from door to door, convincing people, requesting housewives and retired people to volunteer
gains momentum slowly, meets with resistance initially from people who want to use the parks for social functions
things shape up slowly
today proud residents of colony with manicured parks
2. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has launched the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. What have you done in your locality to implement this campaign? Write a report describing your efforts with regard to this campaign.

3.4 LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Listen to a speech delivered by a 12 year old girl Severn Suzuki at the UN Earth Summit in 1992. Now look at the questions given below. Listen to the speech again and answer the questions. Keep going back to the speech till you answer all the questions.

Check Your Progress 6

1. List the four environmental problems Suzuki thinks adults need to pay attention to.

2. What does Suzuki think adults are incapable of doing?

3. What is the difference between the privileged children and those that are underprivileged?

4. What is the one single goal Suzuki is referring to?

5. What does ‘We’ refer to?

6. Would you classify the passage as a speech, essay, story or a play?

7. Suggest a suitable title.

From A Cocoon With Hope
3.5 SPEAKING

Sit in groups of four and discuss how we can help to prevent poaching in our already scarce forest area.

Remember to take turns while speaking and allowing others to respond to your suggestions/opinion.

You could use expressions like the following:
To begin with .................................................................
In my opinion ........................................................................
In my view the government/we should ................................
I think we should ...........................................................
I am sure you will all agree ..................................................
I would suggest that we ......................................................

For agreement you could use expressions like these:
I agree with ..........................................................................
I am also in favour of ........................................................
I endorse the idea mooted by ..............................................
I am in total agreement to what ……said. I too feel ..................

For disagreement you could use expressions like:
Well, that’s true but don’t you think ......................................
I would like to differ at this point ........................................
I request you to look at the issue this way .............................
On the contrary .....................................................................
I disagree to a certain extent ................................................
(Remember you must allow the other to have said some logical point and thus not disagree totally or violently)
When in disagreement you could ask the opinion of the others in the group and come to a consensus.

3.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh
2. The books written by Gerald Durrell
3. Crow Chronicles by Ranjit Lal

3.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have given you practice in
- reading and understanding a report on the development of the idea of non-violent methods of making silk
- understanding the words in the report by looking at the context
- using the past tense
- writing a simple report
- listening and comprehending a speech
- conducting and carrying on a discussion on an issue.
3.8 ANSWERS

Activity 1
1. Project Tiger, Greening Girnar, VanMahotsav
2. All the reasons are correct.

Check Your Progress 1
1. ii) it did not require the killing of cows.
2. iv) boiling the cocoons along with the worms a few days before they fly out.
3. i) Gandhiji
4. ii) its yarn is obtained.
5. iii) the yarn obtained from the punctured cocoon is very little.
6. (ii) it upholds the value of life.

Check Your Progress 2
1. Four reasons are:
   i) the moth punctures the cocoon when it leaves it, thus leaving very little of thread for yarn.
   ii) making the yarn is a tedious process
   iii) during the making process there is a lot of wastage
   iv) since the silk is produced with such difficulty the saree is expensive.
2. Kalashetra in Tamilnadu; Nalgonda District, Andhra Pradesh
3. The irony is that the very cocoon, created by nature to safeguard the growing insect, is made up of the fine silk thread that can be spun into lustrous silk yarn. Something that is used to protect the moth becomes the cause of its death.

Check Your Progress 3
1. Frail
2. Hide
3. Yarn
4. Astonished
5. Promulgate
6. Bulk
7. Forbearance
8. Accessible

Check Your Progress 4
1. Ten irregular verbs from the reading passage: make-made, spin-spun, begin-begun, are-were, was-were, fall-fell, put-put, leave-left, lead-lead, go-went
2. That night our mother went to the shop and didn’t come back. What happened? I don’t know.

When the sun was going down our grandparents came. Someone from the village had told them that we children were alone, our mother had not come back. They took us back to their house. We stayed a long time in our grandparent’s place. Our mother never returned.
The Environment

Check Your Progress 5

1. Title: (providing some information of what the report is about)

Name of the reporter:

I Introduction to the report:

- Defense Colony wore a dirty look with overflowing bins and foraging animals. Environment was stinking
- marriage parties arranged in the lawns and parks
- the area left unclean after the party making it heyday for crows and stray animals
- no place to sit or get fresh air

II The need for cleaning up and action:

- felt the need for greening neighbourhood
- Residents’ Welfare Association held meetings
- asked for suggestions, volunteers
- took decision not to allow any marriage parties in parks
- decided to green the place rejuvenating the parks in the colony

III Action taken:

- with the help of the municipal authorities got a ban on marriage parties in the parks and lawns.
- developed lawns and flowerbeds
- invested in grass, manure, seeds and gardening equipment
- liaised with the municipal committee for water connection to park
- employed full time gardeners
- Residents had to contribute heavily as initial costs were rather high.

IV The stages the project went through:

- initially a luke warm response
- volunteers had to go from door to door, convincing people, requesting housewives and retired people to contribute and volunteer
- it slowly gained momentum, though it met with resistance initially from people who wanted to use the parks for social functions
- gradually things began to shape up.
- were able to achieve their plan and today are proud residents of colony with manicured parks and lawns.
- it is a pleasure to visit the colony.

2. Do it yourself.

Listening text: Speech of Severn Suzuki

“Hello, I am Severn Suzuki speaking for E.C.O – the Environmental Children’s Organization. We are a group of 12 and 13 year-olds trying to make a difference, Vanessa Suttie, Morgan Geisler, Michelle Quigg and me. We’ve raised all the money to come here ourselves, to come 5,000 miles to tell you adults you must
change your ways. Coming up here today, I have no hidden agenda. I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election, or a few points on the stock market.”

“I am here to speak for all generations to come. I am here to speak on behalf of the starving children around the world whose cries go unheard. I am here to speak for the countless animals dying across this planet, because they have nowhere left to go. I am afraid to go out in the sun now, because of the holes in our ozone. I am afraid to breathe the air, because I don’t know what chemicals are in it. I used to go fishing in Vancouver, my home, with my Dad until, just a few years ago, we found a fish full of cancers. And now we hear of animals and plants going extinct every day, vanishing forever. In my life, I have dreamt of seeing the great herds of wild animals, jungles and rainforests full of birds and butterflies, but now I wonder if they will even exist for my children to see.”

“Did you have to worry of these things when you were my age? All this is happening before our eyes and yet we act as if we have all the time we want and all the solutions. I’m only a child and I don’t have all the solutions, but I want you to realize, neither do you. You don’t know how to fix the holes in our ozone layer. You don’t know how to bring the salmon back up a dead stream. You don’t know how to bring back an animal now extinct. And you can’t bring back the forest that once grew where there is now a desert. If you don’t know how to fix it, please stop breaking it.”

“Here you may be delegates of your governments, business people, organizers, reporters or politicians. But, really, you’re mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles and all of you are someone’s child. I’m only a child, yet I know we are all part of a family, 5 billion strong, in fact 30 million species strong. And borders and governments will never change that. I’m only a child, yet I know we are all in this together and should act as one single world towards one single goal.”

“In my anger, I am not blind and in my fear I am not afraid of telling the world how I feel. In my country we make so much waste, we buy and throw away, buy and throw away, buy and throw away and yet Northern countries will not share with the needy. Even when we have more than enough we are afraid to share, we are afraid to let go of some of our wealth. In Canada, we live the privileged life. We’ve plenty of food, water and shelter. We have watches, bicycles, computers and television sets. The list could go on for two days. Two days ago here in Brazil, we were shocked when we spent time with some children living on the streets. This is what one child told us, ‘I wish I was rich and if I were, I would give all the street children food, clothes, medicines, shelter and love and affection’. If a child on the street who has nothing is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy? I can’t stop thinking that these are children my own age, that it makes a tremendous difference where you are born. And that I could be one of those children living in the Favelas of Rio. I could be a child starving in Somalia, or a victim of war in the Middle East or a beggar in India. I am only a child, yet I know if all the money spent on war was spent on finding environmental answers, ending poverty and finding environmental answers, what a wonderful place this earth would be.”

“At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us to not to fight with others, to work things out, to respect others and to clean up our mess, not to hurt other creatures, to share, not be greedy. Then, why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do? Do not forget why you are attending these conferences, who you are doing this for. We are your own children. You are deciding what kind of a world we are growing up in. Parents should be
able to comfort their children by saying ‘Everything is going to be all right, it’s not the end of the world, and we are doing the best we can’. But I don’t think you can say that to us anymore. Are we even on your list of priorities? My dad always says, ‘You are what you do, not what you say’. Well, what you do makes me cry at night. You grown-ups say you love us. But I challenge you, please, make your actions reflect your words. Thank you.”

**Check Your Progress 6**

1. Loss of ozone layer, polluted air and water bodies, loss of flora and fauna.

2. They tell kids to behave, not fight with others, respect others and not to hurt other creatures, to share, not be greedy while they themselves are incapable of doing it.

3. Privileged children have plenty of food, water, shelter as well as possessions such as bicycles, watches, computers, etc. These children are selfish of their possessions and often do not share. Street children, because they have seen so much suffering and hardship, are very willing to share.

4. Save the environment

5. All human beings

6. It’s a speech.

7. Save environment