
UNIT 1

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, our aim is to give you practice in reading comprehension by (i) setting a passage from George Orwell for you to read, and (ii) giving a glossary of difficult words, and questions on comprehension. We have also set exercises on selected items of vocabulary. The section on grammar and usage introduces you to the feature of subject-verb concord and gives examples of the concord of number and person with the verbs *be*, *do*, and *have*. For practice in writing, you will write a short speech of the kind you will read in the passage set for reading.

After completing the unit you should be able to

- read simple narrative passages with understanding;
- distinguish between words having related meanings;
- observe the rules of concord with the verbs *be*, *do* and *have*; and
- write a short composition presenting your views, and supporting them with facts.

1.1 READING COMPREHENSION

1.1.1 Study Guide

The aim of this section is to help you to read with understanding and to expand your vocabulary.

There is a reading passage, followed by a glossary. You should first read the whole passage silently and rapidly to get the main points. Then you should read it again, carefully and at a slower pace, to get all the details. You should also consult the glossary for the meanings of unfamiliar words, besides trying to guess the meanings of words and phrases from the contexts in which they occur.

After you have read and understood the passage, you must answer all the comprehension questions. Your answers should then be checked with the answers given by us at the end of the unit.

1.1.2 Passage for Reading

From *Animal Farm*

by George Orwell

- 1 Mr. Jones, of the the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-house for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was already snoring.
- 2 As soon as the light in the bedroom went out, there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings. Word had gone round during the day that old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way. Old Major was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say.
- 3 All the animals were now present except Moses, the tame raven, who slept on a perch behind the back door. When Major saw that they had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively, he cleared his throat and began :

'Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you.
- 4 'Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength; and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty.
- 5 'But is this simply part of the order of nature? Is it because this land of ours is so poor that it cannot afford a decent life to those who dwell upon it? No, comrades, a thousand times no ! This single farm of ours would support a dozen horses, twenty cows, hundreds of sheep—and all of them living in a comfort and a dignity that are now almost beyond our imagining. Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word—Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever.
- 6 'Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself. Our labour tills the soil, our dung fertilizes it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin. You cows that I see before me, how many thousands of gallons of milk have you given during this last year? And what has happened to that milk which should have been breeding up sturdy calves? Every drop of it has gone down the throats of our enemies. And you hens, how many eggs have you laid this last year, and how many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens? The rest have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men. And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who should have been the support and pleasure of your old age? Each was sold at a year old—you will never see one of them again. In return for your four confinements and all your labour in the field, what have you ever had except your bare rations and a stall?
- 7 'Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion! I do not know when that Rebellion will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done. Fix your eyes on that, comrades, throughout the short remainder of your lives. And above all, pass on this message of mine

to those who come after you, so that future generations shall carry on the struggle until it is victorious.

- 8 'And remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades.'

1.1.3 Note on the Author

George Orwell was the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair (1903-50), English novelist and essayist, who was born in India. He is known for his satirical novels, of which *Animal Farm* (1945) is one. It is an allegory on the Russian Revolution.

A satire is a literary work — a novel, play, etc., which tries to show the foolishness or evil of some establishment or practice in an amusing way.

An allegory is a story in which the characters and actions have a deeper moral meaning and represent good and bad qualities.

1.1.4 Glossary

(The numbers refer to the paragraphs in the reading passage.)

- 1 **manor** : a large house with land
ring : a circular band
lantern : a container that encloses the flame of a light
lurched : moved irregularly
yard : an enclosed area near a building
snoring : breathing heavily and noisily while asleep
- 2 **fluttering** : moving the wings quickly without flying
Major : an officer in the army; here it is the name of the boar.
prize : that has gained a prize or is worthy of a prize
boar : a male pig kept for breeding
communicate : make known
barn : a farm building for storing food for animals
highly regarded : very well thought of
- 3 **raven** : a large black bird
perch : a branch or rod where a bird rests
comrade : a close companion; fellow member of a union
acquired : gained
stall : an indoor enclosure for one animal
- 4 **miserable**: very unhappy
laborious: doing hard labour
atom : a very small bit
slaughtered : killed for food
hideous : shocking
- 5 **order** : arrangement
afford : be able to give
dignity : true worth
produce : something that has been produced, especially by growing or farming
abolished: brought to an end
- 6 **consumes**: eats or drinks
bare : not more than
tills : cultivates
fertilizes: makes (the land) produce good crops
gallon : a measure for liquids (in Britain 4.54 litres)
breeding : bringing up

sturdy : strong in body
hatched : (of an egg) broke, letting the young bird out
foal : a young horse
confinement: the time when a mother is about to give birth to a child

- 7 **crystal**: a transparent natural mineral
spring from: be a result of
tyranny : the use of cruel power to rule others
rebellion: fighting against anyone in power
straw : dried stems of grain plants used for animals to sleep on
generation: all people born at about the same time
- 8 **resolution**: a decision; making up one's mind to do something
falter : lose strength
astray : off the right path
prosperity : good fortune and success

1.1.5 Comprehension Questions

Exercise 1

Answer the following questions on the passage you have read (Section 1.1.2). You may refer to the passage again to find the answers. After you have written the answers, you should check them with the answers given by us at the end of the unit.

- 1 Why was the ring of light from Mr. Jones's lantern dancing from side to side?

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- 2 a) Where had the animals agreed to meet?

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- b) Why had they assembled there?

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- 3 What does old Major want to share with the animals?

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- 4 Pick out the three words Major uses to describe the lives of the animals. Why does he use these words?

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- 5 a) How is Man different from the animals?

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- b) Does Major depict Man as

- i) selfish?
- ii) greedy?
- iii) a weakling?
- iv) mean?
- v) the lord of all the animals? or
- vi) cruel?

(There can be more than one choice. Give a reason for your choice.)

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- 6 a) How, according to Major, could animals be rich and free?

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b) When will this rebellion take place? Does this show that Major is

- i) a realist?
- ii) an idealist? or
- iii) a dreamer?

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7 a) How does Major describe all men?

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b) How does he describe all animals?

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c) Why do you think Major call the animals 'Comrades'?

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1.2 VOCABULARY

Exercise 2

Pick out the odd word in each of the following sets, that is, the word that does not belong to the set:

Example: murder, slaughter, kill, pass away

Answer : pass away

- 1 lock, knock, shut, bolt
- 2 stirring, shouting, fluttering, moving
- 3 round, stout, fat, obese
- 4 employees, comrades, associates, fellow workers
- 5 miserable, funny, wretched, unhappy

Exercise 3

Use the most appropriate word from each of the sets of words given above to complete these sentences :

- 1 Every night you should.....the gate to prevent thieves from getting in.
- 2 The hens start.....their wings at daybreak.
- 3 A wrestler has to be strong and..... He cannot be thin.
- 4 All the.....of that mill are on strike as they have not been given their wages.
- 5 Usha is feeling.....as she has no money to buy food for her children.

1.3 GRAMMAR AND USAGE

1.3.1 Concord of Number and Person

This section will give you practice in what is called 'concord', that is, agreement, in grammar, and the use of the verbs

- i) *be* and its various forms
am, is, are, was, were,
- ii) *do, does,*
- iii) *have, has.*

Let's see how these verbs are used.

1.3.2 *be*

Look at the following sentences, most of which are taken from the reading passage in Section 1.1.2.

- 1 I *am* afraid I shall not be able to help you.
- 2 It *is* about this that I wish to speak.
- 3 What *is* the nature of this life of ours?
- 4 *Is* this simply part of the order of nature?
- 5 Man *is* the only creature that consumes without producing.
- 6 Our lives *are* miserable.
- 7 We *are* born, we *are* given just so much food
- 8 Mr. Jones *was* too drunk to remember to shut the propholes.
- 9 Mrs. Jones *was* already snoring.
- 10 All the animals *were* now present.

Notice that the verb *be* has the forms *am, is, are, was, were*, depending on the tense (present or past), the person (first, second, or third), and the number (singular or plural) of the subject.

| <i>be</i> | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------|---------------------|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|---------------------|--------------|--------|
| Present Tense | | | | | Past Tense | | | | |
| First Person | | Second Person | Third Person | | First Person | | Second Person | Third Person | |
| Singular | Plural | Singular and Plural | Singular | Plural | Singular | Plural | Singular and Plural | Singular | Plural |
| am | are | are | is | are | was | were | were | was | were |

Here are some more examples.

- 1 *am* (used with *I* in the present tense)

Examples

I am an Indian. I am writing a book on India.
(*I am* is written as *I'm* in an informal style.)

- 2 *is* (used with *he, she, it* and singular nouns, in the present tense)

Examples

- i) Rajiv Gandhi is the Prime Minister of India.
- ii) My friend Ramesh is working hard these days.
- iii) It is very cold today.
- iv) English is spoken in a large number of countries.

(*is* is often combined with the subject and written as *'s* in an informal style.

Examples: *He's, she's, it's*)

- 3 *are* [used with plurals and with *you* (2nd person singular) in the present tense]

Examples

- i) You are very good at Mathematics.
- ii) My friends are at the Zoo today. We are also going there.
- iii) Children below five are allowed to travel free on Indian Railways.
(*are* is often combined with the subject and written as *'re* in an informal style.
Examples: *You're, we're, they're*)

- 4 *was* [used with *I, he, she, it* and with singular nouns, in the past tense]

Examples

- i) I was in Delhi yesterday

- ii) Einstein was a famous scientist.
- iii) Mohan was writing a letter when I went to see him.
- iv) The hall was decorated for yesterday's meeting.

5 *were* [used with plurals, and with *you* (2nd person singular), in the past tense]

Examples

- i) We were expecting you yesterday.
- ii) You were not at home when I rang you up.
- iii) A lot of people were present at the meeting.
- iv) Ten people were killed in a bus accident yesterday.

6 When the grammatical subject is *there*, we use *is* or *are*, *was* or *were*, depending on the number of the true subject following the verb.

Examples

- i) There is a girl in that room.
- ii) There is a man hiding behind the bushes.
- iii) There are fifty students in this class.
- iv) There was an interesting programme on television yesterday evening.
- v) There were hundreds of people at the meeting this morning.

Exercise 4

Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verb *be* (*am, is, are, was, or were*).

- 1 A dozen people injured in yesterday's accident.
- 2 you busy now?
- 3 I going to the cinema to-night.
- 4 There many people in India even now who cannot read and write.
- 5 I surprised to meet Raj yesterday evening.
- 6 I think this the most interesting of Hardy's novels.

1.3.3 do

The present tense forms are *do* and *does*.

Of these, *do* is used with plurals and with *I* and *you*; *does* is used with the third person singular.

Examples

- i) I do not smoke cigarettes.
- ii) Do you play tennis?
- iii) We do not wish to hurt you in any way.
- iv) Shyam does not speak Bengali.
- v) Does your father know that you are here?

Exercise 5

Fill in the blanks with *do* or *does*.

- 1 you know how to make a cup of tea?
- 2 I not think I can come with you.
- 3 your father work at the bank?
- 4 he come to office by bus?
- 5 How we get there?

1.3.4 have

The present tense forms are *have* and *has*.

Of these, *have* is used with plurals and with *I* and *you*; *has* is used with the third person singular.

Examples

- i) My friend Sunil has dark hair.
- ii) I have a bad cold.
- iii) Have you read *Animal Farm*?
- iv) I have not seen many English films.
- v) We have not been able to help him in any way.

Fill in the blanks with *have* or *has*.

- 1 they got a school in their village?
- 2 Now you learnt the secret of happiness.
- 3 I my breakfast at a restaurant.
- 4 The teacher advised me to improve my spelling.
- 5 he arrived already?

Exercise 7

Use the correct form of the verb out of those given in brackets.

- 1 "I (have/has) no money. I (am/is/are) hungry, thirsty and tired," murmured David to himself.
- 2 He made an effort and went to a small shop in Dover. A young girl (was/were) coming out of the shop with a basket of rice on her arm. "What (do/does) you want? I (have/has) no money," she said.
- 3 "I (do/does) not want any money. Please tell me the address of Miss Betsey Trotwood."
- 4 "I (am/is/are) her domestic help. Come along with me," she said. David followed her. He looked at himself. His shoes (was/were) torn, his hat (was/were) crushed, and from head to toes he (was/were) powdered with chalk and dust.
- 5 Soon they came to the house of Miss Trotwood. She (was/were) there in the garden.
- 6 "Who (are/is/am) you?," she cried, "I (do/does) not like boys. Go away."
- 7 "I (am/is/are) your nephew, Aunt," David said. "I (am/is/are) David Copperfield."
- 8 She sat down with a thump on the grass, looked at David up and down and said, "So you (are/is/am) my brother's son."
- 9 David (was/were) so miserable that he started crying. She caught him by the collar of his torn shirt and took him inside.
- 10 Mr. Dick (was/were) inside. She told him, "This boy (is/am/are) my brother's son. You (are/is/am) a man of the world. Tell me what I should do with him."
- 11 Mr. Dick looked at David, smiled and said, "Give him a bath."
- 12 The bath (was/were) a great comfort. After the bath David (was/were) wrapped up in shawls and (was/were) taken to bed.

(Adapted from Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield*)

1.4 WRITING

In this section we shall give you practice in composition and the correct use of language.

Here is an exercise for you.

Exercise 8

You have read the passage from *Animal Farm* in Section 1.1.2. Now write a speech of your own in about 200 words. Address the animals and tell them that Man has now become the friend of all the animals.

Here is a possible beginning :

'Dear Friends, have you realized that Man in the 1980s has become your friend and protector

You may like to mention some of the following :

- i) establishment of wild-life sanctuaries and national parks to help create a natural environment for animals and birds and preserve endangered species ;
- ii) strict anti-poaching laws;
- iii) ban on the export of certain varieties of animal hide;
- iv) exposure by the press of crimes against animals, even for medical purposes;
- v) special hospitals for animals and birds.

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have given you practice in

- i) understanding a narrative passage from George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm*,
- ii) distinguishing between words having related meanings and using them in appropriate contexts,
- iii) subject-verb concord with the verbs *be*, *do*, and *have*, and
- iv) writing a short speech presenting a view different from the one given in the passage read.

1.6 KEY WORDS

comprehension : the power of understanding

concord (in grammar) : agreement between words in number, etc., e.g., between a verb and its subject

glossary : list and explanation of selected words from a text

grammar : study of rules for the forms of words and the combination of words into sentences

narrative (as an adjective) : in the form of a story

number (in grammar) : variations in the forms of nouns, verbs, etc., according to whether only one or more than one is to be indicated : e.g., man/men, does/do, I/we.

objective : purpose

person (in grammar) : a class of personal pronouns—the first person : *I*, *we*; the second person: *you*; the third person: *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*

subject (in grammar) : words in a sentence about which something is said

tense (in grammar) : verb form that shows time: e.g., the present tense, the past tense

usage : conventions governing the use of a language

verb : a word or phrase indicating what somebody or something does, what state somebody or something is in, what is becoming of something or somebody

vocabulary : words which make up a language

1.7 SUGGESTED READING

- 1 George Orwell: *Animal Farm*
- 2 Charles Dickens : *David Copperfield*

1.8 CASSETTE RECORDING

An audio-cassette recording based on the reading passage in this unit is available at the study centres of the university.

1.9 ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

(You should look at these answers only after you have done the exercises yourself.)

Exercise 1

- 1 Because he was drunk and his movement was not steady.
- 2 a) In the big barn.
b) To hear what Major had to say.
- 3 His understanding of the nature of life.
- 4 miserable, laborious, short.
To tell the animals how bad their condition is.
- 5 a) The animals produce all the wealth and man takes it away from them. He does not produce anything himself.
b) selfish, cruel
Man makes the animals work and gives them just enough to keep them alive.
- 6 a) By getting rid of Man, so that they could keep all the things they produced.
b) Major does not know.
He is a dreamer.
- 7 a) They are enemies.
b) They are comrades.
c) To remind them that they are all members of a Union.

Exercise 2

- 1 knock, 2 shouting, 3 round, 4 employees, 5 funny.

Exercise 3

- 1 lock, 2 fluttering, 3 stout, 4 employees, 5 miserable.

Exercise 4

- 1 were, 2 Are, 3 am, 4 are, 5 was, 6 is.

Exercise 5

- 1 Do, 2 do, 3 Does, 4 Does, 5 do.

Exercise 6

- 1 Have, 2 have, 3 have, 4 has, 5 Has.

Exercise 7

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1) have, am | 7) am, am |
| 2) was, do, have | 8) are |
| 3) do | 9) was |
| 4) am, were, was, was | 10) was, is, are |
| 5) was | 11) was, was, was |
| 6) are, do | |