

SECOND YEAR III SEM ENGLISH COMPULSARY**Curriculum Overview**

Module 1 of this English syllabus is designed to build literary appreciation, critical thinking and grammatical accuracy through a balanced mix of short fiction, poetry and structural grammar. It carries a weightage of 30 hours and is organised into four thematic units, each pairing two literary or linguistic topics.

Unit	Topic	Author / Area	Genre
1.1	Lemon-Yellow and Fig	Manohar Malgaonkar	Short Story
1.2	Father Returning Home	Dilip Chitre	Poem
2.1	Father's Help	R. K. Narayan	Short Story
2.2	Background, Casually	Nissim Ezekiel	Poem
3.1	Vivekananda: The Great Journey to the West	Romain Rolland	Biographical Prose
3.2	The Road Not Taken	Robert Frost	Poem
4.1	Main Verbs: Do, Be, Have	Grammar	Structural Grammar
4.2	Functions of Tenses	Grammar	Structural Grammar

The prose and poetry selections move outward in scope from an individual's workplace misfortune, to the quiet erosion of family bonds, to childhood mischief, to a poet's search for identity, to a spiritual leader's address to the world, and finally to a universal meditation on choice while the grammar units consolidate the learner's control over verb structure and time reference.

Unit 1.1 Lemon-Yellow and Fig**-Manohar Malgaonkar****Genre:** Short story**Source:** Bliss: An Anthology of Short Stories (Macmillan)**Setting:** A sari and choli-piece shop in Bombay (Mumbai), owned by an absentee proprietor based in Bangalore**About the Author**

Manohar Malgaonkar (1913–2010) was an Indian English novelist and short-story writer known for his crisp, economical prose and his interest in irony, chance and the unpredictability of ordinary lives. A former army officer and big-game hunter turned writer, he brought a keen observational eye and a taste for the twist ending to his fiction, qualities fully on display in this story.

Detailed Summary

The story is narrated by Agarwal, a young man newly employed as a salesman in Mr. Ratnam's sari shop in Bombay. Ratnam, who lives in Bangalore where the saris are woven and visits the shop only occasionally, has hired Agarwal specifically for his honest face and pleasant manner, having been cheated by a previous employee. Agarwal takes his responsibility seriously and, within a short time, proves himself an able salesman, pushing weekly sales to a healthy figure.

One day, a well-dressed, sweetly perfumed young woman enters the shop and buys a lemon-yellow silk sari worth Rs. 40, paying with a Rs. 100 note; Agarwal returns her change. Soon after, another prosperous-looking woman wearing the very same perfume comes in and asks for a fig-coloured sari. The coincidence of the identical perfume triggers Agarwal's memory of a cautionary tale he had once heard, in which two women worked together to swindle a shopkeeper using a hundred-rupee note — one woman would claim to have paid with a note that was never actually handed over, while her accomplice created a distraction.

Determined not to be a victim of the same trick, Agarwal quietly and cleverly removes the hundred-rupee note he had received from the first customer from the cash box and hides it separately, reasoning that if the second woman later claims she too paid with an unaccounted hundred-rupee note, he will be able to prove that only one such note ever entered the till. His precaution, however, becomes his undoing: when Mr. Ratnam next visits and finds a hundred-rupee note missing from the day's accounts, he immediately concludes that Agarwal has been dishonest, and dismisses him on the spot — never learning of, or believing, the elaborate honest reasoning behind the missing note. The final and bitterest irony, often highlighted in readings of the story, is that the two customers were in fact members of Ratnam's own family — his sister and daughter — making Agarwal's suspicion of a stranger's fraud both understandable and, in the end, catastrophically misplaced.

Themes

- Irony of Fate: the very quality (honesty and vigilance) for which Agarwal was hired becomes the cause of his dismissal.
- Appearance versus Reality: two ordinary women shopping for saris are wrongly read as potential con artists.
- The Fragility of Trust: an employer's trust, once shaken by circumstantial evidence, cannot easily be restored by explanation.
- Hasty Judgement: Ratnam convicts Agarwal without inquiry, illustrating how quickly appearances can override established goodwill.

Characters

- Agarwal — the narrator-protagonist; earnest, alert, over-cautious; his intelligence and integrity ironically precipitate his downfall.
- Mr. Ratnam — the shop owner; a fair employer in principle, but one whose trust proves conditional and whose judgement is swayed by appearances rather than evidence.
- The two customers — unnamed within the plot's logic, later revealed to be Ratnam's sister and daughter, functioning as agents of dramatic irony.

Narrative Style and Technique

Malgaonkar tells the story in the first person, giving readers direct access to Agarwal's reasoning and mounting anxiety, which makes his precaution feel entirely rational even as readers sense where the plot is heading. The prose is plain and unadorned, driven by dialogue and small physical details — the shared perfume, the exact colours of the saris, the precise sums of money — which lend the tale a documentary, true-to-life texture. The story's power lies chiefly in its surprise ending: a classic 'twist-in-the-tail' structure that recontextualises everything the reader has been told.

Significance of the Title

The title names the exact shades of the two saris purchased that fateful day. Far from being decorative, these colour-names function as the story's central symbols: ordinary, innocuous words that come to stand for suspicion, misjudgement and loss. The specificity of 'lemon-yellow' and 'fig' (rather than a generic 'yellow' and 'purple') mirrors the story's larger concern with how small, precise details can be catastrophically misread.

Critical Appreciation

As a piece of short fiction, the story succeeds through economy: within a few pages, Malgaonkar sets up character, motive and a plausible chain of cause and effect that leads inexorably to an ending that is both surprising and, on reflection, entirely logical. It offers a compact case study in dramatic irony — the reader is never once given more information than Agarwal himself, so the final revelation strikes with full force, while inviting reflection on how workplaces and relationships can be undone by well-intentioned but unverified assumptions.

Unit 1.2 Father Returning Home

-Dilip Chitre

Genre: Poem (originally composed in Marathi; translated into English by the poet himself)

Source: Travelling in a Cage (1980)

Setting: The suburban railway network and a modest urban household in Bombay (Mumbai)

About the Author

Dilip Chitre (1938–2009) was a major bilingual poet, writer, painter and filmmaker who wrote with equal distinction in Marathi and English. He is widely regarded as one of the pioneers of Indian English poetry that captures urban, middle-class experience with unsentimental precision. His own translations of his Marathi poems into English, of which this poem is one, are noted for retaining the terseness and emotional restraint of the originals.

Detailed Summary

The poem follows an ageing, weary father as he makes his way home from work on a crowded Bombay suburban local train. Chitre's opening lines fix him amid the anonymous, indifferent crush of daily commuters — his body has grown frail, his eyesight is failing, his hair is turning grey, and he is simply one more tired figure being carried mechanically through the city's transport system. The imagery of the train, the wet, muddy platform and street evoke the grinding, impersonal rhythm of urban working life.

When the father finally reaches home, no warmth or connection greets him. His children are engrossed in their own worlds — study, homework, entertainment — barely acknowledging his arrival, while his wife is occupied with routine domestic chores. Unable to bridge this silence, the father withdraws into his own room, where he seeks solace not in family conversation but in his religious books, particularly the Bhagavad Gita, poring over verses on death and the soul in an attempt to make sense of his own mortality and isolation. The poem closes on this note of quiet, unresolved loneliness — a man surrounded by family yet fundamentally alone.

Themes

- Urban Alienation: the impersonal, mechanical rhythms of city life (trains, crowds, routine) erode individual identity and connection.
- The Generation Gap: the widening emotional distance between an ageing parent and children absorbed in their own concerns.
- Loneliness of Old Age: the father's physical decline mirrors his emotional isolation within his own household.
- Search for Meaning: turning to spiritual texts as a private refuge from an unfeeling domestic and urban environment.

Imagery and Symbolism

Chitre builds the poem almost entirely out of concrete, unglamorous sensory detail — greying hair, dinning wheels, mud-spattered shoes, a dim lonely bulb — rather than abstract statement, letting physical decay stand in for emotional decline. The crowded local train becomes a symbol of urban anonymity, in

which the father is merely one indistinguishable body among many; his retreat into the Gita symbolises both a search for transcendence and an admission that human connection at home has failed him.

Poetic Style and Technique

The poem is written in free verse, without regular metre or rhyme, which suits its flat, reportorial, almost documentary tone. Chitre deliberately avoids sentimentality: the emotional weight of the poem comes from understatement and the accumulation of small, precise images rather than direct expressions of grief or complaint. This restraint — characteristic of Chitre's translated verse — mirrors the father's own emotional suppression.

Critical Appreciation

'Father Returning Home' is frequently read as an unflinching portrait of the modern Indian nuclear family, in which economic necessity (the father's daily commute to earn a living) paradoxically produces the very emotional distance that undermines the family unit it supports. Its power lies in its refusal to moralise or resolve the loneliness it depicts; the father is left, as the poem ends, still searching, and the reader is left to supply the empathy the household withholds.

Teaching Notes

Form: Free verse, no fixed rhyme or meter; originally written in Marathi, translated into English by the poet himself.

Section-by-section paraphrase

Opening — The commute

The poem opens with the father amid the crowd on a Bombay suburban local train, one indistinguishable body among the daily mass of commuters. Chitre emphasizes his physical decline — greying hair, weakening eyes, a frail, aging body — set against the mechanical clatter and rhythm of the train.

Middle — The journey home

The father makes his way from the station through the wet, muddy streets, his shoes and clothes marked by the grime of the commute. The imagery here is deliberately unglamorous and physical — nothing uplifting or scenic, just the tired grind of getting from work to home.

Arrival — The empty welcome

When he reaches home, there is no warmth waiting for him. His children are absorbed in their own activities — studying, or otherwise occupied — and barely register his arrival. His wife is caught up in domestic chores. No one really speaks to him or acknowledges his day.

Closing — Retreat and search for meaning

Unable to find connection in the family space, the father withdraws to his own room. He turns to his religious books — the poem points specifically to the Bhagavad Gita — reading about death and the soul, searching privately for some sense of meaning or peace that his home life doesn't offer him.

Key teaching points

Element	Teaching focus
Title irony	"Returning home" suggests comfort/arrival, but the poem shows the opposite — return to isolation, not welcome
Imagery of decay	Physical details (grey hair, failing eyes, mud) function symbolically for emotional/relational decline, not just aging

Element	Teaching focus
Urban alienation	The crowded train as a symbol of anonymity — discuss how city infrastructure can dehumanize daily life
Generational gap	Contrast the father's isolation with the children's absorption in their "own worlds" — good entry point for discussing changing family structures
Restraint/understatement	No direct statement of grief or complaint — the emotional weight comes from accumulated flat, physical detail. Ask: why might understatement be <i>more</i> powerful here than explicit emotion?
Translation itself	Since Chitre translated his own Marathi poem, worth discussing how self-translation might preserve or alter tone compared to translation by someone else

My father travels on the late evening train
Standing among silent commuters in the yellow light
Suburbs slide past his unseeing eyes
His shirt and pants are soggy and his black raincoat
Stained with mud and his bag stuffed with books
Is falling apart. His eyes dimmed by age
fade homeward through the humid monsoon night.
Now I can see him getting off the train
Like a word dropped from a long sentence.
He hurries across the length of the grey platform,
Crosses the railway line, enters the lane,
His chappals are sticky with mud, but he hurries onward.
Home again, I see him drinking weak tea,
Eating a stale chapati, reading a book.
He goes into the toilet to contemplate
Man's estrangement from a man-made world.
Coming out he trembles at the sink,
The cold water running over his brown hands,
A few droplets cling to the greying hairs on his wrists.
His sullen children have often refused to share
Jokes and secrets with him. He will now go to sleep
Listening to the static on the radio, dreaming
Of his ancestors and grandchildren, thinking
Of nomads entering a subcontinent through a narrow pass.

Unit 2.1 Father's Help

-R. K. Narayan

Genre: Short story

Source: Malgudi Days

Setting: The fictional South Indian town of Malgudi; the Albert Mission School

About the Author

R. K. Narayan (1906–2001) is one of the founding figures of Indian English fiction, best known for creating the fictional town of Malgudi, the setting for the majority of his novels and short stories. His fiction is celebrated for its gentle irony, close observation of ordinary middle-class life, and especially for its affectionate, humorous portrayals of childhood, most memorably through his recurring character Swaminathan ('Swami').

Detailed Summary

The story centres on Swaminathan, a schoolboy anxious to avoid a class he dreads — he is convinced that his teacher's scolding, and the prospect of punishment for unfinished homework, make going to school unbearable that day. Rather than admit this outright, Swami invents an excuse and appeals to his father to write a note to the school explaining his absence or requesting leniency. His father, initially amused and indulgent, agrees to help and drafts a note on Swami's behalf.

Swami, however, is not satisfied with a mild, apologetic note; anxious that a soft excuse will not spare him from his teacher's wrath, he persistently coaxes his father into making the note firmer and more authoritative, subtly steering him into writing something that criticises the teacher's methods. His father, drawn along partly by paternal affection and partly by his own irritation at being pestered, ends up producing a note far more severe and confrontational in tone than he originally intended. The comedy escalates as Swami, now armed with this unexpectedly forceful letter, must face the very real consequences of presenting it to his teacher, and the note designed to protect him threatens instead to land both father and son in embarrassing trouble.

Themes

- The Comic Innocence of Childhood: Swami's exaggerated fears and small manipulations are treated with warmth rather than judgement.
- Parent–Child Dynamics: a father's affection is shown being gently exploited, and in turn shaping consequences neither anticipated.
- Gentle Satire on School Discipline: the story pokes fun at the rigid, punishment-driven culture of the colonial-era classroom.
- Unintended Consequences: a well-meant gesture of 'help' spirals into a predicament larger than the original problem.

Characters

- Swaminathan (Swami) — an imaginative, anxious, resourceful schoolboy whose child's-eye logic drives the story's comedy.
- Swami's father — indulgent yet quick-tempered, drawn step by step into overreach by his son's persistence.
- The teacher — an offstage but looming authority figure whose feared reaction motivates the entire plot.

Narrative Style and Technique

Narayan's prose is simple, conversational and lightly ironic, narrated with an affectionate, knowing distance from Swami's childish logic. The humour arises less from exaggerated incident than from precise, everyday dialogue and the escalating comedy of misunderstanding, a hallmark of the Malgudi stories. Narayan lets the reader see the gap between Swami's intentions and the consequences of his actions, generating gentle irony without ever mocking the child.

Critical Appreciation

'Father's Help' exemplifies Narayan's gift for turning a trivial domestic episode into a story with genuine narrative tension and comic payoff. Beneath its humour lies a mild critique of an education system that relies on fear and punishment, and a warm, realistic study of how parental love can be manipulated — harmlessly, here — by a child's ingenuity.

Unit 2.2 Background, Casually

-Nissim Ezekiel

Genre: Autobiographical / confessional poem

Source: The Exact Name (1965)

About the Author

Nissim Ezekiel (1924–2004) is widely regarded as a founding figure of modern Indian English poetry. Born into Mumbai's Bene Israel Jewish community, he wrote with clarity, irony and formal control, and his poetry frequently examines questions of belonging, identity and the poet's vocation within a country to which he belongs by birth but often feels marginal.

Detailed Summary

Structured in several numbered sections, the poem is a frankly autobiographical account of Ezekiel's own life. It opens with recollections of a difficult, isolated childhood as a member of a small religious minority, subjected to the taunts and exclusions of classmates, and shaped early by a sense of being different. The poem moves through his rebellious adolescence and youth — including a restless, unsettled period as a young man drifting without clear direction — before tracing his years spent in London, where poverty, disillusionment and homesickness eventually convince him that his true creative and personal identity is inseparable from India.

On his return to India, the poem records a process of reconciliation: rather than continuing to feel like an outsider, the speaker consciously commits himself to his homeland and to his vocation as a poet, declaring his intention to stay, to write, and to accept both the frustrations and rewards of Indian life. The poem's closing sections affirm this hard-won sense of belonging, framed not as naive patriotism but as a deliberate, adult choice made after testing alternatives.

Themes

- Identity and Belonging: the long, uneven journey from alienation to self-acceptance as an Indian and as a poet.
- Marginality: the experience of growing up as a religious minority within a larger cultural mainstream.
- Exile and Return: disillusionment abroad as the catalyst for a renewed, deliberate commitment to one's own country.
- The Poet's Vocation: writing itself framed as an act of self-definition and a chosen 'commitment.'

Structure and Style

The poem's division into discrete, chronologically ordered sections mirrors the shape of an autobiography or memoir, allowing Ezekiel to move fluidly across decades of his life. His diction is plain, conversational and often self-deprecating, deliberately avoiding grand or ornamental language even when addressing serious themes of exile and identity. This flat, ironic register is characteristic of Ezekiel's broader poetic style and distinguishes his confessional mode from more overtly emotional autobiographical poetry.

Critical Appreciation

'Background, Casually' is often read as a landmark in Indian English poetry for its unsentimental, self-aware treatment of a minority Indian's search for identity. Its title itself is ironic: what the poem recounts is anything but 'casual' — a lifetime's formative struggle — narrated with a deliberately understated, almost offhand tone that throws the depth of the underlying experience into sharper relief. The poem's final affirmation of commitment to India is widely regarded as one of the most resonant statements of belonging in modern Indian poetry in English.

The poem "Background Casually" written by Nissim Ezekiel tells about the struggle of the poet for identity in a country where he as well as his community (Jews) is considered to an alien. The poem has been divided into three sections. The first section deals with the childhood of the poet. The second section throws light on his adult-age and third section deals with the old-age of the poet.

In the beginning, Ezekiel uses the third person for himself. According to him, he was born low. Being a member of the alien community he could neither eat nor could sleep and thus became quite weak. Due to this feeling, he could not fly a kite. Even the top also failed to spin in his hands. In the next stanza, the poet describes his childhood by using the first person. He was sent to a Roman Catholic School where he, according to him, was like prey before wolves (referring to Hindus and Muslims). He was often taunted by the Hindus and Muslims who accused him of the murder of Christ. They compare him to Judas who betrayed Christ. The same year he won Scripture prize depicting that he was quite good in his schooling. He was often beaten by a Muslim boy and hence terror reigned in his mind during that stage. Not only Muslims but Hindu boys also repelled him away with their wrong accent and use of language. Being enraged he even thought of becoming violent and used his knife, though he did not mention where, how and why he used the knife. One night he heard prayers that made him believe that he is not morally so good (as he heard of Yoga and Zen). He thought if he could still become a Rabbi (a saint). Being curious he tried to find the answer but the deeper he went the more confused he was. In the second section, Ezekiel talks about his adult-age experiences. His family desired to send him to England for higher studies but being financially poor they could not effort his expenses. However one of their friends paid for him and he was able to go to England. There he was alone and considered poverty, poetry, and philosophy of his friends. Time passed and even after two years he was alone. A woman came and tried to motivate him and henceforth he tried to make his life a little bit better.

Later he recognized his failure which became an unbearable thought. After spending some years he desired to go back to India. However, he was too poor to do so. Hence he started working on a cargo ship that took French guns and mortar shells to India and China. He was finally able to go back to India on the same ship. After coming back to India Ezekiel tried to be happy and feel at home again. However, he was still an alien. His father often told him that all the Hindus are violent. Nissim and his family were often humiliated by their neighbors. Hence he prepared to endure the worst. He married and even changed his job. Doing such things he acknowledged that he was a fool. He started writing poetry and knew well that he has ample to write. He explains how low their community was. His ancestors did the job of crushing seeds which were not a good job. In the 3rd section, Ezekiel explains his experience as an old person. He says that one of his friends told how he fought in the Boer War. Hearing the stories started fearing from the Indians. He recognized that writing poetry is also not safe and even the words can harm a person. He wrote poems and gave up his sufferings. Now he tried to write wisely without giving free play to his

thoughts. He expresses his inner and outer suffering that he ultimately failed to defeat. He says that now he has become an integral part of India. The foreigners consider him to be an alien on that land (India). But he decided now he will consider himself as an Indian. He has to stay there though it is a backward place for the other Jews living outside of India.

Teaching Notes

Structure: The poem unfolds in six numbered sections, functioning almost like chapters of a verse-autobiography, moving chronologically through the poet's life.

Section-by-section paraphrase

I. Childhood and early isolation

The speaker recalls growing up as a Jewish boy in India, marked as different from his Hindu and Christian classmates. He describes the sting of being taunted and excluded, and an early, painful awareness of belonging to a small, marginal community within a much larger culture.

II. Adolescence and rebellion

The speaker moves into a restless, directionless youth — searching, testing boundaries, unsure of his place or purpose, caught between his inherited identity and a desire to define himself on his own terms.

III–IV. Departure and life abroad

He leaves India for London, seeking wider horizons. Instead he finds hardship — poverty, menial work, disillusionment with the West he had idealized. This section is often read as the poem's turning point: the gap between his romantic expectations of "escape" and grim reality abroad.

V. Return to India

Disillusioned, the speaker returns home, but not merely out of defeat. The return becomes an active, reflective choice — a re-encounter with India on more mature terms.

VI. Commitment and resolution

The poem closes with the speaker's deliberate declaration of belonging: a decision to stay, to write, and to accept India — its frustrations included — as his true and permanent home. This is usually treated as the poem's emotional and thematic climax.

Key teaching points

Element	Teaching focus
Title irony	"Casually" undercuts the seriousness of the content a life's defining struggle told in a deliberately offhand tone
Confessional mode	Compare to other autobiographical poets; discuss how personal history becomes public poetic material
Minority experience	Good entry point for discussing identity, marginalization, and belonging in a pluralistic society

Element	Teaching focus
Diction	Plain, conversational, self-deprecating — contrast with more "poetic"/ornamental verse students may have read
Structure as narrative	The numbered sections mimic memoir; ask students to map each section to a "life stage"

A poet-rascal-clown was born, The frightened child who would not eat Or sleep, a boy of meager bone. He never learned to fly a kite, His borrowed top refused to spin. I went to Roman Catholic school, A mugging Jew among the wolves. They told me I had killed the Christ, That year I won the scripture prize. A Muslim sportsman boxed my ears. I grew in terror of the strong But undernourished Hindu lads, Their prepositions always wrong, Repelled me by passivity. One noisy day I used a knife. At home on Friday nights the prayers Were said. My morals had declined. I heard of Yoga and of Zen. Could I, perhaps, be rabbi saint? The more I searched, the less I found. Twenty two: time to go abroad. First, the decision, then a friend To pay the fare. Philosophy, Poverty and Poetry, three Companions shared my basement room. The London seasons passed me by. I lay in bed two years alone, And then a Woman came to tell My willing ears I was the Son Of Man. I knew that I had failed In everything, a bitter thought. So, in an English cargo ship Taking French guns and mortar shells To Indo China, scrubbed the decks, And learned to laugh again at home. How to feel it home, was the point. Some reading had been done, but what Had I observed, except my own	Exasperation? All Hindus are Like that, my father used to say, When someone talked too loudly, or Knocked at the door like the Devil. They hawked and spat. They sprawled around. I prepared for the worst. Married, Changed jobs, and saw myself a fool. The song of my experience sung, I knew that all was yet to sing. My ancestors, among the castes, Were aliens crushing seed for bread (The hooded bullock made his rounds). One among them fought and taught, A Major bearing British arms. He told my father sad stories Of the Boer War. I dreamed that Fierce men had bound my feet and hands. The later dreams were all of words. I did not know that words betray But let the poems come, and lost That grip on things the worldly prize. I would not suffer that again. I look about me now, and try To formulate a plainer view: The wise survive and serve—to play The fool, to cash in on The inner and the outer storms. The Indian landscape sears my eyes. I have become a part of it To be observed by foreigners. They say that I am singular, Their letters overstate the case. I have made my commitments now. This is one: to stay where I am, As others choose to give themselves In some remote and backward place. My backward place is where I am
--	--

Unit 3.1 Vivekananda: The Great Journey to the West -*Romain Rolland*

Genre: Biographical / expository prose

Source: Adapted from Rolland's *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel* (1930)

About the Author

Romain Rolland (1866–1944) was a French novelist, dramatist, essayist and Nobel laureate (Literature, 1915), celebrated for his humanist convictions and his deep admiration for Indian spiritual thought. Deeply influenced by Vedanta and by the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, Rolland devoted a full biography to Vivekananda, of which this piece is an extract, praising him as one of the great spiritual figures of the modern world.

Detailed Summary

The extract traces Swami Vivekananda's historic voyage from India to the West and his emergence, almost overnight, as a compelling spiritual voice on the world stage. Rolland recounts how Vivekananda, then a relatively unknown monk, travelled to the United States to represent Hinduism and Vedanta at the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Rolland dwells on the electrifying effect of Vivekananda's oratory: his simple, direct address — famously opening with 'Sisters and Brothers of America' — moved the vast, largely unfamiliar Western audience to sustained applause, instantly establishing him as the most compelling representative of Indian spirituality at the gathering.

Beyond the single speech, the passage describes the wider impact of Vivekananda's subsequent lecture tours across America and Europe, where he explained Vedantic philosophy, championed the underlying unity of all religions, and challenged Western assumptions about India as a land only of poverty and superstition. Rolland portrays Vivekananda as a bridge-builder between East and West, someone who brought India's ancient spiritual inheritance into serious dialogue with modern Western thought, while himself absorbing and admiring elements of Western energy and organisation.

Themes

- **Spiritual Universalism:** the conviction, central to Vivekananda's message, that all religions point toward the same underlying truth.
- **East–West Dialogue:** the meeting of Indian spirituality with Western modernity, and the possibility of mutual respect and exchange.
- **Self-Confidence and National Pride:** Vivekananda's calm, dignified bearing before an unfamiliar Western audience as a source of pride for a colonised nation.
- **The Power of Oratory:** how conviction and eloquence, more than institutional support, can transform a lone speaker into a global figure.

Style and Technique

Rolland writes in an elevated, admiring, almost lyrical register befitting a biographer deeply moved by his subject. The prose combines vivid narrative description of the historic Chicago address with broader reflective commentary on Vivekananda's significance, blending the documentary and the celebratory. As a piece translated and adapted for the classroom, it retains Rolland's characteristic reverence while remaining accessible and direct in its sentence structure.

Critical Appreciation

The extract is valuable both as a historical account of a landmark moment in India's cultural presence on the world stage, and as an example of cross-cultural biographical writing — a celebrated Western intellectual paying tribute to an Indian spiritual leader. It invites students to consider how individual conviction and eloquence can shift global perceptions, and how Vivekananda's message of unity across religions remains relevant to contemporary discussions of tolerance and pluralism.

Unit 3.2 The Road Not Taken

-Robert Frost

Genre: Poem

Source: Mountain Interval (1916)

About the Author

Robert Frost (1874–1963) was an American poet renowned for his depictions of rural New England life rendered in accessible language and traditional verse forms, beneath which he frequently embedded complex, ambiguous meditations on choice, isolation and the human condition. He remains one of the most widely quoted and, at times, most widely misread poets in the English language, and this poem is his most famous — and most frequently misinterpreted — work.

Detailed Summary

The speaker stands at a fork in a wooded path, faced with two roads diverging in a 'yellow wood.' Regretting that he cannot travel both, he studies each path carefully: the first bends away out of sight, while the second, he decides, is 'grassy and wanted wear,' appearing perhaps slightly less travelled — though he almost immediately concedes that, in truth, the two roads have been worn 'really about the same' and that both were covered equally that morning in unstepped leaves. He chooses the second path, resolving to keep the first for another day, while acknowledging, with a touch of realism, that one road tends to lead to another and he will likely never return to take the path not chosen.

In the poem's final stanza, the speaker projects far into the future, imagining himself recounting this decision 'with a sigh,' many years later, claiming that he took the road 'less travelled by, / And that has made all the difference.' The poem thus closes not on the moment of choice itself but on the act of narrating that choice retrospectively, an act which subtly reshapes and perhaps exaggerates the significance of what was, in the moment, an almost arbitrary decision.

Themes

- **Choice and Consequence:** the way small decisions accumulate to define the shape of a life.
- **Individuality versus Conformity:** the popular (though contested) reading of the poem as a celebration of independent, unconventional choices.
- **Ambiguity and Self-Narrative:** the gap between what actually happened (two nearly identical roads) and how the speaker later chooses to remember and recount it.
- **Irreversibility of Time:** the recognition that choosing one path forecloses the other, since 'way leads on to way.'

Poetic Form and Technique

The poem is composed of four stanzas of five lines each (quintains), written predominantly in iambic tetrameter with an ABAAB rhyme scheme, giving the poem a controlled, song-like regularity that belies the uncertainty of its content. The central image of the forking road functions as an extended metaphor for the choices that structure a human life, while Frost's diction remains plain and conversational throughout, allowing the poem's deeper irony to emerge through tone and implication rather than explicit statement.

Critical Appreciation

Although frequently read — and often quoted at graduations — as a straightforward endorsement of nonconformity and bold individual choice, many critics point out that the poem's own text undercuts this reading: the speaker admits the two roads were 'about the same,' and the triumphant final claim is explicitly framed as something he will say later, 'with a sigh,' hinting at self-mythologising or even a note of regret rather than pure celebration. This tension between the poem's popular reputation and its more ironic internal logic is central to serious critical discussion of the work, and makes it a rich text for close reading.

The Road Not Taken
 Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
 And sorry I could not travel both
 And be one traveler, long I stood
 And looked down one as far as I could
 To where it bent in the undergrowth;
 Then took the other, as just as fair,
 And having perhaps the better claim,
 Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
 Though as for that the passing there
 Had worn them really about the same,
 And both that morning equally lay
 In leaves no step had trodden black.
 Oh, I kept the first for another day!
 Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
 I doubted if I should ever come back.
 I shall be telling this with a sigh
 Somewhere ages and ages hence:
 Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
 I took the one less traveled by,
 And that has made all the difference.

Teaching Notes

Form: Four stanzas of five lines each (quintains), iambic tetrameter, ABAAB rhyme scheme.

Stanza-by-stanza paraphrase

Stanza 1

The speaker stands where a path splits into two in an autumn ("yellow") wood. He wishes he could travel both, but being one traveler, he can't. He stands a long while looking down one path as far as he can see, to where it curves out of sight in the undergrowth.

Stanza 2

He then takes the other path, reasoning it may have just as fair a claim on him — perhaps even better, since it looks grassier and less worn. But almost as soon as he says this, he corrects himself: really, the wear on both paths was about the same.

Stanza 3

That morning, both paths lay equally covered in leaves that no one had yet stepped on and blackened. He tells himself he'll save the first path for another day — while admitting, realistically, that one road leads to another, so he probably won't ever come back to it.

Stanza 4

Jumping far ahead, he imagines himself telling this story "ages and ages hence" — with a sigh — claiming that two roads diverged in a wood, and he took the one less traveled, and that this choice "made all the difference."

Key teaching points

Element	Teaching focus
The famous misreading	Widely quoted as a celebration of bold individualism/nonconformity, but the text itself says the roads were "really about the same" — the poem may actually be about self-mythologizing, not genuine difference
The "sigh"	Ambiguous — could be wistful/nostalgic, or could hint at regret; invites debate rather than a single answer
Extended metaphor	The forked road = life choices; ask students where the metaphor might break down (e.g., real choices rarely look so symmetrical)
Tense shift in final stanza	The poem jumps into a future, imagined retelling — the "difference" is asserted by the <i>future self</i> , not proven by the poem itself
Form vs. content	The neat, songlike rhyme scheme contrasts with the poem's underlying uncertainty and irony

Unit 4.1 Main Verbs: 'Do, Be, Have'

-Grammar

Area: Structural / functional grammar

Conceptual Overview

'Do', 'Be' and 'Have' occupy a unique position in English grammar because each can function either as a main (lexical) verb, carrying its own independent meaning, or as an auxiliary (helping) verb, supporting another main verb to build questions, negatives, emphatic statements, continuous forms, perfect forms or the passive voice. Distinguishing between these two roles in context is essential for accurate sentence construction.

'Do' as a Main Verb and as an Auxiliary

As a main verb, 'do' expresses the performance or completion of an action or task, e.g., 'She does her homework every evening' or 'They did a great job.' As an auxiliary, 'do' (with its forms 'does' and 'did') is used to form questions in the simple present and simple past ('Do you like coffee?', 'Did he call?'), to form negatives ('I do not agree', 'She doesn't know'), and to add emphasis to an otherwise plain statement ('I do understand your concern').

'Be' as a Main Verb and as an Auxiliary

As a main (copular) verb, 'be' (am/is/are/was/were/being/been) links a subject to a complement describing identity, quality or state, e.g., 'She is a teacher' or 'They were tired.' As an auxiliary, 'be' combines with a present participle to form continuous/progressive tenses ('I am writing', 'They were playing') and with a past participle to form the passive voice ('The letter was written by him', 'The window is being repaired').

'Have' as a Main Verb and as an Auxiliary

As a main verb, 'have' most commonly expresses possession, relationship or experience, e.g., 'He has a car' or 'We have two children.' It is also used in fixed expressions describing actions, such as 'have breakfast' or 'have a shower.' As an auxiliary, 'have' (has/had) combines with a past participle to form the perfect tenses, indicating an action completed before a reference point in time: 'She has finished her work', 'They had already left when I arrived.'

Key Distinctions and Common Errors

- Confusing the auxiliary and main-verb uses of 'have' in negatives: 'I haven't a car' (British, main verb) versus the more standard 'I don't have a car' (using 'do'-support).
- Overusing or omitting 'do'-support: incorrect 'Does she likes tea?' should be 'Does she like tea?' (base form after 'does').
- Mixing continuous and passive uses of 'be': ensuring the correct participle (present participle for continuous, past participle for passive) follows the auxiliary.
- Subject-verb agreement with 'be' and 'have' in the present tense (is/am/are; has/have) according to person and number.

Significance in Language Use

Mastery of 'do', 'be' and 'have' in both their main-verb and auxiliary functions underpins nearly every major tense and sentence type in English — questions, negatives, continuous aspect, perfect aspect and the passive voice all depend on one or more of these three verbs. Accurate control of them is therefore foundational to fluent, grammatically correct spoken and written English.

Unit 4.2 Functions of Tenses -Grammar

Area: Structural / functional grammar

Conceptual Overview

Tense in English grammar expresses the relationship between the time an action or state occurs and the moment of speaking or a reference point in the narrative. English organises this relationship along two axes: time (present, past, future) and aspect (simple, continuous/progressive, perfect, perfect continuous), producing a system of twelve principal tense forms, each with distinct grammatical functions.

Present Tenses

- Simple Present — habitual actions, general truths and facts, fixed schedules: 'The sun rises in the east'; 'She works in a bank.'
- Present Continuous — actions happening at or around the moment of speaking, temporary situations, and pre-arranged future plans: 'I am reading a novel'; 'We are meeting them tomorrow.'
- Present Perfect — actions completed at an unspecified past time with present relevance, or actions continuing up to now: 'She has visited Paris twice'; 'I have lived here since 2018.'
- Present Perfect Continuous — actions that began in the past and are still continuing, emphasising duration: 'They have been working on this project for three months.'

Past Tenses

- Simple Past — completed actions at a definite time in the past: 'He visited his grandmother last week.'
- Past Continuous — an action in progress at a specific past moment, often interrupted by another action: 'I was reading when the phone rang.'
- Past Perfect — an action completed before another past action or point in time: 'She had left before we arrived.'
- Past Perfect Continuous — an ongoing action in the past that continued up to another past moment: 'He had been waiting for an hour before the bus came.'

Future Tenses

- Simple Future — predictions, spontaneous decisions and promises: 'It will rain tomorrow'; 'I will help you.'
- Future Continuous — an action that will be in progress at a specific future time: 'This time next week, I will be travelling.'

- Future Perfect — an action that will be completed before a specified future time: 'By next year, she will have graduated.'
- Future Perfect Continuous — an ongoing action that will continue up to a specified point in the future: 'By December, we will have been living here for ten years.'

Functional Importance of Tense Choice

Correct tense selection is central to clear communication because it signals not merely when an event occurred but how the speaker relates that event to other actions, to habitual patterns, or to the present moment of speaking. Errors in tense — such as shifting tense unnecessarily within a single narrative, or confusing the simple past with the present perfect — can obscure sequence, causality and relevance, making tense mastery essential for both academic writing and everyday communication.

Common Areas of Difficulty

- Distinguishing simple past (definite, finished time) from present perfect (unspecified time, present relevance): 'I saw that film' versus 'I have seen that film.'
- Sequencing two past events correctly using the past perfect for the earlier action.
- Choosing between 'will' and the present continuous or 'going to' for expressing future plans and predictions with the appropriate degree of certainty.
- Maintaining tense consistency across a paragraph or narrative unless a genuine shift in time frame is intended.