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# Flamingo

**Textbook in English for Class XII  
(Core Course)**



12074



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्  
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## FOREWORD

The National Curriculum Framework, 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to



opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the Textbook Development Committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in Languages, Professor Namwar Singh and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor Amritavalli for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairmanship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

New Delhi  
20 November 2006

*Director*  
National Council of Educational  
Research and Training



## ABOUT THE BOOK

This textbook for Class XII English course has been developed on the basis of the recommendations made in the *National Curriculum Framework 2005*. It follows the design of the Class XI textbook, *Hornbill*, published in 2006.

The prose selections aim to provide exposure to a wide variety of genres and themes, and writing from different parts of the world. They take into account the interests of young adults while making them aware of the socio-political issues that they will confront as they step into the world outside school. The tasks that follow the units provide opportunities for the development of language skills.

Three short stories, representative of fiction from different parts of the world - French, Swedish and British, have been included. Alphonse Daudet's *The Last Lesson* deals with the theme of language imposition and language loyalty, Selma Lagerlöf's *The Rattrap*, captures the basic goodness in a human being in the face of material temptations and A.C. Barton's *Going Places* explores the theme of adolescent hero-worship and fantasising.

Two of the non-fiction pieces are biographical and two autobiographical. Of the two biographical pieces, *Indigo*, an excerpt from Louis Fischer's *Life of Mahatma Gandhi* portrays Gandhi in action, helping peasants secure legal justice and the excerpt from Anees Jung's *Lost Spring* is an account of the lives of street children, a contemporary reality that youngsters need to be made sensitive to.

The autobiographical piece by William Douglas, a lawyer who was a close associate of Franklin Roosevelt, deals with his personal experience of overcoming the fear of swimming. The second autobiographical account is by Asokamitran writing in a humorous vein about his years in the Gemini Studios.

The Introduction from *The Penguin Book of Interviews* edited by Christopher Silvester has been included to introduce pupils to the subject of media writing. This is accompanied by a recent newspaper interview with Umberto Eco by Mukund Padmanabhan.