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Vistas

Supplementary Reader in English for Class XII
(Core Course)



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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**OFFICES OF THE PUBLICATION
DIVISION, NCERT**

NCERT Campus
Sri Aurobindo Marg
New Delhi 110 016

Phone : 011-26562708

108, 100 Feet Road
Hosdakere Halli Extension
Banashankari III Stage
Bangalore 560 085

Phone : 080-26725740

Navjivan Trust Building
P.O.Navjivan
Ahmedabad 380 014

Phone : 079-27541446

CWC Campus
Opp. Dhankal Bus Stop
Panihati
Kolkata 700 114

Phone : 033-25530454

CWC Complex
Maligaon
Guwahati 781 021

Phone : 0361-2674869

Publication Team

Head, Publication Division : *Ashok Srivastava*

Chief Production Officer : *Shiv Kumar*

Chief Business Manager : *Gautam Ganguly*

Chief Editor : *Naresh Yadav*
(Contractual Service)

Production Assistant : *Rajesh Pippal*

Cover, Layout and Illustrations
Joel Gill

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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 Supplementary Reader 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 Committee 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 Supplementary Reader; 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

Vistas is a supplementary reader in English (Core course) for Class XII, based on the guidelines of the *National Curriculum Framework 2005*. The main objective of this book is to make extensive reading an enjoyable experience, lead students to appreciate some of the best examples of writing and understand the social milieu they live in.


An attempt has been made to attain these objectives by presenting varied themes and genres of writing. The themes range from scientific fantasy, political satire, and adventure, to ethical and moral issues and personal conflicts.

Jack Finney's 'The Third Level' is a scientific fantasy, while 'The Tiger King' by Kalki is a political satire. 'Antartica' is a travel piece, with a suggestion that the young reader could take part in the expedition by logging on to www.studentsonice.com.

The three stories that follow are by Pearl S. Buck, John Updike and Colin Dexter. Buck's story sets human fellow-feeling against national loyalty; John Updike's story is about a child participating in the construction of a story by her father and raises issues regarding parental prejudices foisted on children. Dexter's story is fun-reading about how a criminal escapes jail through creating circumstances by insisting on taking an examination in the prison.

The play by Susan Hill is on the themes of disabilities while excerpts from Bama's 'Karukku' and an excerpt from 'The Land of the Red Apple', a story in Zitkala-Sa's, book 'The School Days of an Indian Girl'.

Each unit has questions. The question on the texts in the supplementary reader take the learner beyond factual comprehension to contemplating on the issues that the texts raise. Activities suggested take off from the texts.



Read and find out

What will now happen to the astrologer? Do you think the prophecy was indisputably disproved?