

4. The Malgudi Cricket Club

Sports

Learning Outcomes

- ▶ read the extract aloud with expressions and comprehend its central idea
- ▶ learn new words and infer their meanings
- ▶ draw from personal experiences or real-life situations
- ▶ learn about idioms
- ▶ learn about simple and compound sentences
- ▶ learn about hard and soft /c/ sounds
- ▶ write a descriptive paragraph



Digital Desk



Warm up



Have you ever played a sport? If yes, what are some of the rules of playing it? Why do you like playing this sport? If no, which sport would you like to play and why?



Vernacular words are everyday or common words spoken by the native people belonging to a particular region or country. The term 'vernacular' means the language or dialect spoken by people in a particular country or region. In India, we have adapted many vernacular words into English. We have created our own 'Indian English' and use several terms and phrases that have actually originated in our native languages. Do you know some vernacular words that have been included in the English dictionary? Hindi words such as **aiyo**, **chutney**, **dhaba**, **maidan** and **ghee** have become part of the English language. Find out more words from the Hindi language that have been added to the English dictionary.

Cross-curricular Connection

A group of enthusiastic schoolboys in the idyllic little town of Malgudi in British India plan to start their own cricket club.

After making his exit from Albert Mission School in a theatrical manner (on the day following the strike), Swaminathan became so consistently stubborn that a few days later his father took him to the Board School and admitted him there. At first Swaminathan was rather uncertain of his happiness in the new school. But he excited the curiosity that all newcomers do, and found himself to his great satisfaction the centre of attraction in Second C. All his new classmates' remarkably new faces, often clustered round him to see him and hear him talk. He had not yet picked the few that he would have liked to call his chums. He still believed that his Albert Mission set was intact, though, since the reopening in June, the set was not what it had been before. Only Rajam and Mani were still intact as far as Swaminathan was concerned. Mani saw him every day. But Rajam had not spoken to him since the day his political doings became known.

And now this afternoon Swaminathan was sitting in a dark corner of the house trying to make a camera with a cardboard box and a spectacle lens. In his effort to fix the lens in the hole that was one round too large, he was on the point of losing his temper, when he heard a familiar voice calling him. He ran to the door.

'Hello! Hello! Rajam,' he cried, 'why didn't you tell me you were coming?'

'What is the thing in your hand?' Rajam asked.

'Oh, it is nothing,' Swaminathan said, giving him the box.

Rajam said, while gazing at the world through the hole in the cardboard box, that he was prepared to forgive Swaminathan for his past sins and would not mind his belonging to the Board School. They were to be friends as of old. 'What would you say to a cricket team?' Rajam asked.

'No, Rajam, I don't think I can play. I don't know how to play.'

'That is what everybody thinks,' said Rajam. 'I don't know how myself, though I collect pictures and scores.'

This was very pleasing to hear. Probably Hobbs¹ too was shy and **sceptical** before he took the bat and swung it.

clustered: have come together in a small group

chums: (informal) friends

set: (slang) group

intact: complete and undamaged

sceptical: doubtful about the truth of something

1 Jack Hobbs was a renowned English cricketer.



'We can challenge a lot of teams, including our School Eleven. They think they can't be beaten,' said Swaminathan.

'What! The Board School mugs think that! We shall thrash them. Oh, yes.'

'What shall we call it?'

'Don't you know? It is the MCC²,' said Rajam.

'That is Hobbs' team, isn't it? They may drag us before a court if we take their name.'

'Who says that? If we get into any trouble, I shall declare before the judge that MCC stands for Malgudi Cricket Club.'

Swaminathan was a little disappointed. Though' as MCC it sounded imposing, the name was really a bit tame. 'I think we had better try some other name, Rajam.'

'What would you suggest?'

'Well—I am for "Friends Eleven".'

'Friends Eleven?'

'Or say "Jumping Stars"?' said Swaminathan.

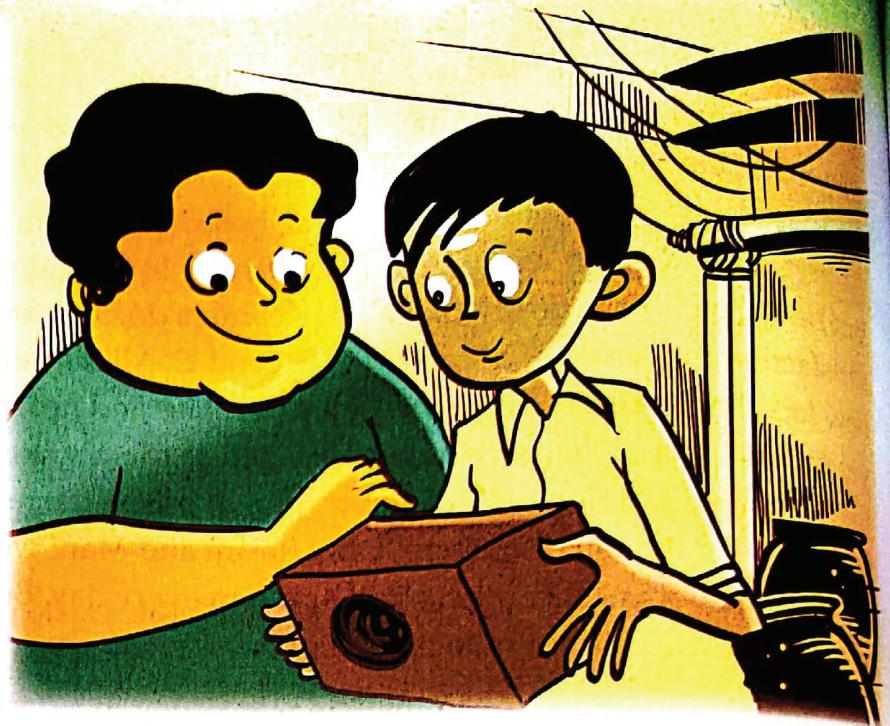
'Oh, that is not bad, not bad you know.'

'I do think it would be glorious to call ourselves "Jumping Stars"!'

Rajam instantly had a vision of a newspaper report: The Jumping Stars soundly thrashed the Board High School Eleven. 'It is a beauty, I think,' he cried, moved by the vision. He pulled out a piece of paper and a pencil, and said, 'Come on, Swami, recite the names that come to your head. It would be better to have a long list to

mugs: (*slang*) stupid people

² MCC stands for Marylebone Cricket Club.



select from. We shall underline "Jumping Stars" and "MCC" and give them special consideration. Come on.'

Swaminathan remained thoughtful and started, "Friends Eleven" . . . "Jumping Stars" . . . "Friends Union" . . .

'I have "Friends Union" here already,' Rajam said, pointing to the list.

Swaminathan went on: "Excelsiors" . . .

'I have got it.'

"Excelsior Union" . . . "Champion Eleven" . . .' A long pause.

'Are you dried up?' Rajam asked.

'No, if Mani were here, he would have suggested a few more names . . .

"Champion Eleven".'

'You have just said it.'

"Victory Union Eleven" . . .'

'That is very good. I think it is very, very good. People would be afraid of us.' He held the list before him and read the names with great satisfaction. He had struggled hard on the previous night to get a few names. But only 'Friends Union' and 'Excelsiors' kept coming till he felt fatigued. But what a lot of names Swaminathan was able to reel off. 'Can you meet me tomorrow evening, Swami? I shall get Mani down. Let us select a name.'

After a while, Swaminathan asked, 'Look here, do you think we shall have to pay tax or something to the Government when we start the team?'

'The Government seems to tax everything in this world. My father's pay is about 500. But nearly 200 and over is demanded by the Government. Anyway, what makes you think that we shall have to pay tax?'

'I mean—if we don't pay tax, the Government may not recognise our team or its name and a hundred other teams may take the same name. It might lead to all sorts of complications.'

'Suppose we have two names?' asked Rajam.

'It is not done.'

'I knew a lot of teams that have two names. When I was in Bishop Waller's, we had a cricket team that we called—I don't remember the name now. I think we called it



"Cricket Eleven" and "Waller's Cricket Eleven". You see, one name is for ordinary use and the other is for matches.'

'It is all very well for a rich team like your Waller's. But suppose the Government demands two taxes from us?'

Rajam realised at this point that the starting of a cricket team was the most complicated problem on earth. He had simply expected to gather a dozen fellows on the maidan next to his compound and play, and challenge the world. But here were endless troubles, starting with the name that must be unique, Government taxes, and so on.

They sat around Rajam's table in his room. Mani held before him a catalogue of Messrs Binns, the shop for sports goods. He read, 'Junior Willard Bats, Seven Eight, made of finest seasoned wood, used by Cambridge Junior Boys' Eleven.'

'Let me have a look at it.' said Rajam. He bent over the table and said, 'Seems to be a fine bat. Have a look at it, Swami.'

Swaminathan craned his neck and agreed that it was a fine bat, but he was indiscreet enough to say, 'It looks like any other bat in the catalogue.'

Mani's left hand shot out and held his neck and pressed his face close to the picture of the bat. 'Why do you pretend to be a cricket player if you cannot see the difference between Junior Willard and other bats? You are not fit to be even a sweeper in our team.' After this admonition the hold was relaxed.

There was a pause, and after that Rajam said, 'Note it down, Swami.' Swaminathan noted down on a paper, 'Vilord June-ear bat.' And looking up asked, 'How many?'

maidan: an open area or field

admonition: warning



'Say three. Will that do, Mani?'

'Why waste money on three bats? Two will do . . .'

'But suppose one breaks in the middle of a match?' Rajam asked.

'Do you suppose we are going to supply bats to our **opponents**? They will have to come provided with bats. We must make it clear.'

'Even then, if our bat breaks we may have to stop playing'.

'Two will do, Rajam, unless you want to waste money.'

Rajam's enthusiasm was great. He left his chair and sat on the arm of Mani's chair, gloating over the pictures of cricket goods in the catalogue. Swaminathan, though he was considered to be a bit of a **heretic**, caught the enthusiasm and perched on the other arm of the chair. All the three devoured with their eyes the glossy pictures of cricket balls, bats and nets.

In about an hour they selected from the catalogue their team's requirements. And then came the most difficult part of the whole affair—a letter to Messrs Binns, ordering goods. Bare courtesy made Rajam offer the authorship of the letter to Mani, who declined it. Rajam took up the task himself. Half an hour later he placed on the table a letter:

From

MCC (And Victory Union Eleven), Malgudi.

To

Messrs Binns,

Sportsmen,

Mount Road,

Madras

Dear Sir,

Please send to our team two Junior Willard bats, six balls, wickets and other things quick. It is very urgent. We shall send you money afterwards. Don't fear. Please be urgent.

Yours obediently,

CAPTAIN RAJAM (Captain)

opponents: people on the opposite team

heretic: a person who holds a belief or an opinion that strongly disagrees with what most people believe



This letter received Swaminathan's benedictions. But Mani expressed certain doubts. He wanted to know whether 'Dear' could stand at the beginning of a letter to a perfect stranger. 'How can you call Binns "Dear Sir"? You must say "Sir".' Rajam's explanation was: 'I won't say "Sir". It is said only by clerks. I am not Binns' clerk. I don't care to address him as "Sir".'

So this letter went as it was.

RK Narayan



About the Author

RK Narayan (1906–2001) was one of India's finest English writers. Narayan was born in Madras, British India and was brought up by his grandmother and was a teacher before he turned to writing. His youngest brother, RK Laxman, was a brilliant cartoonist. RK Narayan is best known for his popular novel *Swami and Friends*, which is centred on a group of schoolboys living in rural South India, in a village called Malgudi. The novel takes place in the years before India became an independent country. In 1986, it was adapted into a wildly popular Hindi-language television series called *Malgudi Days*.



Comprehension

A. Answer these questions.

1. Who had recently moved from one school to another? Name the person and the schools.
2. What was Swaminathan doing when Rajam arrived?
3. Who was better at coming up with names for the team? Which team did the two boys want to beat?
4. Where was Rajam going to order cricket bats from?
5. Why did Rajam want to buy three bats? Who objected to it and why?
6. What were Mani's objections to the letter? Was it changed finally? Why not?

B. Answer these questions with reference to the context.

1. 'What! The Board School mugs think that! We shall thrash them. Oh, yes.'
 - a. Who said this and to whom?
 - b. What does the word 'thrash' mean in this context?
 - c. What did the 'Board School mugs' think?

benedictions: blessings

2. Swaminathan noted down on a paper, 'Vilord June-ear bat.' And looking up asked, 'How many?'
 - a. What had Swaminathan written down? Had he written it accurately?
 - b. How did Rajam and Mani respond to his question?
 - c. What were the three boys discussing and why?

C. Think and answer.

1. Find two instances of humour in the story and explain why they are funny.
2. You have been asked to organise any sports match and be the captain of the team for your school. You will have to do everything from buying supplies to recruiting team members. Make a list of all the tasks you will need to complete as the organiser. Also come up with a name for your team.



Word Wonder

Read these sentences.

- ▶ Ashish is the clear **front runner**.
- ▶ I am not sure what she is going to say, but **the ball is in her court** now.
- ▶ It is a **long shot** but I am hoping Swami wins.

In each of these sentences, the highlighted phrase is an **idiom** that comes from a sporting context.

An **idiom** is a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words.

A. Match the idioms with their meanings.

| idiom | meaning |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. down to the wire | a. to make a mistake and ruin something that you are responsible for |
| 2. across the board | b. the result will not be decided or known until the very end |
| 3. drop the ball | c. involving everyone or everything in a company |
| 4. out of someone's league | d. a difficult situation |
| 5. sticky wicket | e. too good for someone |

B. Frame sentences using each of the idioms you learnt in exercise A above.



Learn About Language

Read this sentence.

- ▶ I did not finish the book because it was uninteresting.

This sentence is made up of two parts:

- ▶ I did not finish the book
- ▶ because it was uninteresting

Both these parts have a finite verb and a subject. Such groups of words are called **clauses**.

A **clause** is any group of words that contain a subject and a verb.

Now, read these sentences.

- ▶ They live in this apartment.

- ▶ Tushar eats a sandwich.

Each of these sentences is a clause and is a **simple sentence**.

A **simple sentence** has only one clause and therefore, only a single finite verb.

If a compound sentence is made up of two clauses and if the subject of the second clause is the same as the subject of the first, the second subject may be omitted.

- ▶ Geetika reached home and cooked dinner.



Read these sentences.

- ▶ I have brought home sandwiches and we will eat them for dinner.

- ▶ I like playing cricket but I am not fond of football.

The highlighted parts in the above sentences are independent clauses that can stand on their own. These independent clauses have been joined by coordinating conjunctions **and** and **but**. The sentences given above are **compound sentences**.

A **compound sentence** contains two independent clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction.

A. State whether these sentences are simple (S) or compound (C).

1. Mita is Neeraj's sister.
2. Karan got to the station in time but the train was late.
3. The baby dropped its rattle and started to cry.
4. This bed is soft and warm.
5. The computer was on but no one was using it.
6. The town hall was destroyed by the last earthquake, but the War Memorial was not damaged.

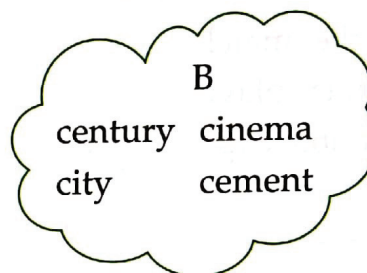
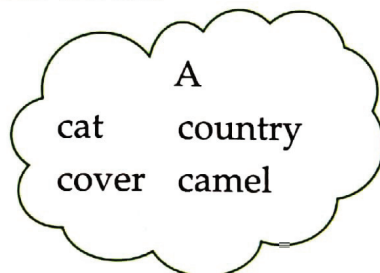


B. Combine these pairs of sentences as directed in brackets.

1. My wife was there. I said nothing. (**simple**)
2. I was on my way home. I met a stranger. (**compound**)
3. Come into the house. Stay outside. (**compound**)
4. Reeta won a prize. She was very happy. (**simple**)
5. The way was long. The wind was cold. (**compound**)
6. I could not sit down. I could not lie down. (**simple**)
7. My mother was very angry. She scolded me. (**simple**)
8. Rohit is ill. He could not pass the medical examination. (**compound**)

Language Lab

Read these words aloud.



Each word in set A has a 'k' sound for 'c'. This is the **hard /c/ sound**.
Each word in set B has a 's' sound for 'c'. This is the **soft /c/ sound**.

A. Say these words aloud. Circle the words that contain the hard /c/ sound and underline the ones that contain the soft /c/ sound. There may be some words without soft or hard /c/ sound.



| | | |
|----------|------------|-----------|
| crash | ice | celebrate |
| berserk | television | table |
| cupboard | cap | cypress |
| circle | glass | car |
| citrus | keep | princess |

B. Listen to the text and identify the words related to music and musical instruments.



1. B ___ S
2. ___ Y
3. S ___ Y
4. P ___ N

5. C _ _ _ _ D
6. U _ _ _ _ _ E
7. S _ _ _ _ _ O
8. O _ _ _ _ A
9. J _ _ _ Z
10. B _ _ _ _



C. Imagine you are describing a football match to someone who can't see the action. Give a running commentary of the event by describing what the players are doing.

Composition



Write a descriptive paragraph of 100–150 words on any one of these topics.

1. First live cricket match
2. Favourite sports player
3. An unforgettable trip

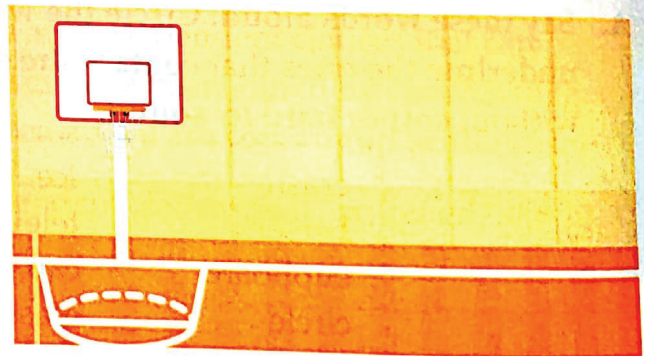
Activity



Who is your favourite sports player? Using a book or the Internet, find out the following information about him/her.

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| Name: | Date of Birth: |
| Nationality: | Years played: |
| Team: | Famous for: |

Make a poster about him/her. Include the information you found out. Stick pictures of him/her. Present your poster in class.



Further Reading: *Swami and Friends* by RK Narayan

