

# 15

## A Birthday Letter

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### 15.1 Objectives

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At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Read and write a personal letter.
- Use imperative sentences
- Make Wh questions
- Thank and appreciate
- Write a personal letter giving advice.

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### 15.2 Let's read

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*What do you expect to get from your parents on your birthday, especially if they are in another city? A pen, a dress, a purse or a book. But here is an unusual present- a letter.*

#### Section I

In 1930, India was not free. Many of our leaders were imprisoned by the British. While in Naini Prison, Pt. Nehru wrote this letter to his daughter Indira, on her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. Let's find out what he told her.

Central Prison, Naini  
October 26, 1930

My dear Indira,

On your birthday you have been in the habit of receiving presents and good wishes. Good wishes you will still have in full measure, but what present can I send you from Naini prison? My presents cannot be very material or solid. They can be of the mind and spirit, .... Things that even the high walls of prison cannot stop.

You know sweetheart, how I dislike sermonizing and doling out good advice ..... I have always thought that the best way to find out what is right and what is not right, what should be done and what should not be done, is not by giving a sermon, but by talking and discussing, and out of discussion sometimes a little bit of truth comes out. I have liked my talks with you and we have discussed many things, but the world is wide and beyond our world lie other wonderful and mysterious worlds ..... none of us need ever be bored or imagine ..... that we have learned everything worth learning and become very wise.

.....But what am I to do then? A letter can hardly take the place of a talk; at best it is a one-sided affair .... Imagine that I have made a suggestion to you for you to think over, as if we really were having a talk.

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### 15.1 Read, Think and Answer I

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1. On what occasion did Pt. Nehru write this letter to his daughter Indira Priyadarshini?

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2. Why can he not send her a “material or solid” present?

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3. What does he not like to do?

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4. What does he suggest in its place?

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### 15.3 Section II

*The study of history can be inspiring. It tells us now ordinary men and women can become heroic. Let's find out who the great heroes are.*

In history we read of great periods in the life of nations, of great men and women .. do you remember how fascinated you were when you first read the story of Jeanne d'Arc, and how your ambition was to be something like her? Ordinary men and women are not usually heroic. They think of their bread and butter, of their children, of their household worries and the like. But a time comes when a whole people become interested in a great cause. Then history helps even simple, ordinary men and women to become heroes. Great leaders have something in them which inspires a whole people and makes them do great deeds..... In India a great leader, full of love for all who suffer and eager to help them, has inspired our people to great actions and noble sacrifice. He has helped to make the starving, the poor and the oppressed free and happy.

Bapuji is in prison, but the magic of his message has stolen the hearts of India's millions. Men and women, and even little children, come out of their little shells and become India's soldiers of freedom. In India today we are making history, and you and I are fortunate to see this happening before our eyes and to take some part ourselves in this great drama.

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### 15.2 Read, Think and Answer II

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1. What does history tell us?

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2. Which historical character inspired young Indira?

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3. What do ordinary men and women usually think of?

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4. When do ordinary men and women become heroes?

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5. Who has inspired millions of Indians fight for freedom?

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### 15.4 Section III

*What are the qualities which would make Indira a brave soldier in India's freedom movement? Let's read and find out.*

What part shall we play in it?

If we are to be India's soldiers we have to respect India's honour, and that honour is a sacred trust. . . . It is no easy matter to decide what is right and what is not. One little test I shall ask you to apply whenever you are in doubt . . . Never do anything in secret or anything that you would wish to hide. For the desire to hide anything means that you are afraid, and fear is a bad thing and unworthy of you. Be brave, and all the rest follows . . . . You know that in our great Freedom Movement, under Bapuji's leadership, there is no room for secrecy or hiding. We have nothing to hide. We are not afraid of what we do or what we say. We work in the sun and in the light. Even so in our private lives let us make friends with the sun and work in the light and do nothing secretly. . . . . and if you do so, my dear you will grow up a child of the light, unafraid and serene and unruffled, whatever may happen.

I have written a very long letter to you. And yet there is so much I would like to tell you. How can a letter contain it? Good-bye, little one, and may you grow up into a brave soldier in India's service.

With all my love and good wishes.

You loving father,  
(J.L. Nehru)

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### 15.3 Read, Think and Answer III

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1. What should soldiers take care of ?

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2. What makes people hide things from others?

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3. When can we make friends with the sun and work in the light?

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4. Bapuji led the freedom movement. What did he focus on?

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### **15.5 Overall Questions**

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1. Why should we discuss and not sermonize?

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2. Why according to Nehru, do people hide things?

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3. What advice did Indira get from her father?

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## 15.6 Let's Learn Grammar

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Read these sentences:

| A  | B   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Love your neighbours.</li><li>• Eat health food.</li><li>• Keep your classroom clean.</li><li>• Keep away from a hot iron.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't tell lies.</li><li>• Never hide the truth.</li><li>• Don't be afraid of the dark.</li></ul> |

All these sentences are used for giving instructions. They are Imperative sentences and they begin with a verb. The sentences in B begin with 'Don't' or 'Never'. They are Negative Imperative sentences.

**Exercise 1.** Match the verbs in A with the words in B

| A       | B             |
|---------|---------------|
| Be      | the truth     |
| Tell    | your teachers |
| Make    | brave         |
| Respect | good friends  |

**Exercise 2**

Begin with the verb and rewrite the sentences as instruction

e.g. we should help our neighbours → Help your neighbour

- i) We should follow traffic rules →
- ii) You should read story books →
- iii) You should study hard →

iv) You shouldn't eat spicy food → don't .....

v) You shouldn't stay out late →

vi) You shouldn't work too hard →

### Wh-Questions

In this lesson you will notice that every section contains a question beginning with 'Wh' question word.

Read these sentences:

(i) What present can I send you from Naini Prison?

(ii) But what am I to do then?

(iii) What part shall we play in it

There are nine 'Wh' question words: when, what, where, why, who, whom, whose, which and how.

**Exercise 3.** Frame at least 10 Wh-question from the table below. Combine your words correctly.

| Question word | Helping verb | Subject | Verb    | Complement    | ? |
|---------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------------|---|
| What          | Do           | You     | Like    | To eat        | ? |
| When          | Did          | You     | Go      | To the market | ? |
| Why           | Do           | You     | Trouble | Me            | ? |
| Where         | Will         | You     | Met     | Him           | ? |
| How           | Did          | You     | Spend   | Your holidays | ? |
| Whom          | Do           | They    | Want    | To elect      | ? |

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## 15.7 Increase Your Word Power

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### Similar sounding words

Read these pairs of words aloud. Notice that they sound similar but are spelt in different ways.

Right      not      our      bored      their      great

Write      knot      hour      board      there      grate

### Exercise I

Write words to complete the similar sounding pairs.

i) whole                      ii) weight                      iii) see

iv) some                      v) wood                      vi) sun

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise II

Choose the correct word from each pair in Exercise I and make new word groups.

i) the \_\_\_\_\_ night      ii) heavy \_\_\_\_\_      iii) the \_\_\_\_\_ side

a big \_\_\_\_\_      a long \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_ you

\_\_\_\_\_ for me.

(iv) \_\_\_\_\_ oil                      (v) I \_\_\_\_\_ wait

a difficult \_\_\_\_\_                      a log of \_\_\_\_\_

(vi) the younger \_\_\_\_\_

the beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ set.

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## 15.8 Let's Talk

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- I. Complete the dialogue by supplying suitable 'Wh' question words from the given list

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| What, Who, Where, Why |
|-----------------------|

Ramesh: Razak, you look tired      1      has happened?

Razak : I was in bed all morning.

Ramesh:      2      ?

Razk: I've got a bad cough.

Ramesh: Go and see a doctor. Don't neglect it.

Razak:      3      should I go to? Dr. Sen or Dr. Sharma?

Rameh: Any one. Don't waste time.

Razak:      4      is Dr. Sen's chamber?

Ramesh: Let's ask Gopal.

- II. Practice reading this dialogue with a partner and then frame another dialogue for practice with another partner.

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## 15.9 Let's Write

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You have read Nehru's letter to Indira. Write a letter to a younger brother who needs your help for the examination. You should include these instruction and add some of your own.

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| - Remain cool.                  | - don't work too hard. |
| - Sleep well.                   | - Have a healthy diet. |
| - Read the questions carefully. | - Check your work.     |

Use the format below

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
|  | Your _____    |
|  | Address _____ |
|  | Date _____    |
| Dear _____                                     |               |
| Thanks for your letter.....                    |               |
| _____  |               |
| _____  |               |
| _____  |               |
| _____  |               |
| Here's wishing you all the best for your exams |               |
|  | _____         |
|  | _____         |

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## 15.10 Check Your Answers

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### Read, think and answer I

1. Indira's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.
2. Because he is in prison.
3. Sermonizing
4. Discussion

### Read, think and answer II

1. History tells us of great periods in the life of nations, of great men and women.
2. Jeanne d'Arc
3. Of bread and butter, of their children and household worries.

4. They become heroes when they become full of faith for a great cause.
5. Bapuji
6. Ordinary men and women became India's soldiers of freedom.

**Read, think and answer III**

1. India's honour
2. Fear makes us hide things from others.
3. When we are fearless and open in our conduct.
4. Openness/courage/fearlessness.

**Overall Questions**

1. Discussion helps us to find out what is right and what is not right. Out of discussion a little bit of truth comes out.
2. People hide things from others because they are afraid.
3. Nehru advised Indira to grow up as a calm, straight forward and fearless human being.

**Grammar**

1. Be brave

Tell the truth

Make good friends

Respect your teachers.

- Ex.2. i) Help your neighbours      ii) Read story books      iii) Study hard
- iv) don't eat spicy food      v) don't stay out late
- vi) don't work too hard.

- Ex.3 What do you like to eat?/ Where will you spend your holidays?/  
How will you go to the market? [You can add to the list]

**Increase your word power**

1. (i) whole/hole                      (ii) weight/wait                      (iii) see/sea  
(iv) some/sum                      (v) wood/would                      (vi) sun/son
2. (i) the whole night                      (ii) heavy weight  
    a big hole                                      a long wait  
(iii) the sea side                      (iv) some oil                      (v) I would wait  
    see you                                      a difficult sum                      a log of wood  
(vi) the younger son  
    the beautiful sun set

**Let's talk**

1. What                      2. Why                      3. Who                      4. where