

Unit 2



Reading A : Oliver Asks for More

Reading B : The Cry of Children (Poem)

Reading C : Reaching the Unreached



Social Issues

Read the saying given below and answer the questions that follow.

**Home is the happiest place in
the world.**

1. What does the sentence mean ?
2. Do you agree / disagree with the view expressed in the saying? Why?
3. Do you like your home? Why?

Oral Discourse: Talk on - “The feelings of a homeless child.”

Oliver Asks for More

(This is an extract from the novel ‘OLIVER TWIST’ written by the British novelist Charles Dickens (1812- 70). It is the story of an orphan boy named Oliver, who is brought to a children’s home.)

Mr. Bumble walked on with long strides. Little Oliver, firmly grasping his gold – laced cuff, trotted beside him.

Oliver had not been within the walls of the workhouse a quarter of an hour, when Mr. Bumble informed him that the board had said he was to appear before it forthwith.

Not having a very clearly defined notion of what a live board was, Oliver was rather astonished by this information, and was not quite certain whether he ought to laugh or cry. He had no time to think about the matter. Mr. Bumble asked Oliver to follow him into a large white – washed room where eight or ten fat gentlemen were sitting round a table.

At the top of the table, seated in an armchair rather higher than the rest, was a particularly fat gentleman with a very round, red face.

‘Bow to the board,’ said Bumble. Oliver brushed away two or three tears that were lingering in his eyes; and seeing no board but the table, bowed to that.

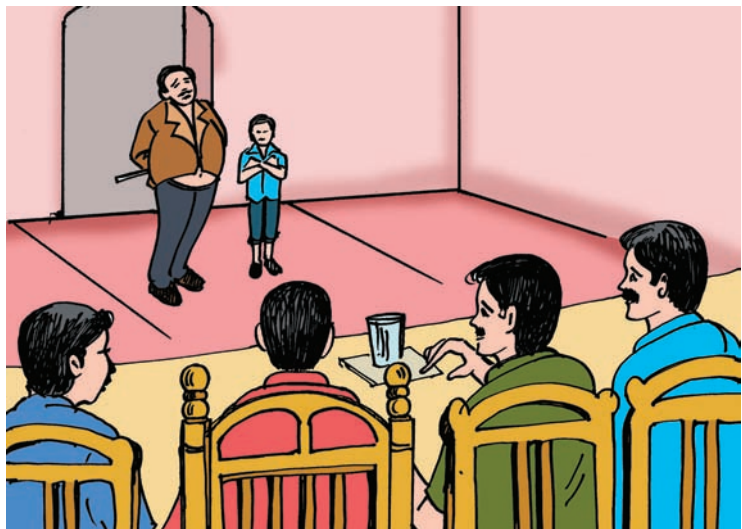
‘What’s your name, boy?’ said the gentleman in the high chair.

Oliver was frightened at the sight of so many gentlemen, which made him tremble. The beadle gave him a tap on his back with his cane, which made him cry.

‘Boy,’ said the gentleman in the high chair, ‘listen to me. You know you’re an orphan, I suppose?’

‘What’s that, sir?’ inquired poor Oliver.

‘The boy is a fool - I thought he was,’ said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.



‘Hush!’ said the gentleman who had spoken first. ‘You know you’ve got no father or mother, and that you were brought up by the parish, weren’t you?’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Oliver, weeping bitterly.

‘What are you crying for?’ inquired the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

‘I hope you say your prayers every night,’ said another gentleman in a gruff voice; ‘and pray for the people who feed you, and take care of you-like a Christian.’

‘Yes, sir,’ stammered the boy.

‘Well! You have come here to be educated and taught a useful trade,’ said the red-faced gentleman in the high chair.

‘So you’ll begin to pick oakum tomorrow morning at six o’clock,’ added the surly one in the white waistcoat.

Oliver bowed low, directed by the beadle, and was then hurried away to a large ward; where, on a rough, hard bed, he sobbed himself to sleep.

Poor Oliver! As he lay sleeping, unconscious of everything around him, the board had taken a decision that would change the course of his life.

The members of this board were very wise and philosophical men. As they turned their attention to the workhouse, they discovered that it was the regular place of public entertainment for the poorer classes. It was the place where they had breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper all the year round and free; where it was all play and no work. This was really a shocking state of affairs. They were of the opinion that the poor should be given only two alternatives - either to starve quickly outside the workhouse, or gradually inside the house. With this view, they decided that the inmates of the workhouse would be issued three meals of thin gruel a day, with an onion twice a week.

For the first six months after Oliver Twist was moved in, the system was in full operation. As a result, during this period, the number of workhouse inmates got smaller, and the inmates themselves shrank in size and became thinner.

The room in which the boys were fed, was a large stone hall, with a big copper bowl at one end, out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at mealtime. Of this festive composition each boy had one basinful and no more-except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides.

The basins never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again. When they had performed this operation they would sit staring at the copper bowl, with such eager eyes, as if they could have devoured the big bowl itself and everything in it. At the same time they sucked their fingers most carefully to catch up any stray splashes of gruel that might have stuck thereon. Boys have generally excellent appetite. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months; at last they

got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook-shop), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel per day, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next to him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye; and they believed him. A council was held; lots were cast as to who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver, while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own courage.

'Please, sir, I want some more.'

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralyzed with wonder; the boys with fear.

'What!' said the master at length, in a faint voice.

'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.'

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

The board was sitting in solemn meeting, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said, 'Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!'

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

'For more!' said Mr. Limbkins. 'Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the board?'

'He did, sir,' replied Bumble.



‘That boy will be hung’, said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. ‘I know that boy will be hung.’

Nobody contradicted the prophetic gentleman’s opinion. An excited discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish. In other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

- *Charles Dickens*

About the author

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is a well known English novelist. Due to his father’s imprisonment, Charles left school and worked in a shoe factory. While he was working as an office boy, he launched his writing career. His novels *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *Pickwick Papers*, *Bleak House*, *A Tale of two Cities* and *David Copperfield* brought him name all over the world. He went on lecture tours to America and got literary reputation. He focussed on social issues and human ailments in his works.



Glossary

- beadle (*n*) : an official of a church
- parish (*n*) : a church committee
- oakum (*n*) : loose fibre obtained by untwisting and picking apart old ropes
- surly (*adj*) : serious or angry
- gruel (*n*) : a thin liquid food of oats, rice, etc.
- devoured (*v*) : ate hungrily or quickly
- appetite (*n*) : the desire to eat, hunger
- voracious (*adj*) : wanting great quantities of food
- stupefied (*adj*) : shocked
- paralyzed (*v*) : became motionless
- ladle (*n*) : a long handled spoon used to serve liquids
- countenance (*n*) : a person’s face or facial expression
- confinement (*n*) : putting in a prison or a closed room.
- apprentice (*n*) : one who works under a skilled person.



Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. How did Oliver feel when he was asked to appear before the live board?
2. Why did Oliver tremble and cry in the white-washed room?
3. “What is that, sir?” inquired poor Oliver. What does ‘that’ refer to?
4. What kind of people were the members of the board? Justify your opinion.
5. What main differences do you notice between the children and the master? (Observe the physical appearances, dress, behaviour, etc.) What can you infer from these differences?
6. How do you look at Oliver’s request, “Please, sir, I want some more!”? What compelled him to say this?
7. What happened to Oliver at the end of the story?
8. Do you find children like Oliver around you ? How would you help them to live better?



Vocabulary

I. Look at the underlined part in the following sentence.

“You have come here to be educated...” said the red-faced gentleman.

The word ‘red-faced’ is called a Compound Adjective.

The phrase ‘red-faced gentleman’ is a short form of ‘a gentleman with a red face’.

1. Pick out the phrases with Compound Adjectives from the story or elsewhere and write how they can be rewritten to express the same meaning.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. Change the underlined parts in the following paragraph into compound adjectives. Rewrite the paragraph in your note book.

Sachin Tendulkar is a cricketer who is famous all over the world. He is a batsman playing with right hand. He has many world records to his credit which are mind blowing. Besides all these, he is a person with a kind heart. He works with an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) based in Mumbai to help more than 200 orphans every year.

3. Fill in the blanks with appropriate compound adjectives from the box given below.

deep-rooted, old-fashioned, well-mannered, soft-spoken, brand-new

Latha is a _____ girl. She speaks kindly with her classmates. Look at her, she is wearing an _____ dress. She does not like to wear _____ dresses. Don't you think Latha is a _____ girl?



Grammar

I. Look at the following sentence taken from the story.

'The boy is a fool,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

As you know, the above underlined expression, can be changed into a question.

How do we change the above statement into a question? By putting the auxiliary verb before the subject **'the boy'**.

The boy is a fool.



Is the boy a fool?

Look at some more sentences.

1. 'I understand that he asked for more.'

'Do I understand that he asked for more?'

2. 'Oliver asks for more'

Does Oliver ask for more?

3. 'The boys took their places.'

Did the boys take their places?

These sentences are changed into questions by placing **'do/does/did'** at the beginning. Such questions are called Yes / No questions.

Change the following statements into Yes/ No questions.

1. Oliver was frightened at the sight of so many gentlemen.

2. You are an orphan.

3. You say your prayers every night.

4. You will pick oakum tomorrow morning.

5. Mr. Bumble rushed into the room.

6. They can devour the big bowl.

7. Boys have generally excellent appetite.

II. Read the following sentence taken from the story.

“You were brought up by the parish, weren’t you?”

In this sentence ‘weren’t you?’ at the end is called a question tag. Question tags are used to get information or confirmation. The question tags are positive if the statements are negative. And if the statements are positive, question tags are negative. These tags are short / contracted form of questions. If the statement has an auxiliary, the tag begins with an auxiliary. In case it does not have an auxiliary, it begins with do / does / did.

Read the following dialogue to understand the usage of question tags.

Ramu : The weather is good today, isn’t it?

Vijay : Indeed, Ramu.

Ramu : How about going out now? Hope you’ll join me, won’t you?

Vijay : I’ve got some important work now, I am afraid.

Read the following dialogue that took place at a party. Add suitable question tags to complete it.

Rohit : Hi, I’ve met you before, _____

Suma : No, I don’t think so.

Rohit : But your name is Vani, _____

Suma : No, it’s Suma! Anyway, glad to meet you.

Rohit : Me too. This is Rohit. The party seems to be really lively, _____

Suma : Yes, definitely. We enjoy ourselves a lot on such occasions, _____

Rohit : Yeah, we do.

III. Editing

Read the following passage. Every numbered sentence has an error. Identify and edit it.

(1)When Rohit was nine, his family lived for a small town. (2)His father Rajarao were a clerk in Rao & Rao Company. (3)Janaki, Rohit’s mother, was an housewife. She used to be alone in the daytime when Rohit was at school, and Rajarao, in his office. (4)She wanted to has a pet. (5)She asked Rohit’s father several time for a pet.



Writing

Anne Frank was a little girl of thirteen. She was as lonely as Oliver Twist. When the German army invaded her country, she had to hide in a small building with her family . She suffered a lot. She recorded her feelings and thoughts in her diary.

Friday, 1st October, 1942.

Just for fun, I am going to tell you each person’s first wish, when we are allowed to go out again. Mrs. Van says, ‘If I go out, I’ll eat cream cakes.’ Dussel says, ‘If I am let free, I’ll run to see my wife Lotje.’ Mummy says, ‘I will have a cup of coffee.’ Peter says, ‘I will go to the cinema.’ I long for so many things. But I long for a home of our own.

1. What did Anne write in her diary?
 - ◆ personal feelings/thoughts/reflections
 - ◆ events other than routine
 - ◆ future plans
2. Did you notice any variety in the sentences ?
3. Are all the sentences connected with each other properly ?

After facing the live board, Oliver returned to his bed crying. He sat up to write his diary. Now, imagine you are Oliver Twist. Write a diary entry with the above features in mind.