

A Tale of Three Villages

1. Koko Village, Nigeria



Mr. Sunday Nana, his wife and four small children live in Koko Village, Nigeria . The village is like any other African village-picturesque, colourful and noisy. The Nana family's house too, is the same as all the other houses in the village, with mud walls and a rusting corrugated iron roof, and with children and chickens sharing the compound.

There is one difference, however. Outside Mr. Nana's front are three large empty metal drums, the bright red paint now flaking away, but the skull and crossbones symbol clearly visible on each. And in a clearing 200m away from the village, next to a stream that the villagers get their drinking water from, is an enormous pyramid of identical drums, reaching to the sky. Some of them are badly corroded, their slimy contents of various colours - grey, dark green, bright orange, etc. - leaking out, down, on to the baked African earth and into the stream. Some have fallen down and rolled - or been rolled by playful children - into the bush. Some are smoking in the midday heat. Some are swelling, as if their contents are bursting to get out. Some have already burst.

“They came on a Wednesday,” said Sunday, “Many, many big lorries. They took all day unloading them. No-one told us what was in them. They gave the Chief a brown paper bag-I saw him smiling as the lorries drove away. This was five years ago. Then three months ago, one of the brightest boys in the village - Thomas Agonyo - started university in Lagos. He came home one weekend with a new Chemistry book, and spent all day looking at the drums and writing things down and talking to himself and shaking his head. We all thought he had gone mad. Then he called a meeting of the village and told us that the drums contained

poisonous chemicals. He said they had come from Italy. But I don't know where that is. Is it in Europe?"

Mr. Sunday Nana stopped, frowning, a troubled look on his face, "In the last five years, 13 people have died in this village, my own elder brother one of them. They have been in pain, terrible pain. We have never seen deaths like that before. Lots of our children are sick. We have asked the Government to take the drums away, but they do nothing. We have written to Italy, but they do nothing. The Chief says we should move our houses to another place. But we have no money to buy land. We have no choice. We have to stay here. "And they" ----- pointing to the mountain of death in the clearing - "are our neighbours."

Comprehension

I. Answer the following questions.

1. Why were the large empty drums placed outside Mr. Nana's house?
2. What harm can the pyramid of identical drums cause to the villagers?
3. Why was the Chief smiling as the lorries drove away?
4. Was Thomas Agonyo correct in his findings? Justify your opinion.
5. Why didn't the people move from their place?
6. There is a repetition of sentences with 'some' in the passage. Read the passage again and write down the sentences and the function of 'some' in each one of them. Do you find any other repetitions in the passage? If yes, mention it.

II. Choose the correct answer.

1. Nana's house is _____
 - a) picturesque, colourful and noisy.
 - b) with mud walls and a rusting corrugated iron roof.
2. _____ is visible on the empty metal drums.
 - a) bright red paint flaking away
 - b) skull and crossbones symbol

3. The important conclusion Thomas Agonyo gave is that _____
- the drums had come from Italy.
 - the drums contained poisonous chemicals.

III. Write the adjectives or adjective phrases that describe the happy and gloomy situations in the village.

Grammar

Quantifiers as the name implies are a type of determiners which denote imprecise quantity. They differ from numbers or numerals which indicate precise quantity.

Example:

I've got **some** apples in my basket and **some** water in my bottle.

I haven't got **any** apples in my basket, nor **any** water in my bottle.

Generally quantifiers are used before nouns.

Some, any, all, no, no one, both, each, every, several are some of the quantifiers.

"Some" is usually thought of as the positive counterpart to "any" in many circumstances.

"Any" can be used before countable and uncountable nouns usually in questions and negative sentences.

Example:

- Are you bringing **any** friends with you?
- I am bringing **some** friends with me.

Quantifiers come before nouns. Some of the quantifiers you find in the text are: some, any, no. You also find numerals. Pick out the nouns along with quantifiers and numerals and write them down and analyze the meaning they convey.

Fill in the blanks appropriately with the following quantifiers: no, any, all, some, each, several and every.

- _____ ordinary person is bothered about climatic changes. If we talk of _____ changes, people look at us as if we don't have _____ work. In fact, it is such a grave problem that _____ person has to think about. _____ scientists feel alarmed because the ozone layer is depleting. In addition, _____ people believe that the global warming is creating climatic problems. But _____ single individual shows _____ concern for it.

2. _____ meteorologists predict that the world will get warm between 2 to 4 degrees Celsius by the year 2030. The scientists believe that _____ year _____ polar ice will melt and cause rainfall, increase in the sea level and also temperature will be affected. _____ people disagree with the theory that the human activity is having an effect on the world's climate. _____ scientists need to monitor the Earth's atmosphere and _____ human beings need to care for the air, water and plant life that influence world's weather.
3. People who disagree with the theory that there is a direct relationship between the human activity and climate believe that the world climate has gone through _____ changes since the earth and its atmosphere first formed. So for _____ argument there is a counter argument. _____ individual differs with the other in _____ way or the other.

2. Ponnimanthuri Village, India

"I can remember the time," she said wistfully, "when all the fields around this village were green and the harvests good". Her outstretched arm described a complete circle as she stood in the morning sun. "Then they built those monsters, those....." Her voice spluttered in anger as she shook her fist at a collection of ominous-looking black buildings on the horizon, covered in a low-lying shroud of thick smoke.



"They said that factories need leather to make shoes, handbags and clothes. They said our menfolk would get jobs. They said we would all become rich."

We stood silent, each thinking our own thoughts. Yes, they told you all that. But there is so much they didn't tell you. They didn't tell you that to change animal skins into leather - which they call tanning - uses as many as 250 different chemicals, including heavy metals such as cadmium, arsenic and chromium. They didn't tell you that these chemicals are discharged into the environment from those chimney stacks and fall to earth for miles around, polluting the earth below. They didn't tell you that this would poison your fields, so that nothing will grow.



“They didn't tell us that the chemicals would be dumped in open fields and into our rivers,” sighed Vijayasama. We had been thinking the same thoughts. “They didn't tell us that our women would have to walk ten kilometres every day. They didn't tell us that we would get ulcer and sores on our bodies. They didn't tell us...” Her voice trailed off. There is so much they didn't tell you, I thought.

“We don't buy leather shoes or leather handbags or leather clothes,” she said.

Glossary

outstretched (v)	:	pulled out to full length
trailed off (<i>phr. verb</i>)	:	became gradually quieter and then stopped

I. Answer the following questions.

1. The people in this village were affected by chemical factories. Where, in your opinion, should the factories be built? Why?
2. If it is necessary to build factories near the villages, what precautions should be taken to keep the villagers safe?
3. The narrator said at the end, "There is so much they didn't tell you, I thought"-what was that so much that was not told, according to you?

Grammar

Write the following sentences in reported speech.

1. "I can remember the time." she said wistfully, "when all the fields around this village were green and the harvests good."
2. "They said that factories need leather to make shoes, handbags and clothes. They said our men folk would get jobs. They said we would all become rich."

3. Vorobyov Village, Ukraine (formerly USSR)



"It happened on April the 26th 1986. I remember the date because it was my mother's birthday. We heard the explosion early in the morning. We didn't worry, because there had been explosions before from Chernobyl. But this one was bigger. Everyone stopped what they were doing and listened. Then we ran out into the garden. We could see a cloud of white smoke coming from the nuclear reactor." Natasha Revenko wiped her hands nervously on her apron. Tears came to the corners of her eyes, and slid slowly down her pinched, pale cheeks.

"It was a Saturday," she went on, still wiping her hands on her apron. "It was a lovely warm day, and the children played outside all weekend. Even when the dust began to fall, they still played outside. They picked up handfuls of it and threw it at each other, laughing. It was Wednesday before the loudspeaker van came to the village, telling us to keep our children indoors and not to touch the radioactive dust. They also told us to wash down our houses and roads with water. A week later the children began to vomit.



Their hair fell out. They couldn't eat. They grew so thin, and sores appeared all over their little bodies. Two weeks after that, all three died - all three on the same day." She broke down now and cried quietly, as she had done so many times before. "They're buried over there." She pointed to the church graveyard. "Lots of village children are. And adults."

I touched her gently on the shoulder, leaving her to her bitter-sweet memories, and walked on through the silence. It was a ghost town. No one lived there anymore. They had either died or been forcibly evacuated. The fields were barren. Nothing grew. Nothing ever would again. There was no bird-song. No rabbit peered at me. No cow endlessly chewed. No horse neighed.

Natasha caught me up as we boarded the bus marked MOSCOW. "Thank you for coming with me," She said. "I wanted to see the graves and the house again, before I die."

Glossary

- apron (*n*) : a piece of clothing that covers the front part of your clothes and is tied around your waist
- radioactive dust (*n*) : the dust that comes out of a radioactive reaction

Answer the following questions.

1. What measures should the government have taken when the nuclear reactor was installed beside the village?
2. What havoc can radioactive dust cause?
3. Pick out the words/expressions/images that describe the tragedy caused by the radioactive dust.
4. What is the common theme that runs through the assorted narratives presented under the title 'A Tale of Three Villages'? Substantiate your answer with evidences from the three Texts?

Writing

Out of the three villages you have read about, choose one village of your choice (you may also choose a completely different one). You are a T.V. reporter. You need to go to one of the villages and from there you have to report orally to the news channel what all you find there. How would you report?

Write the script — the dialogue between you and the T.V newsreader. The beginning is given below.

T.V. News Reader : Our correspondent reports from Koko village - What is the situation there? How do you find the village? What are the people around saying?

Project Work

Talk to your elders about life fifty years ago. Talk to them as to how the plants, animals and water bodies were cared for or not cared. Seek the views of the elders and fill in the table and present it before the class.

Sl.No	Items	Status 50 years ago	Present status	Changes happened	Possible causes	How to protect or recover the environment
1.	Plants					
2.	Animals					
3.	Waterbodies					
4	Air pollution					

Based on the information you have gathered in the last column of the table, discuss in groups how best the youngsters can help save/protect the environment. List the specific recommendations.

Self Assessment



How well have I understood this unit?

Read and tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
Reading: I read and comprehended the text:			
A. Environment			
B. Or will the Dreamer Wake?			
C. A Tale of Three Villages			
Vocabulary: I was able to			
• replace the underlined words in the sentences with the words from the box that have the same meaning.			
• say what the persons are called.			
• fill in the blanks with appropriate forms of the words underlined.			
• pick the meanings of the word underlined.			
Grammar: I was able to			
• underline the non-finite clauses.			
• rewrite the sentences to include the non-finite clauses.			
• write the sentences in reported speech.			
• report the dialogue.			

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fill in the blanks. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write the sentences in reported speech. 			
Writing: I was able to			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write an imaginary interview. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write a spoken discourse between the newsreader and me. 			
Listening and Speaking:			
I listened and was able to tick the correct options to complete the statements.			
Study Skills:			
I was able to fill the columns in the table given in study skills.			
Project Work:			
I was able to seek the views of the elders on how the plants, animals and water bodies were cared for or not cared.			
I was able to discuss in our group how best the youngsters can help/ save/ protect the environment by giving specific recommendations.			