
UNIT 21

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21.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit our aim is to give you further practice in reading comprehension. We shall give you an interesting story to read : 'The Bet' by Anton Chekhov, and also give a glossary of difficult words and questions on comprehension. There are also exercises on selected items of vocabulary.

The section on grammar and usage deals with modal auxiliaries *can, may, must, ought to, should* and *would*. We shall also ask you to write a short essay expressing your views on topics related to the story read by you.

After completing the unit you should be able to is

- read and appreciate a short story,
- use the modal auxiliaries correctly,
- write a short composition expressing your views on a particular topic.

21.1 READING COMPREHENSION

21.1.1 Passage for Reading

'The Bet'

by Anton Chekhov

1. It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversation. Among other things, they had talked of capital punishment. The majority of the guests, among whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral, and unsuitable. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced by imprisonment for life.
2. "I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I think the death penalty is more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more humane, he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"
"Both are equally immoral," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object—to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to."
3. Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said :
"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life. I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."
4. A lively discussion arose. The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man :
"It's not true! I'll bet you two millions you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years."
"If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, I would stay not five but fifteen years."
"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two millions!"
"Agreed! You stake your millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man. And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker,

spoiled and frivolous, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said :

“Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me two millions are a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you won’t stay longer. Don’t target either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you.”

5. And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself: “What was the object of the bet? What is the good of that man’s losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two millions? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money ...”

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker’s garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books, and was allowed to write letters, to drink wine, and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted—books, music, wine, and soon—in any quantity he desired, by writing an order, but could receive them only through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary, and bound the young man to stay there exactly fifteen years, beginning from twelve o’clock of November 14, 1870 and ending at twelve o’clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him two millions.

6. For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and besides, nothing

could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoiled the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of the light character; novels with a complicated love plot, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on.

7. In the second year the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all the year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and talking angrily to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.
8. In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into this studies—so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured at this request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner :
“My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake, I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them !” The prisoner’s desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.
9. Then, after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology and histories of religion followed the Gospels.
10. In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, and a manual of medicine, and a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

11. The old banker remembered all this, and thought :

"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two millions. If I do pay him, it is all over with me : I shall be utterly ruined."

Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which were greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange, wild speculation, and the excitability which he could not get over even in advancing years; had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune, and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investment. 'Cursed bet !' muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair. "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him everyday the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life, let me help you !' No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!"

12. It struck three o'clock. The banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house, and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house. It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp, cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes, but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, not the lodge, nor the trees. Going to the spot where the lodge stood, he twice called the watchman. No answer followed. Evidently the watchman had sought shelter from the weather, and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse.

"If I had the pluck to carry out my intention," thought the old man, 'suspicion would fall first upon the watchman."

13. He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door, and went into the entry of the lodge. Then he groped his way into a little passage and lighted a match. There was not a soul there. There was a bedstead with no bedding on it, and in the corner there was a dark cast-iron stove. The seals on the door leading to the prisoner's rooms were were intact.

When the match went out the old man, trembling with emotion, peeped

through the little window. A candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing could be seen but his back, the hair on his head, and his hands. Open books were lying on the table, on the two easy chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years' imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The banker tapped at the window with his finger, and the prisoner made no movement whatever in response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seals off the door and put the key in the keyhole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear at once footsteps and a cry of astonishment, but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

And the table a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones, with long curls like a woman's and a shaggy beard. His face was yellow with **an earthy** tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow, and the hand on which his shaggy head was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was already streaked with silver, and seeing his emaciated, aged-looking face, no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep.....In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper, on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

14. "Poor creature!" thought the banker, "he is asleep and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man, throw him on the bed, stifle him a little with the pillow, and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he was written here....."
15. The banker took the page from the table and read as follows :
"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that your books call the good tinks of the world. "For fiteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is sure I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women...Beauties as ethereal as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain

in a whirl. In your books I have climbed high peaks and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and the mountaintops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens, and the strains of the shepherd's pipes; I have touched the wings of comely devils who flew down to converse with me of God.....In your books I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms....

"Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

"And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory, and deceptive, like a mirage. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe. "You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if, owing to strange events of some sort, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at your who exchange heaven for earth. I don't want to understand you.

"To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce the two millions of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive myself of the right to the money I shall go out from here five minutes before the time fixed, and so break the compact..."

16. When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt for himself. When he got home he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping.
17. Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces, and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate, and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.

21.1.2 Note on the Author

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov /'tøkɒf/ (1860-1904) was a Russian dramatist and short-story writer.

21.1.3 Glossary

bet : an agreement to risk money on the result of a future event

1. **'capital 'punishment** : punishment by death according to law
4. **'frivolous** : unable to take important matters seriously
'reckoning : the act of calculating
5. **ca'price** : sudden wish to do something
6. **'pampered** : shown too much attention and made comfortable and contented
7. **'audible** : which can be heard
8. **pro'cured** : obtained
9. **'Gospel** : the accounts of Christ's life in the Bible
the'ology : the study of religion
10. **ɪndi'scriminate'ly** : not choosing carefully
ɪ'natural 'sciences : biology, chemistry, and physics
'Byron (1788-1824) : English Romantic poet
'Shakespeare (1564-1616) : English dramatist and poet
'Chemistry : the science that studies the substances which make up the earth, the universe, and living things, how they combine with each other, and how they behave in different conditions.
'manual : a book giving information about something
'medicine : the science of understanding and treating disease
'treatise /'tri: tɪs/ : a book or article that examines the facts and principles of a particular subject
spar : a thick pole used on a ship to support sails or ropes
11. **'assets** : things that have value
'desperate : wild or dangerous
ɪ'specu'lation : business trading in the hope of profit from price rises
in'vestments : money used to make more money out of things that will increase in value
'muttered : spoke in a low voice
'bankruptcy : inability to pay one's debts
12. **'rustling** : the sound made, for example, when dry leaves move or get rubbed together
chilled : cold but not frozen

- 'green-house** : a building with glass roof and sides and often some form of heating, used for growing plants which need heat, light and freedom from winds
- pluck** : courage and will
- su'spicion** : a belief that someone is guilty
13. **groped** /grəʊpt/ : tried to find by feeling with the hands in the dark
- 'bedstead** : the main framework of a bed
- stove** /stəʊv/ : an enclosed apparatus for cooking, which works by burning coal, oil, gas, etc. or by electricity
- in'tact** : whole because so part has been touched or spoilt
- 'grating** : sharp, heard, and unpleasant
- creaked** /kri:kt/ : made the sound of a badly oiled door
- 'skeleton** : the framework of all the bones in the body
- 'shaggy** : with long, uneven and untidy hair
- tint** : slight degree of a colour
- propped** : supported in position
- streaked** /stri:kt/ : with a thin line or band different from what surrounds it
- e'maciated** /i'meɪʃieɪtɪd/ : very thin
14. **'stifle** : to cause to stop breathing properly
- consci'entious** /'kɒŋʃi'entʃəs : showing great care
15. **'fragrant** /'freɪɡrənt/ : having a sweet or pleasant smell
- e'thereal** : of unearthly delicacy
- whirl** : the sensation of moving round and round very fast
- 'crimson** : a deep slightly purplish red colour
- 'cleaving** : dividing or cutting
- 'sirens** : (in ancient Greek literature) women-like creatures whose sweet singing charmed sailors and caused the wreck of their ships
- 'comely** : attractive
- 'compass** : area
- de'spise** : regard as worthless
- 'fleeting** : passing quickly
- il'lusory** : deceiving and unreal
- 'mirage** /'mɪrɑ : ʒ/ : a strange effect of hot air conditions in a desert in which distant objects seem near, or in which objects appear which are not really there ; a hope that cannot be fulfilled
- 'burrowing** : moving ahead by digging
- pos'terity** : descendants ; people who will be born after you

'hideousness : the quality of having a terrible affect on the senses

'marvel : wonder

re'nounce : give up

'paradise : a condition of perfect happiness

'compact : an agreement between two or more parties

16. **'stock exchange** : the place where stocks and shares are bought and sold

con'tempt : lack of respect

21.1.4 Comprehension Questions

Exercise 1

Answer the following questions after you have read the story.

1. What was the general opinion of the guests about the death penalty ?

2. Does the banker agree with the guests ? What is his own view ?

3. Why, according to the young lawyer, is life imprisonment preferable to the death penalty ?

4. Would you describe the bet between the banker and the lawyer as

(a) calculated and deliberate

(b) wild and impulsive

(c) playful and sprightly ?

Choose the correct alternative and justify your choice

5. What were the terms of the bet agreed on by the banker and the young lawyer ?

6. How did the prisoner feel during the first year of his confinement ?

7. What was the lawyer's achievement during the second half of the term of his captivity ?

8. Why did the banker want to kill the lawyer towards the end ?

9. Why didn't he kill the prisoner after all ?

10. Judging from the letter the lawyer had written, do you think he was a different man after his fifteen years' captivity? If so, in what sense was he different from others ?

21.2 VOCABULARY

Exercise 2

Match the items under **A** with those under **B**.

- | A | B |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. journalist | (a) a person kept in confinement for crime, etc. |
| 2. intellectual | (b) an extremely rich person |
| 3. banker | (c) a public official who carries out the order of a death sentence |
| 4. lawyer | (d) one having or showing interest in academic pursuits |
| 5. executioner | (e) one whose job it is to write for, edit or publish a newspaper, etc. |
| 6. millionaire | (f) owner of, or partner, in an establishment for keeping money and valuables safely |
| 7. prisoner | (g) one who has studied law and practises it as a profession |

Exercise 3

Sometimes a word of opposite meaning is formed by adding *dis-*, *im-*, *un-*, etc. to the original word as in the examples below :

approve—*dis*approve

moral—*im*moral

suitable—*un*suitable

By adding *dis-*, *im-*, *un-*, and *mis-* to the words given below, form words of opposite meaning :

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. understand | 2. agree | 3. audible | 4. voluntary |
| 5. continue | 6. judge | 7. movable | 8. comfort |
| 9. rest | 10. earthly | 11. same | 12. clear |
| 13. necessary | 14. possible | 15. pious | 16. mature |
| 17. courteous | 18. conduct | 19. behave | 20. humane |

Exercise 4

The sentences/phrases given below occur in the story. In each of these, a word is italicized, and three alternative meanings are given. Choose the correct alternative according to the context.

1. a *lively* discussion
 - (a) exciting
 - (b) uninteresting
 - (c) about live in general

2. To me, two millions are a *trifle*.
 - (a) a big sum
 - (b) a big joke
 - (c) a small sum

3. *Voluntary* confinement is a great deal harder than compulsory confinement.
 - (a) legal
 - (b) self-imposed
 - (c) lawful

4. The sounds of the piano could be heard *continually*.
 - (a) seldom
 - (b) frequently
 - (c) non-stop

5. *fantastic* stories
(a) imaginary
(b) moral
(c) illusory
-
6. The one means of being saved from *bankruptcy* is the death of that man.
(a) desire to pay one's debts
(b) inability to pay one's debts
(c) fear of having to pay one's debts
-
7. If I had the *pluck* to stifle him with a pillow.
(a) wisdom
(b) desire
(c) courage
-
8. Beauties as *ethereal* as clouds.
(a) transparent
(b) opaque
(c) of unearthly lightness
-
9. ... the *strains* of the shepherds' pipes.
(a) music
(b) fatigue
(c) boredom
-
10. ... the writing in which millions were *renounced* ...
(a) mentioned
(b) emphasised
(c) given up
-

21.3 GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Modal Auxiliaries

There are some special verbs in English which are called modal auxiliaries. Some of these are :

can, may, must, ought to, should, would.

21.3.1 *can*

can has a number of uses.

- (i) It means, 'know how to', 'be able to'.

Examples :

I can swim well.

I couldn't do that new job; it was too difficult.

(meaning 'I wasn't able to do it')

I can see you easily from here.

Let's go where we can have some freedom.

Money cannot buy everything.

- (ii) It can also mean 'be allowed to' (by rules);

e.g., You can't pick the ball up in football.

(The rules do not allow this.)

- (iii) It is also used in the sense of 'have permission to'; e.g., Can we go to the shops for sweets?

21.3.2 may

may is used in the following senses :

- (i) It can mean 'be likely to' (possibility).

Examples :

He may come or he may not.

He may have been hurt.

- (ii) It can also mean 'have permission to, be allowed to'.

May I come in?

Exercise 5

Fill in the blanks with *may* or *can* in the following sentences :

1. You _____ not think so, but dirty streets _____ cause epidemics.
2. With a little effort you and your wife _____ keep the house clean.
3. Rubbish should be put in the dustbin so that it _____ be removed by cleaners everyday.
4. Look at the dark clouds; it _____ rain tonight.
5. " _____ you stand on your head?"
How _____ I? I haven't learnt yoga."

21.3.3 must, have to

Study the use of *must* and *have to* in the following sentences :

You *must* clean your own boots. (Those are my orders.)

You *have to* clean your own boots when you join the army. (The rules oblige you to do that.)

Both *must* and *have to* are used to express an obligation. The main difference between the two is that *must* expresses an obligation imposed by the speaker, while *have to* expresses an obligation imposed by external circumstances. The other important point to bear in mind is that *have to* is preferred for habits and *must* for an obligation that is urgent.

I *have to* water the plants myself.

I *must* inform him at once; he has got the job.

You don't *have to* go to school on holidays.

You *must* go to school today; it is the last day for paying the fees.

Note : *must* has no past or future form. Therefore, *had to* is used for the past, and *will have to* for the future. Look at the following :

I *had to* stop the car ; there was a bus in the middle of the road.

John is retiring in 1990; he *will have to* look for a new job if he wants to continue his son's education.

Exercise 6

Fill in the blanks with *must* or *have to* in the following sentences :

1. I _____ leave now; it is getting late.
2. I can never remember people's phone numbers; I always _____ look then up.
3. You _____ try to be a little more tactful.
4. It isn't fair; I always _____ do the dirty work.
5. If there is a problem, you _____ report it to me at once.
6. I _____ do all the drafting at my office; my colleagues are too lazy.
7. Tell him he _____ be here by five; I insist on it.
8. My cook is old and blind. Whenever he wants to eat. I _____ get up and cook for him.
9. Notice in a department store. Bags and umbrellas _____ be left at the desk.
10. You _____ visit us again some time.

21.3.4 *ought to, should and would*

Study the use of *ought to, should* and *would* in the following sentences :

You *ought to* send more money to your old parents.

(It's your duty.)

You *ought to* have worked harder; I advised you to.

(But you didn't, and now it is too late.)

I think you *should* wear your glasses regularly.

(It's my suggestion/advice.)

Should I go there by taxi? (asking for advice)

Would you please tell me the way to India Gate? (a request)

I *would* like to see the manager. (more polite than 'I want to ...')

Ought to is very often used when we wish to refer to the duty of the person referred to by the subject. The speaker is reminding this person of the duty, or giving him advice. *Ought to* does not carry the speaker's authority (as *must* does) nor does it indicate an outside authority (as *have to* does). *Ought to* is usually said without much emphasis. *Should* can also be used in the same way as *ought to*.

Compare the following :

You *have to* take this injection. (The doctor insists on it.)

You *musn't* drink this; it is poison.

You *ought not to* smoke so much; you are wasting your money.

You *have to obey* Mr. Gill. (Mr. Gill insists on it.)

You *must* obey Mr. Gill. (The speaker insists on, or approves of, Mr. Gill's authority.)

You *ought to* obey Mr. Gill. (Neither the speaker's authority nor Mr. Gill's is involved here, but the speaker thinks that obeying Mr. Gill is advisable or part of the duty of the person addressed.)

Note : *ought to* with the perfect infinitive (e.g., *ought to have done*, *ought to have gone*) expresses a duty or a course of action that was neglected.

Example : You *ought to have applied* for the job last month; now it is too late.

Exercise 7

Fill in the blanks with *ought to*, *have to* or *must* in the following paragraph :

I _____ have gone to see Mr. Sharma last week. He passed away this morning in hospital; they _____ bring the body home. I _____ go to the funeral; that will be making some amends. His three sons _____ be present before they remove the body to the cremation ground. His wife _____ (negative) stay in the house all by herself.

Should can be used in the same way as *ought to*, but it is less forceful than *must* or *have to* because no authority is involved.

Should is generally used to express duty and to indicate a correct or sensible action. It is a useful way of giving advice. Look at the following :

You *should* pay your debts. (duty)

You *shouldn't* tell lies. (correct action)

You *should* eat better to keep fit. (advice)

You have written it wrongly. There *should* be done more line at the end. (correct action)

They *shouldn't* allow parking in this street; it is too narrow. (advice)

Exercise 8

Rewrite the italicized parts of the following sentences, using *should* as in the example:

Example: He insisted *on my selling the house*.

He insisted that I *should* sell the house.

1. He suggested *our postponing the trip*.

2. He was anxious *for everyone to have a chance to work*.

3. He recommended *my buying a new car*.

4. He agreed *to the two winners sharing the prize money*.

5. He arranged *for me to receive higher education*.

Study the use of *would* in the following sentences. Compare *would* with *want*.

I *want* some bananas.

I *would like* some bananas.

I *want to* see the manager.

I *would like to* see the manager, please.

would like is more polite than *want*.

rather/sooner is used after *would* to express preference.

He *would rather/sooner* talk himself than listen to others.

Would is also used for habits and insistence, and can be replaced by *used to*.

They *would* wait for us in the market everyday. (used to wait)

She *would* visit her aunt though we warned her that she wasn't expected to. (insisted on visiting)

"Why don't you get your visa extended?"

"I've requested the officer several times to do it, but he *wouldn't*." (insisted on not doing)

Exercise 9

Fill in the blanks with *would* or *should* in the following sentences :

1. _____ you mind opening the window? It is too hot in here.

2. This jacket doesn't suit you; you _____ buy another.
3. "The manager isn't in". Then, I _____ like to see the assistant manager.
4. Perhaps you _____ be good enough to inform me of any change of programme before hand.
5. Why _____ women be paid less than men for doing the same work?
6. I _____ sooner die than compromise with a rouge like you.
7. He said he _____ be sorry to see the end of such lovely weather.
8. "Raj has failed the examination."
"He _____ have worked harder."

21.4 WRITING

Exercise 11

Imagine you are one of the guests at a party where people are discussing whether life imprisonment is better than capital punishment. Write a couple of paragraphs (about 200 words) saying which point of view you would like to support. Mention (a) the problem, (b) its pro's and con's, and (c) your recommendations and suggestions.

or

Write a short essay (200 words) on one of the following themes :

- (a) The fewer man's material needs, the greater his freedom.
- (b) Life is full of strange happenings.
- (c) Wealth and happiness do not necessarily go together.

21.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have given you practice in

- reading and understanding an interesting story,
- using the modal auxiliaries correctly, and
- writing a short composition expressing your views on a particular topic.

21.6 KEY WORDS

au'thority : The power or right to control and command

con : an argument against something

'modal aux'iliaries : the verb form *can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must, ought to, used to*.

obli'gation : a duty

'preference : a liking for one thing rather than another

pro : an argument in favour of something

21.7 SUGGESTED READING

Anton Chekhov : *The School Mistress and Other Stories*. Translated from Russian by Constance Garnett, Macmillan.

21.8 ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

Exercise 1

1. They thought that the death penalty was outdated, unsuitable, and immoral, and that it should be replaced by life imprisonment.
2. No. He thinks the death penalty is kinder than life imprisonment. According to him, a quick death is far better than a slow, painful one.
3. According to him, to live anyhow is better than not to live at all.
4. b. It was too sudden to be called 'calculated and deliberate', and too grim to be called 'playful and sprightly'.
5. (i) The lawyer was to live in solitary confinement for fifteen years.
(ii) he was not to see any human beings.
(iii) he wouldn't receive any letters or newspapers.
(iv) he would receive books, wine and a musical instrument of his choice through a little window made specially for the purpose.
6. He was miserable. Though he played the piano, and read books of a light character, he suffered from loneliness and depression.
7. He mastered six languages.
8. To save himself from bankruptcy and disgrace. He had lost all his money during the last fifteen years.
9. He read the note the lawyer had written to find that his prisoner was no longer interested in his millions. A complete change had come over the lawyer in his captivity. Compared with himself, the prisoner had become very wise, almost saintly.

10. He had gained a lot of experience of men, women, and the world through his extensive readings. He had gained wisdom and maturity. He had also realized the futility of material possessions. He valued neither money, nor health, nor freedom, nor life. He had become a very uncommon individual difficult to understand by commonplace standards.

Exercise 2

1. e, 2. d, 3. f, 4. g, 5. c, 6. b, 7. a

Exercise 3

- | | | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| 1. mis- | 2. dis- | 3. in- | 4. in- | 5. dis- |
| 6. mis- | 7. im- | 8. dis- | 9. un- | 10. un- |
| 11. in- | 12. un- | 13. un- | 14. im- | 15. im- |
| 16. im- | 17. dis- | 18. mis- | 19. mis- | 20. in- |

Exercise 4

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. a | 2. c | 3. b | 4. b | 5. a |
| 6. b | 7. c | 8. c | 9. a | 10. c |

Exercise 5

1. may, can 2. can 3. can 4. may 5. can, can

Exercise 6

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| 1. must | 2. have to | 3. must | 4. have to | 5. must |
| 6. have to | 7. must | 8. have to | 9. must | 10. must |

Exercise 7

ought to, have to, must, ought to, ought not to.

Exercise 8

1. that we should postpone the trip.
2. that everyone should have a chance to work.
3. that I should buy a new car.
4. that the two winners should share the prize money.
5. that I should receive higher education.

Exercise 9

- | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. would | 2. should | 3. would | 4. would | 5. should |
| 6. would | 7. would | 8. should | | |