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2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit our aim is to give you practice in reading comprehension by (i) setting an extract from a speech by Indira Gandhi for you to read, and (ii) giving a glossary of difficult words, and questions on comprehension. We have also set exercises on selected items of vocabulary. The section on grammar and usage deals with the concord of number and person with the verbs other than *be*, *do* and *have*, which we discussed in Unit 1. For practice in writing, you will complete a short essay on the subject of the passage read by you, with the help of a outline given by us.

After completing the unit you should be able to

- * read speeches on matters of current interest with understanding :
- * distinguish between pairs of words with related meanings :
- * observe the subject-verb concord with all verbs ; and
- * write paragraphs forming part of a short essay with the help of a given outline.

2.1 READING COMPREHENSION

2.1.1 Study Guide

Read the passage given below and try to understand it. It has extracts from a speech made by Indira Gandhi in 1972 at the United Nations Conference on 'Human Environment'.

Some of the words are explained for you in the glossary given at the end of the passage. After you have read and understood the passage, you must answer all the comprehension questions. You should then check your answers with those given by us at the end of the unit.

2.1.2 Passage for Reading

Human Environment

By Indira Gandhi

1. One cannot be truly human and civilized unless one looks upon not only all fellow-men but all creation with the eyes of a friend. Throughout India, edicts carved on rocks and iron pillars are reminders that 22 centuries ago Emperor Ashoka defined a king's duty as not merely to protect citizens and punish wrongdoers but also to preserve animal life and forest trees. Ashoka was the first and perhaps the only monarch until very recently, to forbid the killing of a large number of species of animals for sport or food. He went further, regretting the carnage of his military conquests and enjoining upon his successors to find "their only pleasure in the peace that comes through righteousness."
2. Along with the rest of mankind, we in India—in spite of Ashoka—have been guilty of wanton disregard for the sources of our sustenance. We share your concern at the rapid deterioration of flora and fauna. Some of our own wild life has been wiped out, miles of forests with beautiful old trees, mute witnesses of history, have been destroyed. Even though our industrial development is in its infancy, and at its most difficult stage, we are taking various steps to deal with incipient environmental imbalances; the more so because of our concern for the human being—a species which is also imperilled. In poverty he is threatened by malnutrition and disease, in weakness by war, in richness by the pollution brought about by his own prosperity.
3. On the one hand the rich look askance at our continuing poverty, on the

other they warn us against their own methods. We do not wish to impoverish the environment any further and yet we cannot for a moment forget the grim poverty of large numbers of people. Are not poverty and need the greatest polluters ? For instance, unless we are in a position to provide employment and purchasing power for the daily necessities of the tribal people and those who live in or around jungles, we cannot prevent them from combing the forest for food and livelihood, from poaching and from despoiling the vegetation. When they themselves feel deprived, how can we urge the preservation of animals ? How can we speak to those who live in villages or slums about keeping the oceans, the rivers and air clean when their own lives are contaminated at the source ? The environment cannot be improved in conditions of poverty. Nor can poverty be eradicated without the use of science and technology.

4. Must there be conflict between technology and a truly better world or between enlightenment of the spirit and a higher standard of living ? Foreigners sometimes ask what to us seems a very strange questions, whether progress in India would not mean a diminishing of her spirituality or her values. Is spiritual quality so superficial as to be dependent upon the lack of material comfort ? As a country we are not more or less spiritual than any other but traditionally our people have respected the spirit of detachment and renunciation.
5. The Government of India is one of the few which have an officially sponsored programme of family planning and this is making some progress. We believe that planned families will make for a healthier and more conscious population. But we know also that no programme of population control can be effective without education and without a visible rise in the standard of living. Our own programmes have succeeded in the urban or semi-unban areas. To the very poor, every child is an earner and a helper. We are experimenting with new approaches and the family planning programme is being combined with those of maternity and child welfare, nutrition and development in general.
6. It is an over-simplification to blame all the world's problems on increasing population. Countries with but a small fraction of the world population consume the bulk of the world's production of minerals, fossil fuels and so on. Thus, we see that when it comes to the depletion of natural resources and environmental pollution the increase of one inhabitant in an affluent country, at his level of living, is equivalent to an increase of many Asians, Africans or Latin Americans at their current material levels of living.

(from Indira Gandhi's speech at the UN Conference on 'Human Environment', 1972)

2.1.3 Note on the Author

Indira Gandhi (1917-1984) was Prime Minister of India from 1966 to 1977 and 1980 to 1984.

2.1.4 Glossary

(The number refer to the paragraphs in the reading passage)

1. **civilized** : at a highly developed stage of social organization
creation : the whole universe ; the world and all the things in it
edicts : orders issued by a king or state
carved : cut
preserve : protect
monarch : a king who rules a state and has supreme power
species : a group of related animals or plants
regret : feel sorry about
carnage : large-scale killing of human beings
enjoining : require a person to do something
righteousness : moral goodness
2. **wanton** : without justification
sustenance : means of sustaining life
concern : anxiety
deterioration : becoming lower in quality ; wearing away
flora : plants
fauna : animals
wiped out : destroyed completely
mute : silent
witness : one who has seen some event
infancy : childhood
incipient : just starting
environmental : relation to the surroundings in which people live
imperilled : placed in danger
malnutrition : lack of adequate nutrition
pollution : making unclean or impure

3. **askance** : without liking
impoverish : make poor
grim : severe, cruel
combing : searching
poaching : catching or killing animals and birds illegally
despoiling : robbing
urge : insist on
slums : dirty and poor section of a city
contaminated : made impure
eradicated : uprooted; removed completely
technology : the use of science in industry
4. **conflict** : opposition
enlightenment : giving the light of understanding
spirit : the principle of life
diminishing : making less
spirituality : caring for spiritual things or value
values : moral principles or beliefs
superficial : being on the surface only
lack : shortage or absence
material : related to physical well-being
traditionally : as a tradition (thoughts and practices continued over a long period)
detachment : freedom from self-interest
renunciation : giving up one's claims or rights
5. **sponsored** : promoted
conscious : aware
effective : producing a result
urban : of cities and towns
maternity : motherhood
nutrition : provision of food necessary for healthy growth
6. **fossil** : a remnant of a plant or animal of a past age
depletion : using up ; exhausting
affluent : rich
equivalent : equal in significance
Latin Americans : people in those areas of America where the official languages are Spanish and Portuguese derived from Latin ; people in South America.

2.1.5 Comprehension Questions

Now try to answer the following questions. You may check your answers with those given by us at the end of the unit.

Exercise 1

1. a) How does Mrs. Gandhi describe a person who looks upon his fellow-men and the world with friendly eyes ?

- b) Were Indians aware of this even in ancient times ? Give an example to prove this.

2. a) The environment around us has been destroyed. What are the three examples given ?

- b) It is not only the environment but man also who is in danger.
 - i) What dangers face him when he is poor ?

 - ii) What dangers face him when he is politically weak ?

 - iii) What dangers face him when he is rich ?

3. a) Mention the ways in which the poor are compelled to spoil the environment.

- b) How can poverty be removed ?

4. What have Indians down the ages respected ?

5. a) When can a programme of population control be successful ?

- b) Why do some poor people want big families ?

6. Natural resources are being depleted.
- a) How are the developed countries responsible for this ?

- b) How are the developing countries responsible for this ?

1.2 VOCABULARY

Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with suitable words out of those given in brackets :

- i) a) Children in this orphanage are happy because they are well _____ .
 b) Many trees in the jungles are now _____ by the Forest Department. (preserved, looked after)
- ii) a) Smoking in cinema halls is _____ .
 b) We are _____ to speak loudly in the library. (prohibited, forbidden)
- iii) a) Many trees in the forests have been _____
 b) Standards of morality have _____ (destroyed, deteriorated)
- iv) a) We _____ reading stories.
 b) It is a _____ walking in the hills. (pleasure, enjoy)
- v) a) They spent a lot of money on their daughter's wedding, so their bank balance has now been _____
 b) Mr. Lal has been unemployed for four years now. He and his family are quit _____ (impoverished, depleted)

Exercise 3

Use the following words in sentences. Use the dictionary, if necessary. (A good one is *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*.)

empty, vacant

environment, neighbourhood

employment, job

clean, pure

2.3 GRAMMAR AND USAGE: CONCORD OF NUMBER AND PERSON

In this section you will learn how verbs in the present tense agree with their subjects in number and person.

Look at these examples from the reading passage in section 2.1.2.

	Subject	Verb
Paragraph 1	one	looks
Paragraph 2	we	share
Paragraph 3	they	warn
	they	feel
Paragraph 4	foreigners	ask
Paragraph 5	we	believe
	we	know
Paragraph 6	countries	consume
	we	see
	it	comes

You will find more examples in the following extract from a newspaper. The verbs are printed in bold type. Notice how they agree with their subjects in number.

Example

Almost every full moon night, the officials in Andaman and Nicobar Islands **take** part in a cautious ritual. The tribesmen **watch** from a safe distance as the officials **approach** the island in a boat carrying gifts for them. The islanders **come** forward hesitantly only after the officials **have** dumped the coconuts brought for them onto the beach and **begin** sailing away from their small island. On some nights the tribals even **muster** up enough courage to swim upto a few feet away from the boat.

Let Lieutenant Governor **maintains** that they **do** not want to interfere with the way of life of the tribals _____. The islands **rely** heavily on the mainland for most goods.

(from *The Times of India*. 17th November, 1986)

In verbs that have regular forms the third person singular of the present simple tense is formed by the addition of -s or -es (for example *looks, comes, maintains, relies, passes, mixes, reaches, pushes*). The simple form is used in all other cases.

Examples

- Government officials *give* the islanders coconuts as gifts. The Lieutenant Governor *gives* the islanders food and medicines.

2.	I We You All of us Most children	like reading stories.
	3rd person singular subject	verb with -s
	My friend Suresh The doctor He She No one One of my friends	likes reading poems.

Exercise 4

Fill in the blanks with the correct present tense forms of the verbs given below :

1. Animal lovers _____ to find a shelter for injured animals.
2. There _____ a number of good schools in this city.
3. What _____ is a sound philosophy of education.
4. You _____ advised not to be too generous with your sentiments.
5. He _____ on English.
6. He _____ more time in India than anywhere else in the world.
7. Faith, they _____, can move mountains.
8. They _____ here to satisfy their curiosity.
9. He _____ to come here as a guest.
10. My watch _____ the date as well as the time. The date _____ automatically at midnight.
(say, show, come, be, change, need, try, want, spend, speak)

2.4 WRITING

Exercise 5

Here is a composition exercise for you.

Complete this essay on 'Trees are our best friend' by writing Paragraph 3 and 4 with the help of the outline given here.

1. Trees are useful to man in three important ways : they provide him with wood and other products; they give him shade; and they help to prevent droughts and floods.
2. Unfortunately man has not realized that the last of these services is the most important. In his eagerness to make quick money, he has cut down trees in large numbers, only to find that with them he has lost the best friend he had.
3. Two thousand years ago _____ a powerful country cut down trees _____ to build warships _____ conquered a big empire _____ but without trees soil became hard and poor _____ country faced floods and starvation.
4. Governments realize importance of trees _____ difficult to persuade the average man _____ wood to cook _____ make charcoal _____ people too careless to plant new trees _____ essential to educate people _____ otherwise forests will disappear.

2.7 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. *The Years of Endeavour : Selected Speeches of India Gandhi (1969-1972)*. Publications Division, Government of India.
2. *Langman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, Indian edition.
3. A. S. Hornby : *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 3rd edition (Revised).

2.8 CASSETTE RECORDING

An audio-cassette recording based on the reading passage in this unit is available at the study centres of the university.

2.9 ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

Exercise 1

1. a) She describes him as truly human and civilized.
b) Yes. More than two thousand years ago Emperor Ashoka laid down that a king must protect animal life and forest trees, and he was very sorry about the large-scale killing of human beings during his conquests.
2. a) i) some of the wild animals have been destroyed completely,
ii) some of the forests have also been destroyed, and
iii) industrial development has upset the balance in our environment.
b) i) He faces the danger of poor nutrition and disease.
ii) He faces the danger of war.
iii) He faces the danger of an impure environment.
3. a) When the poor people living around the jungles cannot get employment and cannot buy the things they need every day, they have to search for food in the forests, kill animals there, and cut down trees and plants.
b) By the use of science and technology.
4. Detachment and renunciation.
5. a) When we spread education and raise the standard of living of the people.
b) They think every child is an earner and a helper.

6. a) The developed countries consume most of the world's production of minerals and fossil fuels.
- b) In developing countries people are so poor and their lives are so contaminated that they cannot think of keeping the air, the rivers, and the oceans clean.

Exercise 2

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| i) a) looked after | iv) a) enjoy |
| b) preserved | b) pleasure |
| ii) a) prohibited | v) a) depleted |
| b) forbidden | b) impoverished |
| iii) a) destroyed | |
| b) deteriorated | |

Exercise 3 : Specimen Answers

This ink bottle is **empty**. I must buy another one.

The post of principal at this college has been **vacant** for some time.

A man's character is influenced by his **environment**.

There are some very friendly people in our **neighbourhood**.

A large number of educated people in India cannot get suitable **employment**.

If you do not like your present **job**, try to find another one.

To avoid disease, we should keep our environment **clean**.

The air in our cities is not **pure**, because the **trucks**, buses, cars, and scooters give out a lot of smoke.

Exercise 4

- | | | | | |
|----------|-------|------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 try | 2 are | 3 need | 4 are | 5 speaks |
| 6 spends | 7 say | 8 are/come | 9 wants | 10 shows, changes |