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# UNIT 1

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit, our aim is to give you practice in reading comprehension by (i) setting a passage from Subhas Chandra Bose 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 introduces you to the feature of subject-verb concord and gives examples of the concord of number and person with the verbs be, do, and have. For practice in writing, you will write a short speech of the kind you will read in the passage set for reading.

After completing the unit you should be able to

- \* read simple narrative passage with understanding ;
- \* distinguish between words having related meanings ;
- \* observe the rules of concord with the verbs be, do and have ; and
- \* write a short composition presenting your views, and supporting them with facts.

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## 1.1 READING COMPREHENSION

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### 1.1.1 Study Guide

The aim of this section is to help you to read with understanding and to expand your vocabulary.

There is a reading passage, followed by a glossary. You should first read the whole passage silently and rapidly to get the main points. Then you should read it again, carefully and at a slower pace, to get all the details. You should also consult the glossary for the meanings of unfamiliar words, besides trying to guess the meanings of words and phrases from the contexts in which they occur.

After you have read and understood the passage, you must answer all the comprehension questions. Your answers should then be checked with the answers given by us at the end of the unit.

### 1.1.2 Passage for Reading

From *An Indian Pilgrim*

By Subhas Chandra Bose

1. One evening, when my father was in Calcutta, he suddenly sent for me. I found him closeted with my second brother, Sarat. He asked me if I would like to go to England to study for the Indian Civil Service. If I agreed I should start as soon as possible. I was given twenty-four hours to make up my mind.
2. It was an utter surprise to me. I took counsel with myself and, within a few hours, made up my mind to go. All my plans about researches in psychology were put aside. How often, I wondered, were my carefully laid plans going to be shattered by the superior force of circumstances. I was not so sorry to part company with psychology, but what about joining the Indian Civil Service and accepting a job under the British Government ? I had not thought of that even in my dreams. I persuaded myself, however, that I could never pass the I.C.S. examination at such short notice, for by the time I reached England and settled down to study,

barely eight months would be left and I had but one chance, in view of my age. If, however, I managed to get through, there would be plenty of time to consider what I should do.

3. I had to leave at a week's notice. A berth was somehow secured in a boat going all the way by sea. But the difficulty was about my passport. There one was left to the tender mercies of the C.I.D., especially in a province like Bengal. And from the police point of view, my antecedents were certainly not irreproachable. Through the good offices of a high police official who was a distant relative of mine, I was introduced to police headquarters and within six days my passport was forthcoming. A marvel indeed :
4. Once again I had done things off my own bat. When I consulted the group regarding my proposed journey to England, they threw cold water on the project. One of the most promising members who had been to England had married and settled down there and did not think of returning. It was dangerous to try another experiment. But I was adamant. What did it matter if one member had gone astray? It did not follow that others would do the same, so I argued. My relations with the group had been growing increasingly lukewarm for some time past, and I had joined the University infantry without consulting them. But this was the limit. Though we did not say so, we felt that we had come to the parting of the ways, since I was determined to strike out a line for myself.
5. Then I visited the Provincial Adviser for studies in England, himself a product of Cambridge and a Professor of the Presidency College. He knew me by sight and naturally did not have a high opinion of an expelled student. As soon as he heard that I intended to sit for the I.C.S. examination the next year, he summoned up all his powers of dissuasion. I had no chance whatsoever against the 'tip-toppers' from Oxford and Cambridge : why was I going to throw away ten thousand rupees ? That was the burden of this homily. Realising the force of his argument and unable to find an answer to his question, I simply said, "My father wants me to throw away the ten thousand rupees". Then seeing that he would do nothing to help me secure admission to Cambridge, I left him.
6. Relying entirely on my own resources and determined to try my luck in England, I set sail on the 15th September, 1919.

### **1.1.3 Note on the Author**

Subhas Chandra Bose (b. 1897), popularly known as *Netaji* ('the leader'), was one of the most prominent freedom fighters of our country. He headed the Indian National Congress for a time and, during the second world war, organised and commanded the

Indian National Army. His writings have been published in several volumes. *An Indian pilgrim* is his autobiography. An autobiography is a literary work on the author's own life.

### 1.1.4 Glossary

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

1. **closeted** : having a private meeting  
**make up my mind** : decide  
**counsel** : advice  
**researches** : special studies  
**psychology** : study of the mind  
**put aside** : dismissed  
**wondered** : asked myself  
**shattered** : destroyed  
**circumstances** : conditions  
**company** : being together  
**barely** : only just  
**get through** : pass
3. **berth** : a place to sleep  
**secure** : reserve  
**all the way** : the whole distance  
**passport** : an official document authorising foreign travel  
**tender mercies** : unsympathetic treatment  
**C.I.D.** : the criminal investigation department of the police  
**antecedents** : records  
**irreproachable** : above criticism  
**good offices** : kind help  
**forthcoming** : ready  
**marvel** : surprise
4. **consulted** : asked for an opinion  
**cold water** : discouragement  
**project** : plan  
**promising** : likely to be successful

**settle down** : lived permanently  
**experiment** : scientific test  
**adamant** : firm  
**astray** : off the mark  
**lukewarm** : not eager  
**infantry** : foot soldiers  
**product** : one who has studied at (some institution)  
**by sight** : when seen  
**expelled** : thrown out  
**summoned up** : collected  
**dissuasion** : convincing someone not to do something  
**tip-toppers** : top-ranking  
**burden** : tone  
**homily** : preaching  
**realising** : understanding  
**secure** : get

6. **resources** : abilities  
**determined** : having made a firm decision

### 1.1.5 Comprehension Questions

#### Exercise 1

Answer the following questions on the passage you have read (section 1.1.2). You may refer to the passage again to find the answers. After you have written the answers, you should check them with the answers given by us at the end of the unit.

1. What was the author asked to decide in twenty-four hours?  
.....  
.....
2. a) How many times could the author appear at the ICS examination ?  
.....
- b) Why couldn't he get more chances ?  
.....
3. Was the author ready to accept a job under the British Government ?  
.....

4. Receiving a passport within six days was
- a) normal  
.....
  - b) surprising  
.....
  - c) impossible in Bengal (choose one)  
.....
5. a) Why did 'the group' discourage the author's going to England ?  
.....
- b) The author's relations with the group were
    - i) always friendly
    - ii) previously friendly but recently not
    - iii) neither friendly nor unfriendly
    - iv) gradually cooling off
- (There can be more than one choice. Give a reason for your choice.)
- .....  
.....  
.....
6. a) Did the author go to England by air or by sea ?  
.....
- b) How do we know ?  
.....
7. Sarat was closeted with his father not earlier than September 1919. How do we know this ?  
.....

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## 1.2 VOCABULARY

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### Exercise 2

Pick out the odd words in each of the following sets, that is, the word that does not belong to the set :

*Example* : murder, slaughter, kill, pass away

*Answer* : pass away

1. start, startle, begin commence .....
2. shattered, destroyed, broken, torn .....
3. certainly, surely, completely, definitely .....
4. dangerous, miserable, risky, hazardous .....
5. intended, wanted, pretended, planned .....

### **Exercise 3**

Use the most appropriate word from each of the sets of words given above to complete these sentences :

1. You must ..... for Delhi today.
2. The house was ..... by fire.
3. Slowly but ..... her condition improved.
4. Usha is feeling ..... as she has no money to buy food for her children.
5. I went to the shop because I ..... a box of biscuits.

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## **1.3 GRAMMAR AND USAGE**

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### **1.3.1 Concord of Number and Person**

This section will give you practice in what is called ‘concord’, that is, agreement, in grammar, and the use of the verbs.

- i) *be* and its various forms  
*am, is, are, was, were*
- ii) *do, does*
- iii) *have, has*

Let’s see how these verbs are used.

### **1.3.2 *be***

Look at the following sentences, many of which are taken from the reading passage in Section 1.1.2

1. I am afraid I shall not be able to help you.
2. It is about this that I wish to speak.
3. What is the nature of this life of ours ?

4. Man *is* the only creature that consumes without producing.
5. Our lives *are* miserable.
6. We *are* born, we are given just so much food.
7. My father *was* in Calcutta.
8. I *was* adamant.
9. My antecedents *were* certainly not irreproachable.

Notice that the verb *be* has the forms *am, is, are, was, were* depending on the tense (present or past), the person (first, second or third), and the number (singular or plural) of the subject.

*be*

Present Tense					Past Tense				
First Person		Second Person	Third Person		First Person		Second Person	Third Person	
Singular	Plural	Singular and Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular and Plural	Singular	Plural
am	are	are	is	are	was	were	were	was	were

Here are some more examples :

1. am (used with I in the present tense)

*Example :*

I am an Indian, I am writing a book on India.

(*I am* is written as *I'm* in an informal style)

2. is (used with he, she, it and singular nouns, in the present tense)

*Example :*

- i) K.R. Narayanan is the President of India.
- ii) My friend Ramesh is working hard these days.
- iii) It is very cold today.
- iv) English is spoken in a large number of countries.

(It is often combined with the subject and written as 's' in an informal style. Example : He's, she's, it's)

3. are [used with plurals and with you (2nd person singular) in the present tense]

*Example :*

- i) You are very good at Mathematics.



- ii) My friends are at the Zoo today. We are also going there.
  - iii) Children below five are allowed to travel free on Indian Railways (*are* is often combined with the subject and written as 're in an informal style. Examples : You're, We're, they're).
4. was (used with I, he, she, it and with singular nouns, in the past tense)  
*Examples :*
- i) I was Delhi yesterday.
  - ii) Einstein was a famous scientist.
  - iii) Mohan was writing a letter when I went to see him.
  - iv) The hall was decorated for yesterday's meeting.
5. were [used with plural and with you (2nd person singular), in the past tense]  
*Examples :*
- i) We were expecting you yesterday.
  - ii) You were not at home when I rang you up.
  - iii) A lot of people were present at the meeting.
  - iv) Ten people were killed in a bus accident yesterday.
6. When the grammatical subject is there, we use *is* or *are*, *was* or *were*, depending on the number of the subject following the verb.  
*Examples :*
- i) There is a girl in that room.
  - ii) There is a man hiding behind the bushes.
  - iii) There are fifty students in this class.
  - iv) There was an interesting programme on television yesterday evening.
  - v) There were hundreds of people at the meeting this morning.

#### Exercise 4

Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verb *be* (am, is, are, was or were).

1. A dozen people.....injured in yesterday's accident.
2. ....you busy now?
3. I.....going to the cinema to-night.
4. There.....many people in India even now who cannot read and write.
5. I.....surprised to meet Raj yesterday evening.
6. I think this.....the most interesting of Hardy's novels.

### 1.3.3 *do*

The present tense forms are *do* and *does*.

Of these, *do* is used with plurals and I and you; *does* is used with the third person singular.

*Examples :*

- i) I do not smoke cigarettes.
- ii) Do you play tennis ?
- iii) We do not wish to hurt you in any way.
- iv) Shyam does not speak Bengali.
- v) Does your father know that you are here ?

### Exercise 5

Fill in the blanks with *do* or *does*.

- 1. ....you know how to make a cup of tea?
- 2. I.....not think I can come with you.
- 3. ....your father work at the bank?
- 4. ....he come to office by bus?
- 5. How.....we get there?

### 1.3.4 *have*

The present tense forms are *have* and *has*.

Of these, *have* is used with plurals and with I and you ; *has* is used with the third person singular.

*Examples :*

- i) My friend, Sunil has dark hair.
- ii) I have a bad cold.
- iii) Have you read Animal Farm ?
- iv) I have not seen many English films.
- v) We have not been able to help him in any way.

### Exercise 6

Fill in the blanks with *have* or *has*.

- 1. ....they got a school in their village ?
- 2. Now you.....learnt the secret of happiness.
- 3. I.....my breakfast at a restaurant.

4. The teacher.....advised me to improve my spelling.
5. ....he arrived already ?

### Exercise 7

Use the correct form of the verb out of those given in brackets.

1. "I (have/has) no money. I (am/is/are) hungry, thirsty, thirsty and tired," murmured David to himself.
2. He made an effort and went to a small shop in Dover. A young girl (was/were) coming out of the shop with a basket of rice on her arm. "What (do/does) you want ? I (have/has) no money," She said.
3. "I (do/does) not want any money. Please tell me the address of Miss Betsey Trotwood."
4. "I (am/is/are) her domestic help. Come along with me," she said. David followed her. He looked at Himself. His shoes (was/were) torn, his hat (was/were) crushed, and from head to toes he (was/were) powdered with chalk and dust.
5. Soon they came to the house of Miss Trotwood. She (was/were) there in the garden.
6. "Who (are/is/am) you ?", she cried, "I (do/does) not like boys. Go away."
7. "I (am/is/are) your nephew, Anut," David said. "I (am/is/are) David Copperfield."
8. She sat down with a thump on the grass, looked at David up and down and said, "So you (are/is/am) my brother's son."
9. David (was/were) so miserable that he started crying. She caught him by the collar of his torn shirt and took him inside.
10. Mr. Dick (was/were) inside. She told him, "this boy (is/am/are) my brother's son. You (are/is/am) a man of the world. Tell me what I should do with him."
11. Mr. Dick looked at David, smiled and said, "Give him a bath."
12. The bath (was/were) a great comfort. After the bath David (was/were) wrapped up in shawls and (was/were) taken to bed.

(Adapted from Charles Dickens : David Copperfield)

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## 1.4 WRITING

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In this section we shall give you practice in composition and the correct use of language. Here is an exercise for you.



- ii) distinguishing between words having related meanings and using them in appropriate contexts,
- iii) Subject-verb concord with the verbs *be*, *do* and *have*, and
- iv) writing a short letter presenting a view different from the one given in the passage read.

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## 1.6 KEY WORDS

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**comprehension** : the power of understanding

**concord** (in grammar) : agreement between words in number, etc.; e.g., between a verb and its subject

**glossary** : list and explanation of selected words from a text

**grammar** : study of rules for the forms of words and the combination of words into sentences

**narrative** (as an adjective) : in the form of a story

**number** (in grammar) : variations in the forms of nouns, verbs, etc., according to whether only one or more than one is to be indicated : e.g., man/men, does/do, I/we.

**objective** : purpose

**person** (in grammar) : a class of personal pronouns—the first person : I, we; the second person : you; the third person : he, she, it, they

**subject** (in grammar) : words in a sentence about which something is said

**tense** (in grammar) : verb form that shows time : e.g., the present tense, the past tense

**usage** : conventions governing the use of a language

**verb** : a word or phrase indicating what somebody or something does, what state somebody or something is in, what is becoming of something or somebody

**vocabulary** : words which make up a language

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## 1.7 SUGGESTED READING

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1. Subhas Chandra Bose : *An Indian Pilgrim*
2. Charles Dickens : *David Copperfield*

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## 1.8 ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

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(You should look at these answers after you have done the exercises yourself)

### Exercise 1

1. The author was asked to decide if he wanted to go to England to study for the Indian Civil Service.
2. (a) He could appear only once.  
(b) He couldn't get more chances because he would be above the required age.
3. He had not thought about that.
4. Surprising
5. (a) The group discouraged the author because one of its members had gone to England and was living there permanently.  
(b) The author's relations with the group were gradually cooling off.
6. (a) The author travelled by sea.  
(b) We know this because he mentions a boat going all the way by sea.
7. The author left on 15th September, 1919. He had to leave at a week's notice. Therefore, the conversation between his father and his brother took place about a week before the 15th, and surely not earlier than September, 1919.