
UNIT 15

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15.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall give you practice in reading comprehension by

- i) giving you a passage from Doris Lessing’s story ‘A Mild Attack of Locusts’, and
- ii) Giving a glossary of difficult words, and questions on comprehension.

We shall also set exercises on the use of

- i) Phrases referring to groups of animals and insects, and
- ii) the prefixes *ir-*, *im-*, *in-* and *Ire-*

In the section on grammar and usage, we shall discuss types of adverbial clauses :

- i) time clauses beginning with *when*, *while*, *as soon as*, *before* and *after*,
- ii) clauses beginning with *because* and *although*, and
- iii) conditional clauses.

We shall also ask you to write descriptive compositions based on the passage read. After completing the unit you should be able to

- read and understand simple narrative passages,
- use different types of adverbial clauses correctly, and
- write descriptive compositions based on the passage read.

15.2 READING COMPREHENSION

15.2.1 Passage for Reading

A Mild Attack of Locusts

by Doris Lessing

Since the days of the eighth plague of Egypt, when locusts ‘covered the whole earth, so that the land was darkened’, men have recorded with horror the devastations caused by their swarms.

What are locusts, and why are they such a plague to man? Locusts are short-horn grasshoppers, differing from the familiar and less destructive grasshoppers of English summer hedgerows in that they are larger and love to wander great distances in crowds. The locust larvae, or hoppers, collect together in tens of thousands and wander about the countryside in armies, moving sometimes a mile in twenty-four hours. Fully grown locusts collect in swarms and fly several miles a day. When they settle, they eat every living plant about them, an average-sized swarm devouring about twenty tons of food a day.

Today governments are fighting this age-long scourge with modern methods of pest control. Areas where outbreaks of locusts occur are sprayed with insecticides such as Gammexane and Dieldrin. Farmers are warned by radio of the approach of swarms. Yet when the swarms are blackening the sky overhead, farmers still resort to the primitive and ineffective device of banging gongs and lighting fires to discourage the locusts from settling.

The scene of this story is set in central Africa.

(from *Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia*, by permission of Oxford University Press)

- 1 The rains that year were good, they were coming nicely just as the crops needed them—or so Margaret gathered when the men said they were not too bad ... The men were Richard her husband, and old Stephen, Richard’s father, a farmer from way back.

Margaret had been on the farm three years. She still did not understand how they did not go bankrupt altogether, when the men never had a good word for the weather, or the soil, or the Government. But she was getting to learn the language. Farmer's language. And they neither went bankrupt nor got very rich. They jogged along, doing comfortably.

Their crop was maize. Their farm was three thousand acres on the ridges that rise up towards the Zambezi escarpment, high, dry windswept country, cold and dusty in winter, but now, being the wet season, steamy with the heat rising in wet, soft waves off miles of green foliage. The sky made her eyes ache, she was not used to it. One does not look so much at the sky in the city she came from. So that evening when Richard said : 'The Government is sending out warnings that locusts are expected, coming down from the breeding grounds up North,' her instinct was to look about at the trees. Insect—swarms of them—horrible! But Richard and the old man had raised their eyes and were looking up over the mountains. 'We haven't had locusts in seven years,' they said. 'They go in cycles, locusts do'. And then : 'There goes our crop for this season!' But they went on with the work of the farm just as usual, until one day they were coming up the road to the homestead for the midday break, when old Stephen stopped, raised his finger and pointed : 'Look, look, there they are!'

- 2 Out ran Margaret to join them, looking at the hills. Out came the servants from the kitchen. They all stood and gazed. Over the rocky levels of the mountain was a streak of rust-coloured air. Locust. There they came.

At once Richard shouted at the cook-boy. Old Stephen yelled at the house-boy, the cook-boy ran to beat the old ploughshare hanging from a tree-branch, which was used to summon the labourers at moments of crisis. The house-boy ran off to the store to collect tin cans, any old bit of metal. The farm was ringing with the clamour of the gong, and they could see the labourers come pouring out of the compound, pointing at the hills and shouting excitedly. Soon they had all come up to the house, and Richard and old Stephen were giving them orders—Hurry, hurry, hurry.

- 3 And off they ran again, the two white men with them and in a few minutes Margaret could see the smoke of fires rising from all around the farm-land. Piles of wood and grass had been prepared there. There were seven patches of bared soil, yellow and ox-blood colour, making a film of bright green, and around each drifted up thick clouds of smoke. They were throwing wet leaves on to the fires now, to make it acrid and black. Margaret was watching the hills. Now there was a long, low cloud advancing, rust-colour still, swelling forward and out as she

looked. The telephone was ringing. Neighbours—quick, quick, there come the locusts. Old smith had had his crop eaten to the ground. Quick, get your fires started. For of course, while every farmer hoped the locusts would overlook his farm and go on the the next, it was only fair to warn each other, one must play fair. Everywhere, fifty miles over the countryside, the smoke was rising from myraids of fires. Margaret answered the telephone calls, and between stood watching the locusts.

- 4 The air was darkening. A strange darkness, for the sun was blazing—it was like the darkness of a fire, when the air gets thick with smoke. The sunlight comes down distorted, a thick hot orange. Oppressive it was, too, with heaviness of a storm. The locusts were coming fast. Now half the sky was darkened. Behind the reddish veils in front which were the advance guards of the swarm, the main swarm showed in dense thick cloud, reaching almost to the sun itself.

Margaret was wondering what she could do to help. She did not know. Then up came old Stephen from the lands. ‘We’re finished, Margaret, finished! Those beggars can eat every leaf and blade of the farm in half an hour! And it is only early afternoon—if we can make enough smoke, make enough noise till the sun goes down, they’ll settle somewhere else perhaps ...’ And then : ‘Get the kettle going. It’s thirsty work, this.’

- 5 So Margaret went to the kitchen, and stoked up the fire, and boiled the water. Now, on the tin roof of the kitchen she could hear the thuds and bangs of falling locusts, or a scratching slither as one skidded down. Here were the first of them. From down on the lands came the beating and banging and clanging of a hundred petrol tins and bits of metal. Stephen impatiently waited while one petrol tin was filled with tea, hot, sweet and orange-coloured, and the other with water. In the meantime, he told Margaret about how twenty years back he was eaten out, made bankrupt by the locust armies. And then, still talking, he hoisted up the petrol cans, one in each hand, by the wood pieces set corner-wise across each, and jogged off down to the road to the thirsty labourers. By now the locusts were falling like hail on to the roof of the kitchen. It sounded like a heavy storm. Margaret looked out and saw the air dark with a criss-cross of the insects, and she set her teeth and ran out into it—what the men could do, she could. Overhead the air was thick, locusts everywhere. The locusts were flopping against her and she brushed them off, heavy red-brown creatures, looking at her with their beady old-men’s eyes while they clung with hard serrated legs. She held her breath with disgust and ran through into the house. There it was even more like being in a heavy storm. The iron roof was reverberating, and the clamour of iron from the lands was like thunder. Looking out, all the trees were queer and still, clotted

with insects, their boughs weighed to the ground. The earth seemed to be moving, locusts crawling everywhere, she could not see the lands at all, so thick was the swarm. Towards the mountains it was like looking into driving rain—even as she watched, the sun was blotted out with a fresh onrush of them. It was a half-night, a perverted blackness. They came a sharp crack from the bush—a branch had snapped off. Then another. A tree down the slope leaned over and settled heavily to the ground. Through the hail of insects a man came running. More tea, more water was needed. She supplied them. She kept the fires stoked and filled tins with liquid, and then it was four in the afternoon, and the locusts had been pouring across overhead for a couple of hours. Up came old Stephen again, crunching locusts underfoot with every step, locusts clinging all over him, cursing and swearing banging with his old hat in the air. At the doorway he stopped briefly, hastily pulling at the clinging insects and throwing them off, then he plunged into the locust-free living-room.

6 ‘All the crops finished. Nothing left,’ he said.

But the gongs were still beating, the men still shouting, and Margaret asked :

‘Why do you on with it, then?’

‘The main swarm isn’t settling. They are heavy with eggs. They are looking for a place to settle and lay. If we can stop the main body settling on our farm, that’s everything. If they get a chance to lay their eggs, we are going to have everything eaten flat with hoppers later on. He picked a stray locust off his shirt, and split it down with his hoppers later on.’ He picked a stray locust off his shirt, and split it down with his thumb-nail—it was clotted inside with eggs. ‘Imagine that multiplied by millions. You ever seen a hopper swarm on the march? Well, you’re lucky.’

Margaret thought that an adult swarm was enough. Outside now the light on the earth was a pale thin yellow, clotted with moving shadow, the clouds of moving insects thickened and lightened like driving rain. Old Stephen said :

‘They’ve got the wind behind them, that’s something.’

‘Is it very bad?’ asked Margaret fearfully, and the old man said emphatically :

‘We’re finished. This swarm may pass over, but once they’ve started, they’ll be coming down from the North now one after another. And then there are the hoppers—it might go on for two or three years.’

7 Margaret sat down helplessly, and thought : ‘Well, if it’s the end, it’s the end. We’ll all there have to go back to town...’ But at this, she took a quick look at Stephen, the old man who had farmed forty years in this country, been bankrupt twice, and she knew nothing would make him go and become a clerk in the city.

Yet her heart ached for him, he looked so tried, the worry-lines deep from nose to mouth. Poor old man... He had lifted up a locust that had got itself somehow into his pocket, holding it in the air by one leg. 'You've got the strength of a steel-spring in those legs of yours' he was telling the locust, good humouredly. They although he had been fighting locusts, squashing locusts, yelling at locusts, sweeping them in great mounds into the fires to burn for the last three house, nevertheless he took this one to the door, and carefully threw it out to join its fellows as if he would rather not harm a hair of its head. This comforted Margaret, all at once she felt irrationally cheered. She remembered it was not the irremediable ruin.

'Get me a drink, less,' he then said, and she set the bottle of whisky by him. Five o'clock. The sun would set in an hour. Then the swarm would settle. It was as thick overhead as ever. The trees were ragged mounds of glistening brown.

Margaret began to cry. It was all so hopeless—if it wasn't bad season, it was locusts, if it wasn't locusts, it was army-worm, or veldt fires. Always something. The rustling of the locust armies was like a big forest in the storm, their settling on the roof was like a beating of the rain, the ground was invisible in a sleek brown surging tide—it was like being drowned in locusts, submerged by the loathsome brown flood. It seemed as if the roof might sink in under the weight of them, as if the door might give in under their pressure and these rooms fill with them—and it was getting so dark...she looked up. The air was thinner, gaps of blue showed in the dark moving clouds. The blue spaces were cold and thin : the sun must be setting. Through the fog of insects she saw figures approaching. First old Stephen, marching bravely along, then her husband, drawn and haggard with weariness. Behind them the servants. All were crawling all over with insects. The sound of the gongs had stopped. She could hear nothing but the ceaseless rustle of a myriad wings.

The two men slapped off the insects and came in.

'Well', said Richard, kissing her on the cheek, 'the main swarm has gone over.' 'For the Lord's sake,' said Margaret angrily, still half-crying, 'what's here is bad enough, isn't it?' For although the evening air was no longer black and thick, but a clear blue, with a pattern of insects whizzing this way and that across it, everything else—trees, buildings, earth, was gone under the moving brown masses. 'If it doesn't rain in the night and keep them here—if it doesn't rain and weigh them down with water, they'll be off in the morning at sunrise.' Margaret roused herself, wiped her eyes, pretended she had not been crying, and fetched them some supper, for the servants were too exhausted to move. She sent them down to the compound to rest.

She served the supper and sat listening. There is not one maize-plant left, she heard. Not one. The men would get the planters out the moment the locusts had gone. They must start all over again.

- 8 'But what's the use of that?' Margaret wondered, if the whole farm was going to be crawling with hoppers ? But she listened while they discussed the new Government pamphlet which said how to defeat the hoppers. You must have men out all the time moving over the farm to watch for movement in the grass. When you find a patch of hoppers, small lively black things, like crickets, then you dig trenches around the patch, or spray them with poison from pumps supplied by the Government. The Government wanted them to co-operate in a world plan for eliminating this plague for ever. You should attack locusts at the source. Hoppers, in short. The men were talking as if they were planning a war, and Margaret listened, amazed.

In the night it was quiet, no sign of the settled armies outside, except sometimes a branch snapped, or a tree could be heard crashing down.

- 9 Margaret slept badly in the bed beside Richard, who was sleeping like the dead, exhausted with the afternoon's fight. In the morning she woke to yellow sunshine lying across the bed, clear sunshine, with an occasional blotch of shadow moving over it. She went to the window. Old Stephen was ahead of her. Then he stood outside, gazing down over the bush. And she gazed, astounded—and entranced, much against her will. For it looked as if every tree, every bush, all the earth, were lit with pale flames. The locusts were fanning their wings to free them of the night dews. There was shimmer of red-tinged gold light everywhere.

She went out to join the old man, stepping carefully among the insects. They stood and watched. Overhead the sky was blue, blue and clear.

'Pretty,' said old Stephen with satisfaction.

Over the slopes, in the distance, a faint red smear showed in the sky, thickened and spread. 'There they go,' said Stephen. 'There goes the main army, off South.' And now from the trees, from the earth all round them, the locusts were taking wing. They were like small aircraft, manoeuvring for the take-off, trying their wings to see if they were dry enough. Off they went. A reddish brown stream was rising off the miles of bush, off the lands, the earth. Again the sunlight darkened. And as the clotted branches lifted, the weight on them lightening, there was nothing but the black spines of branches, trees. No green left, nothing. All morning they watched, the three of them, as the brown crust thinned and broke and dissolved, flying up to mass with the main army, now a brownish-red smear in the Southern sky. The lands which had been filmed with green, the new tender

mealie plants, were stark and bare. All the trees stripped. A devastated landscape. No green, no green anywhere.

By midday the reddish cloud had gone. Only an occasional locust flopped down. On the ground were the corpses and the wounded. The African labourers were sweeping these up with branches and collecting them in tins.

After the midday meal the men went off to the lands. Everything was to be replanted. With a bit of luck another swarm would not come travelling down just this way. But they hoped it would rain very soon, to spring some new grass, because the cattle would die otherwise—there was not a blade of grass left on the farm. As for Margaret, she was trying to get used to the idea of three or four years of locusts. She felt like a survivor after war—If this devastated and mangled countryside was not ruin, well, what then was ruin?

- 10 But the men ate their supper with good appetites. ‘It could have been worse,’ was what they said. ‘It could much worse.’

(From Doris Lessing : *The Habit of Loving* ; Copyright © 1957 Doris Lessing. Reprinted by permission of Jonathan Clowes Ltd. London, on behalf of Doris Lessing.)

15.2.2 Glossary

Introduction

'locust : a type of insect of Asia and Africa which flies from place to place in large groups often destroying almost all crops.

plague/plɛɡ/ : a continually troublesome thing.

deva'station : a complete destruction

swarm/swɔ:m/ : a large group of insects moving in a mass

'grass,hopper : a type of insect which can jump high and makes a sharp noise by rubbing parts of its body together

'hedgerow : a row of bushes, especially along country roads

'larve/'la:və/ : (plural : *larvae*), the worm-like young of an insect between leaving the egg and changing into a winged form

'hopper : a grasshopper

de'vor-ing/di'vau rɪn/ : eating up quickly and hungrily

scourage : a cause of great harm

pest : a small animal or insect that harms or destorys food supplies

in'secticide : chemical substance made to kill insects

gong : a round piece of metal hanging from a frame, which when struck with a stick gives a deep ringing sound.

- 1 **'bankrupt** : unable to pay one's debts
 jogged : moved along slowly, steadily but uneventfully
 e'scarpment : a long cliff on a mountain-side
 'foliage : leaves on plants, trees, etc.
- 2 **'clamour** : a loud continuous, usually confused noise
- 3 **'acid** : causing a stinging sensation
- 4 **op'pressive** : causing feelings of illness or sadness
- 5 **'slither**/slɪðə/(N.) : an act of sliding unsteadily
 'skidded : slipped sideways
 'criss-cross : a pattern made by crossing a number of straight lines
 'flapping : falling heavily
 'beady : small, round, and shining, like a bead
 ser'rated : having a row of connected V-shapes like teeth
 re'verberating : being thrown back again and again
 'clotted : having a thick mass or lump
 'crawling : moving slowly with the body close to the ground
 per'verted : turned away from what is natural
 stoked : filled with material which is burned
 'crunching : crushing noisily
- 7 **'squashing**/'skwoʃ in/ : crushing
 ir'rationally : against reasonable behaviour
 sleek : smooth and shining
 'loathsome : which causes great dislike
 'whizzing : moving very fast, often with a noisy sound
- 8 **'cricket** : a type of small brown insect, the male of which makes loud short noises by rubbing its leathery wings together
- 9 **'blotch** : a spot of no special shape
 a'stounded : shocked with surprise
 en'tranced : filled with great wonder
 'shimmer : a soft trembling shining effect
 ma'noeuving/mənu:vərɪn/: moving to a position skilfully

crust : a hard outer covering

filmed : covered with a film

'mealie : (in South Africa) an ear of maize

'imminent : which is going to happen very soon

15.2.3 Comprehension questions

Exercise 1

(Numbers 1 to 10 divide the story into different sections. You will find the answer to a question in the section marked with the corresponding number. For example, the answer to Question I will be found in the first three paragraphs of the story.)

1 Margaret had been on the farm for three years. Had she come from a town or a village? Give a reason for your answer.

.....
.....

2 The locusts came over the mountains. How does the author describe them? What happened on the farm when Stephen and the others saw the locusts coming?

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.....
.....
.....

3 Where did the men run off to? What did they do there? Why did they do it?

.....
.....

4 The sun was shining brightly, so why was the air darkening?

.....

5 Why did the invasion of the locusts sound like a heavy storm?

.....

6 What did old Stephen tell Margaret? Then why did they continue beating the gongs?

.....
.....

7 Margaret knew old Stephen would not go to work in a town. Why?

.....
.....

8 In the evening what did the men discuss?

This shows that they

- a) had fortitude.
- b) were ambitious.
- c) were good citizens. (Choose the correct answer)

9 In the morning Margaret and Stephen stepped out of the house. What 'entranced' them?

10 Were the farmers upset by the invasion of locusts?

Pick out words from the story in support of your answer.

15.3 VOCABULARY

Exercise 2

Write phrases by matching the words of List A with suitable ones taken from List B.

Example : a pride of lions

List A

- a swarm of
- a shoal of
- a pack of
- a herd of
- a pride of

List B

- fishes
- cattle
- lions
- locusts
- wolves

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Exercise 3

- a) Make new word by adding *ir-*, *im-*, *in-*, or *re-* in front of the following words.
rational, mature, patient, adjust, relevant, act.

.....
.....

- b) Now use these words in the blanks below :

- 1 My friend told me a very long story, but it was full of _____ details.
- 2 Being afraid of entering a dark room is rather _____
- 3 When the sun comes out, the flowers _____ by opening wide.
- 4 It is often difficult to _____ oneself to life in a village after living in a city for many years.
- 5 The invitees became _____ and started leaving the hall as the Chief Guest was late.
- 6 Not doing your assignments and being quite happy about it is rather an _____ behaviour.

15.4 GRAMMAR AND USE : ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

15.4.1 Time Clauses

Consider the following sentence from the introduction to the passage you have read (Section 15.1.1)

When they settle, they eat every living plant about them.

The sentence has two parts :

- i) when they settle
- ii) they eat every living plant about them.

We say that the sentence has two clauses. The second part is the main or the principal clause, and the first part, which is dependent on the second, is the subordinate clause showing time, and is called an adverbial clause of time.

Here is another example from the reading passage.

Stephen impatiently waited *while one petrol tin was filled with tea and the other with water.*

Adverbial clauses of time generally begin with words like *when*, *while*, *as soon as*, *before*, *after*, etc.

Here are some more examples :

- i) Buy the ticket *as soon as* you reach the station.
- ii) The chief guest left *after* the inauguration was over.
- iii) The train had left *before* we reached the station.

Exercise 4

Join the following pairs of sentences by converting one of the sentences into an adverbial clause of time.

Example : He went home.
 He had finished his work.
 He went home after he had finished his work.

- i) I was three and a half.
I went to school.
.....
- ii) I had been ill for a long time.
We moved to Lahore.
.....
- iii) I was washing my hands.
The telephone rang.
.....
- iv) The patient had died.
The doctor arrived.
.....
- v) I boarded the train.
The guard waved the green flag.
.....
.....

Exercise 5

Complete the following sentences with suitable adverbial clauses :

- i) You can go when
- ii) You will feel better after
- iii) We'll get down to business as soon as
- iv) I returned home after
- v) I was cooking an omelette while
- vi) The train will not leave before

Exercise 6

Change the italicized phrases in the following sentences into time clauses; then rewrite complete sentences. Make small changes, wherever necessary.

Examples :

When in difficulty, consult the book of instructions.

When you are in difficulty, consult the book of instructions.

While at it, you might do other things too.

While you are at it, you might do other things too.

While you are working on/at it, you might do other things too.

i) *When published*, this book will cause a revolution.

.....

ii) *Passing by the post office*, would you please buy some stamps for me ?

.....

iii) Mr. Lal retired at the age of 65, *having spent 30 years with the Company*.

.....

iv) He gave up hope of passing the examination, *having already failed twice*.

.....

v) *Nearing the entrance*, I shook hands with my host.

.....

15.4.2 Clauses beginning with *because*

Notice the cause-effect relationship in the following sentence :

The harvest was good that year, *because* the rains had come in time.

Here the clause beginning with *because* is called an adverbial clause of reason.

Exercise 7

Combine the following pairs of sentences by using a clause beginning with *because*.

1. I do it, I like it.

.....

2. I can't do it now. I am too busy.

.....

3. The circus-manager was worried.

Attendances had been falling off.

.....

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4. The clowns' jokes fell flat.
They were the kind of jokes that did not raise a laugh any more.

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.....
.....

5. Sea-snakes are always dangerous
They are aggressive by nature

.....
.....
.....

15.4.3 Clauses beginning with *although*

Look at the following sentence and notice how a direct contrast is expressed by using a clause beginning with *although*.

Although he is a good painter, he sometimes paints very bad pictures.

The contrast here is unexpected and surprising.

Exercise 8

Combine the following sentences using *although* :

- 1 The sun was shining brightly yesterday.
It was rather cold.

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.....

- 2 I was anxious to reach the station in time.
I was too tired to walk fast.

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.....

- 3 He always advises others to be punctual.
He generally comes late himself.

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15.4.4 Conditional Clauses

Look at the following sentences :

- 1 If I go to Delhi, I shall see my brother.

2 If I had gone to Delhi, I would have seen my brother.

3 If I had wings, I would fly.

Notice that

i) All the three types of conditional clauses begin with *if*.

ii) In the first sentence, I am talking about a possible event which will take place in the future (I shall see my brother) if a certain condition is fulfilled (if I go to Delhi).

The pattern of verb forms is :

If + simple present.....(conditional clause).

.....simple future (main clause).

iii) In the second sentence I am talking about an event which did not take place (I did not see my brother) because a certain condition was not fulfilled (I did not go to Delhi).

The pattern of verb forms is :

If + past perfect.....(conditional clause).

would have + past participle (main clause).

iv) In the third sentence I am talking about an event which can take place only if a certain condition which is very improbable, is fulfilled.

The pattern of verb forms is :

If + simple past.....(conditional clause).

would + simple (infinitive) form of verb (main clause).

Exercise 9

Join these pairs of sentences, using conditional clause.

1 I shall come to your party.

You send the car. (condition)

.....

2 He would have read that novel.

You had lent it to him. (condition)

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3 The grass will grow.

You water the lawns. (condition)

4 The bridge would not have developed cracks.

Good quality cement had been used. (condition)

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.....

5 The locusts will lay their eggs in the fields. (condition)
The farmers will be ruined.

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.....

6 I would go abroad every year.
I had lots of money. (condition)

.....
.....

Exercise 10

Complete the following sentences :

- a) 1 If you teach the orphans,
- 2 If you had gone out in the rain,.....
- 3 If you were a politician,
- 4 If you were a millionaire,
- 5 If the doctor had come on time,
- 6 If the locusts had laid eggs,
- 7 If the farmers buy insecticide,
- 8 Unless my friend buys a car,
- 9 If the sun shines brightly,
- 10 If I had won a lottery,
- b) 1 The birds will fly away if,
- 2 The locusts would have attacked all the fields if
- 3 You would live in a palace if
- 4 The children would travel by air if
- 5 I will not buy the house if
- 6 The Indian team would have won the cricket match if
- 7 The milkman would have bought the jersey cow if
- 8 The accident would have been averted if
- 9 The farmers will store fertilizers if
- 10 The boy will go to school regularly if

15.5 WRITING

You have read the story ‘A Mild Attack of Locusts.’

Now here are two composition exercises for you.

Exercise 11

- i) Imagine you are Margaret. Describe what you saw at daybreak after the locusts had attacked the farm.

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- ii) Imagine you are Margaret. Write a letter to your parents describing the attack of the locusts.

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15.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have given you practice in

- i) reading and understanding a narrative passage.
- ii) forming words with the prefixes *ir-*, *im-*, *in-*, and *re-*,
- iii) using different types of adverbial clauses correctly, and
- iv) writing short descriptive compositions based on the passage read.

15.7 KEY WORDS

ad'verbial : using as an adverb

clause (in grammar) : a group of words containing a subject and finite verb, forming a sentence or part of a sentence

con'ditional (in grammar) : expressing a condition or supposition. A conditional clause usually begins with the word *if* or *unless*.

15.8 SUGGESTED READING

Doris Lessing : *The Habit of Loving*.

15.9 ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

Exercise 1

- 1 From a town. It took her some time to understand the language of the farmers.
- 2 'a streak of rust-coloured air'. The cook beat the ploughshare to summon the labourers; the house-boy ran off to the store to collect tin cans and soon the farm was resounding with the sound of the gong.
- 3 To the farm. They lit fires so that the smoke of the fires might keep the locusts off their farms.
- 4 Because of the swarms of locusts that coming over the hills.
- 5 Because they fell like hail on the roof of the kitchen.
- 6 That all the crops had been eaten up by the locusts. They did not want the locusts to settle down and lay their eggs on the farm.

- 7 Because he had lived all his life on the farm, had become bankrupt twice and yet had not left the farm.
- 8 How hoppers should be killed
(a)
- 9 The sight of the innumerable locusts fanning their golden wings to free themselves of the night dews.
- 10 No.
'It could have been worse It could be much worse.'

Exercise 2

- a swarm of locusts
a shoal of fishes
a pack of wolves
a herd of cattle
a pride of lions

Exercise 3

- a) irrational, immature, impatient, re-adjust, irrelevant, react
- b) 1 irrelevant
2 irrational
3 react
4 re-adjust
5 impatient
6 immature

Exercise 4

- i) I was three and a half when I went to school.
ii) I had been ill for a long time before we moved to Lahore.
iii) I was washing my hands when the telephone rang.
iv) The patient had died before the doctor arrived.
v) I boarded the train when the guard waved the green flag.

Exercise 5

- i) you have finished the exercise.
ii) you have taken the medicine.
iii) we have finished lunch.

- iv) the match was over.
- v) you were reading the newspaper.
- vi) all the parcels have been loaded.

Exercise 6

- i) When it is published,
- ii) When you pass by the post office,
- iii) after he had spent 30 years with the company.
- iv) after he had already failed twice.
- v) When I neared the entrance,

Exercise 7

- 1 I do it, because I like it.
- 2 I can't do it now, because I am too busy.
- 3 The circus manager was worried, because attendances had been falling off.
- 4 The clowns's jokes fell flat, because they were the kind of jokes that did not raise a laugh any more.
- 5 Sea-snakes are always dangerous, because they are aggressive by nature.

Exercise 8

- 1 Although the sun was shining brightly yesterday, it was rather cold.
- 2 Although I was anxious to reach the station in time, I was too tired to walk fast.
- 3 Although he always advises others to be punctual, he generally comes late himself.

Exercise 9

- 1 I shall come to your party if you send the car.
- 2 He would have read that novel, if you had lent it to him.
- 3 The grass will grow if you water the lawns.
- 4 The bridge would not have developed cracks, if good quality cement had been used.
- 5 If the locusts lay their eggs in the fields, the farmers will be ruined.
- 6 If I had lots of money, I would go abroad every year.

Exercise 10

- a) 1 you will be doing a great service.
- 2 you could have caught a cold.
- 3 you would try to keep the voters on your side.

- 4 you could also build a house in Delhi.
5 the patient could have been saved.
6 the farmers would have been ruined.
7 they can destroy the locusts.
8 he will have difficulty travelling to office every morning.
9 we can expect a warm afternoon.
10 I would have bought a house.
- b) 1 we make any noise.
2 they had stayed there much longer.
3 you were a king.
4 they could afford it.
5 the roof is in a bad condition.
6 Kepil had scored more runs.
7 he had been able to get a loan.
8 the driver had applied the brakes in time.
9 they have money to buy large quantities.
10 they enjoy their lessons.