



202en27

27

THE PARROT WHO WOULDN'T TALK

Do you have a pet? At some point of time, we have all had a pet or wanted one. Having a pet is not just fun. A pet needs proper care and attention. If it has to be trained, there's a way of doing it. In this story, which is written in the first person, the author's aunt decides to keep a parrot as a pet. She also decides to teach it how to talk. How successful is she in her efforts? Read this humorous (funny) story by the well-known author Ruskin Bond to find out.



OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- read and enjoy a humorous story;
- use modals;
- use the present perfect continuous and past perfect continuous tenses;
- write a short paragraph describing a person;
- analyse a situation critically in order to make a decision;
- identify rhyming words;
- make requests, and give orders and instructions;
- summarise a text;
- relate to the feelings and recognise the needs of pets;
- infer the role of humour in conveying a message, and
- enhance your vocabulary.



27.1 LET US READ THE TEXT

'You are no beauty! Can't talk, can't sing, can't dance!'

With these words Aunt Ruby would taunt the unfortunate parakeet, who glared morosely at everyone from his ornamental cage at one end of the long veranda of Granny's bungalow in north India.

In those distant days, almost everyone – Indian or European – kept a pet parrot or parakeet, or 'lovebird' as some of the smaller ones were called. Sometimes these birds became great talkers, or rather mimics, and would learn to recite entire mantras (religious chants) or admonitions to the children of the house, such as '*Padho, beta, padho!*' ('Study child study!') or for the benefit of boys like me, 'Don't be greedy, don't be greedy!'

These expressions were, of course, picked by the parrot over a period of time, after many repetitions by some member of the household who had taken on the task of teaching the bird to talk.

But our parrot refused to talk.

He'd been bought by Aunt Ruby from a bird-catcher who'd visited all the houses on our road, selling caged birds ranging from colourful budgerigars to chirpy little munnias and even common sparrows that had been dabbed with paint and passed off as some exotic species. Neither Granny nor Grandfather were keen on keeping caged birds as pets, but Aunt Ruby threatened to throw a tantrum if she did not get her way—and Aunt Ruby's tantrums were dreadful to behold!

Anyway, she insisted on keeping the parrot and teaching it to talk. But the bird took an instant dislike to my aunt and resisted all her blandishments.

'Kiss, kiss!' Aunt Ruby would coo, putting her face close to the bars of the cage. But the parrot would back away, its beady little eyes getting even smaller with anger at the prospect of being kissed by Aunt Ruby. And on one occasion it lunged forward without warning and knocked my aunt's spectacles off her nose.

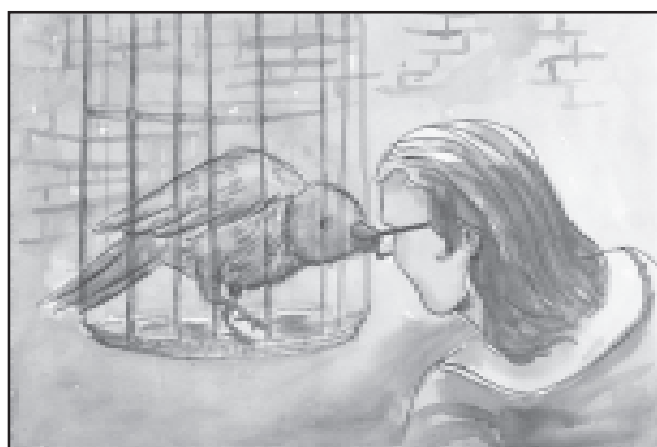


Fig. 27.1



Notes

unfortunate: unlucky or unhappy

morosely: gloomily

ornamental: decorative

mimic: one who imitates

admonition: advice, warning

dabbed: applied paint or some other substance with quick, light strokes

tantrum: outburst of bad temper

to behold: to watch someone or something of remarkable nature

blandishments: flattering statements or actions used to persuade someone to do something

prospect: expectation or what one expects

lunged forward: sudden forward movement



Notes

endearments: words spoken lovingly

hostile: unfriendly

making faces: producing an expression on one's face that shows dislike or some other negative emotion

to supplement: to add

fell upon: to bear or carry out someone else's duty

delicacy: choice or expensive food

siesta: a rest or nap taken in the early afternoon

winging its way: flying away quickly

shrug: to draw up and drop shoulders abruptly

gramophone: record player, a device used for reproducing the sounds stored in a record

expectantly: waiting eagerly or hopefully

The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk

After that Aunt Ruby gave up her endearments and became quite hostile towards the poor bird, making faces at it and calling out 'can't talk, can't talk, can't sing, can't dance!' and other nasty comments.

It fell upon me, then ten years old, to feed the parrot, and it seemed quite happy to receive green chillies and ripe tomatoes from my hands, these delicacies being supplemented by slices of mango, for it was then the mango season. This also gave me an opportunity to consume a couple of mangoes while feeding the parrot!

One afternoon, while everyone was indoors enjoying a siesta, I gave the parrot its lunch and then deliberately left the cage door open. Seconds later, the bird was winging its way to the freedom of the mango orchard.

At the same time Grandfather came to the veranda and remarked, 'I see your aunt's parrot has escaped!'

'The door was quite loose,' I said with a shrug. 'Well, I don't suppose we'll see it again.'

Aunt Ruby was upset at first, and threatened to buy another bird. We put her off by promising to buy her a bowl of goldfish.

'But goldfish don't talk!' she protested.

'Well, neither did your bird,' said Grandfather. 'So we'll get you a gramophone. You can listen to Clara Cluck all day. They say she sings like a nightingale.'

I thought we'd never see the parrot again, but it probably missed its green chillies, because a few days later I found the bird sitting on the veranda railing, looking expectantly at me with its head cocked to one side. Unselfishly I gave the parrot half of my mango.

While the bird was enjoying the mango, Aunt Ruby emerged from her room and, with a cry of surprise, called out, 'Look, it's my parrot come back! He must have missed me!'

With a loud squawk, the parrot flew out of her reach and, perching on the



Fig. 27.2

The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk

nearest rose bush, glared at her and shrieked in my aunt's familiar tones: 'You're no beauty! Can't talk, can't sing, can't dance!'

Aunt Ruby went ruby-red and dashed indoors.

But that wasn't the end of the affair. The parrot became a frequent visitor to the garden and veranda, and whenever it saw Aunt Ruby it would call out, 'You're no beauty, you're no beauty! Can't talk, can't sing, can't dance!'

The parrot had learnt to talk after all!

– Ruskin Bond



LET US DO 27.1

From time immemorial, people the world over have kept pets.

1. In the box below are the names of some pets. Find them in the grid. Look horizontally, vertically and diagonally. Circle each one when you find it.

DOG, CAT, FISH, PARROT, HAMSTER, RABBIT, PIGEON, TURTLE,
GUINEA PIG, CANARY

P	I	G	E	O	N	T	A	Q
C	A	N	A	R	Y	U	M	G
I	D	R	H	U	I	R	T	M
C	K	A	R	C	V	T	Y	E
K	Z	B	A	O	W	L	Z	D
Q	R	B	Y	C	T	E	F	O
G	U	I	N	E	A	P	I	G
F	Y	T	O	B	V	T	S	X
H	A	M	S	T	E	R	H	Q

2. Read aloud the names of the pets given in the box above. Now arrange them in alphabetical order.



Notes



27.2 LET US UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

27.2.1 PART 1

You're no beauty! Can't talk.....And other nasty comments.

This story is set in the pre-independence era (probably 1944-45). In those days, many people, Indian as well as European kept parrots as pets (mostly parakeets and lovebirds). They were popular because they could mimic the human voice.

In the story, the author's grandparents do not like to have birds as pets because they have to be kept in cages. But Aunt Ruby (the author's aunt) buys a parakeet from a bird-catcher and keeps it in a cage. From the beginning the parrot does not like her. She tries very hard to teach it to talk, but it refuses to do so. One day when she puts her face close to the cage, the parrot knocks off her spectacles. Aunt Ruby doesn't like that at all and after that, starts saying unkind things to her pet, and even makes faces at it.

This section gives an idea about Aunt Ruby's nature. She has a strong will, gets angry quickly and has no patience. When her pet doesn't respond to her, she is mean and unpleasant to it.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.1

Answer the following questions.

1. 'You're no beauty! Can't talk, can't sing, can't dance!'
 - a. Who is saying these words and to whom?
 - b. Which word is being repeated here? Why?
2. Where was the parakeet's cage kept?
3. Where did Aunt Ruby get the parakeet from?
4. Why do you think neither Granny nor Grandfather were keen on keeping caged birds as pets? Tick the correct option.
 - a. Caged birds were very noisy.
 - b. They preferred to keep caged rabbits.
 - c. Birdcages were very expensive and Aunt Ruby wanted only ornate ones.
 - d. Caged birds were deprived of their freedom.

The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk

5. Tick the correct option.

The parrot backed away from Aunt Ruby because:

- the sunlight was falling directly on it and it couldn't see properly.
- Aunt Ruby had poked it with a chilli.
- it did not want to be kissed by Aunt Ruby.
- Aunt Ruby's nephew (the author) threw a ball at it.

6. Why did Aunt Ruby become hostile towards the parakeet?



LET US LEARN NEW WORDS 27.1

Read the text in Unit I carefully and find the word 'dislike' in it. In this word 'dis-' is a prefix.

A prefix is a group of letters added before a word to change its meaning and form a new word.

'Dis-' means **not**, or **the opposite of**.

'Dis-' in the word 'dislike' means **to not like** something or someone.

dis + like = dislike

In Column A are given some words with the prefix 'dis-'. Draw lines to connect them with their meanings in Column B. One example has been done for you.

Column A

- dislike
- disobey
- dismount
- discover
- disjoin
- disprove

Column B

- separate
- find/ learn of
- not like
- refuse to carry out rules or commands
- prove to be false or wrong
- get off from something one is riding



LET US TALK 27.1

A **pet** is defined as a domestic or tamed animal or bird kept for companionship or pleasure and treated with care and affection. But is that the reason people keep pets? Aunt Ruby had kept a pet because she wanted to teach it to talk.



Notes



Notes

Talk to three people you know who have pets and ask them the following questions.

- Which pet do you have?
- How long have you had it?
- Why have you kept a pet?
- Do you think human beings share a special bond with their pets? If yes, please describe a related experience and/or your feelings towards your pet?

? DO YOU KNOW



What is the difference between parrots, parakeets and lovebirds?

Parrots are brightly-coloured birds with short, hooked bills that curve downwards, grasping feet and a raucous voice. Some can mimic the human voice. There are more than 300 species of parrots.

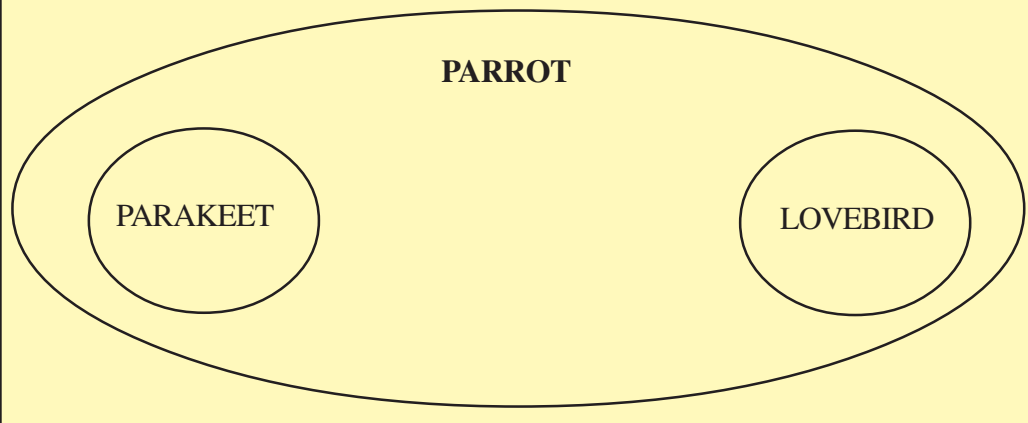
A parakeet is a small parrot with predominantly green plumage and a long tail. There are many species of parakeets as well. The

one we usually see flying around our homes is the rose-ringed parakeet. In Hindi it is called *tota*.



A lovebird is a very small African and Madagascan parrot with mainly green plumage and typically a red or black face. It is noted for its affectionate behaviour towards its mate.

In short, parakeets and lovebirds are types of parrots.





LET US DO 27.2

PETA stands for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Find out more about this organisation. What are its objectives? In how many countries does it have supporters?

27.2.2 PART 2

It fell upon me, then ten years oldThe parrot had learnt to talk after all!

Children can be observant and sensitive. After Aunt Ruby becomes hostile towards her pet, her ten-year-old nephew (the author) feeds the parrot. A tender relationship develops between the parrot and the boy. He feeds the parrot not just things that the parrot likes but also things that he himself likes, such as slices of mango. The boy empathises with the parrot. He understands how the parrot feels. When no one is around, he leaves the cage door open. Do you think this was the correct thing to do? Did he make the right decision? If his aunt had seen him, what could have happened?

In this section, you once again see Aunt Ruby's immature behaviour. She wants to get another bird that she can teach to talk. After some days, the parrot returns. When it sees Aunt Ruby, the parrot says the same unkind words to her that she used to say to it. Aunt Ruby gets what she deserves. This section of the story shows us that one should be careful about what one says, even to one's pets.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.2

Answer the following questions.

1. What all did Aunt Ruby's nephew (the author) give the parrot to eat?
2. Tick the correct option.
He fed the parrot because:
 - a. Aunt Ruby had become hostile towards her pet and someone had to feed it.
 - b. Aunt Ruby had gone out of town and had asked him to look after the parrot.
 - c. it gave him an opportunity to eat mango on the pretext that he was feeding the bird.
 - d. 'a' and 'c'
3. How did the parrot escape from the cage?
4. Aunt Ruby didn't want the goldfish because:
 - a. It couldn't fly.
 - b. It couldn't talk.



Notes



Notes

- c. It couldn't eat chillies.
 - d. All the above
5. The author thinks that the parrot came back because it missed the green chillies. Why do you think the parrot came back?
 6. Why did Aunt Ruby run inside when she heard the parrot talking?



LET US LEARN NEW WORDS 27.2

In Part 2 you came across the phrase 'winging its way'. It means 'to move quickly'. Given below are some more 'wing' phrases, and their meanings.

1. take wing - to take flight; fly away, depart quickly
2. under one's wing - under one's protection; in one's care
3. spread one's wings – extend one's activities and interests; start new activities or interests; begin to be independent

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the correct phrase from those given above. Change the tense of the verb as required.

1. Ever since Anita's parents died in a car crash, her uncle and aunt took her _____.
2. Vimal owned a small but successful restaurant in Delhi. He decided to _____ and opened two more, one in Mumbai and another in Chennai.
3. Raja spotted an unusual insect in his garden but when he went closer, it _____.

Exercise 2

Look up a dictionary and find the meaning of the following phrases.

1. waiting in the wings
2. wing it



LET US DO 27.3

BIRD SOUNDS

In Part 2 of the story, you read: *With a loud squawk, the parrot flew out of her reach.....* Different birds make different kinds of sounds. The loud, harsh sound made by a parrot is called a **squawk**. The series of short, quick, high-pitched sounds made by parrots (when they are in a group) is called **chatter**.

Draw lines to connect the pictures of birds given in Column 1 to their names in Column 2 to the sounds they make in Column 3.

The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk



Notes

Column 1

1.



2.



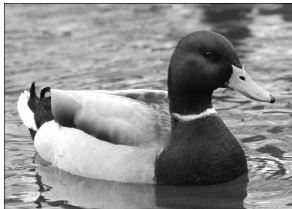
3.



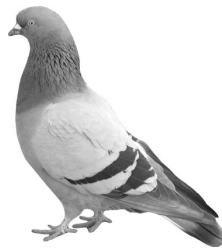
4.



5.



6.



7.



Column 2

a) pigeon

b) duck

c) sparrow

d) owl

e) rooster

f) crow

g) parrot

Column 3

i) crow

ii) quack

iii) coo

iv) squawk/ chatter

v) caw

vi) hoot

vii) chirp



27.3 LET US LEARN GRAMMAR

A. Modals

Modals are special verbs that are used with the main verb to make the sentence more meaningful.

Modals are used to:

- indicate the possibility or necessity of an event
- make requests, offers or suggestions
- to make what you are saying more polite, to seek permission
- express ability or certainty
- express moral obligation or duty
- express willingness, promise or intention

Common Modal Verbs	
Can	Ought to
Could	Shall
May	Should
Might	Will
Must	Would

Need and **dare** can sometimes be used as modal verbs.

Examples

1. May I borrow your notebook? (seeking permission)
2. I could ride a horse when I was five years old. (express ability)
3. Could you hold this for a while? (polite request)
4. It may rain today. (express possibility)
5. You must take better care of your health. (express necessity)
6. We ought to respect our parents. (moral obligation)
7. Shall I bring a glass of water for you? (request)
8. I will write to you as soon as I reach Ambala. (promise)
9. How dare you slap me? (negative, interrogative sense)



10. We should take care of our pets. (duty)
11. I can speak German. (express ability)

Remember:

- Modal verbs do not take '-s' in the third person singular.
Example: He can speaks French. (not correct)
- They have no -ing and -ed form.
Example: She musted have danced for very long. (not correct)
- Many modal verbs cannot be used in the past tense or the future tense.
He will can go with us to the market. (not correct)
- Modals are not used alone. They are always used with the main verb that follows them.
- We use 'not' after modals to make them negative.
Examples: should not (shouldn't), will not (won't), cannot (can't), etc.

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks using the correct word/s from the bracket.

1. _____ I make some coffee for you? (will/shall)
2. Mother is sleeping. I _____ disturb her. (must not/must)
3. _____ you like some tea? (could/would)
4. _____ you please shut the door? (could/should)
5. _____ I borrow your notebook? (may/might)

Exercise 2

Select the correct modal from the box and fill in the blanks.

can, could, can't, will, would, shouldn't, dare, ought to, must, may

1. I _____ like to meet the General Manager.
2. You scratch my back, and I _____ scratch yours.
3. Beggars _____ be choosers.
4. It's getting late. I _____ go now.
5. You _____ love your neighbours.
6. How _____ you open my letter?



Notes

7. I felt Rani _____ have done much better in the test.
8. I _____ run faster than you.
9. You _____ make fun of others.
10. _____ God be with you and bless you.

B. Present Perfect Continuous Tense and Past Perfect Continuous Tense**Present Perfect Continuous Tense**

The present perfect continuous tense is used for an action

- that began in the past and is still continuing
- that has already taken place but whose effect is still there

It is written as: has/have + been + (verb + -ing)

The negative is formed by placing 'not' after has/have.

Examples

1. They have been working since 7 a.m.
2. He is dirty because he has been playing in the garden.
3. Amit has not been fighting.

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the present perfect continuous tense of the verbs in the bracket.

1. Arti _____ for five hours. (sleep)
2. He _____ in this town for the last ten years. (live)
3. Mrs. Mehra _____ to the students about the importance of time management. (speak)
4. I _____ for the last one hour but the bus has not come. (wait)
5. Vikram _____ the Ramayana aloud to his ailing grandmother. (read)

Past Perfect Continuous Tense

The past perfect continuous tense is used for an action

- that began before a point in the past and continued up to that time.

It is written as: had been + (verb + -ing)

The negative is formed by placing 'not' after had.



Examples

1. They had been working since 7 a.m.
2. Amit had not been fighting.

Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with the past perfect continuous tense of the verbs in the box.

get, teach, watch, eat, wait

1. We _____ television when the lights went off.
2. Until last year Radha _____ more than 90 per cent marks in Maths.
3. Mr. Sharma _____ chocolates every day till the doctor told him to stop.
4. Anushka _____ for her father to come back.
5. Mr. Anant Singh _____ for fifteen years when he decided to start a business.

Exercise 3

Rewrite the following sentences after changing the tenses as directed.

1. We waited for Rajesh for two hours. (to present perfect continuous)
2. Anjali is washing the dishes. (to past perfect continuous)
3. Shashi is applying for different jobs. (to present perfect continuous)
4. The art gallery had exhibited his paintings. (to present perfect continuous)
5. I have been cleaning the house all day. (to past perfect continuous)

C. Requests, Orders and Instructions

Requests

When you make a request:

- you ask someone for something OR
- ask them to do something

Examples

1. Can I have my camera back?
2. Will you come with me to the market?

To make your request more effective, use 'can't' or 'couldn't' instead of 'can' or 'could'.



Notes

Example

Can't we have some more ketchup?

Orders

When you give an order:

- you tell someone to do something
You give orders if you have authority over that person or know that person well.

Example

1. Be quiet!

Giving orders can sound rude especially if those orders are being given to someone older than you. You can use '**please**' to make the order more polite.

2. Please don't shout.

Instructions

When you give instructions:

- you tell someone how to do something.
- you tell someone what to do in a particular situation.

Example

1) Come straight down M.G. Road, turn left from the petrol pump and then take the second turn right.

2) Take a cucumber, peel it, cut it lengthwise into four long pieces, and arrange the pieces on a plate.

Changing an order into a request

Earlier in the lesson you studied modals. An order can be changed into a request by using modals like 'can', 'could', 'will' or 'would'. 'Please' or introductory phrases like 'I wonder' or 'Could you possibly' can be added to make the request more polite.

Examples

1. Wait here until the doctor arrives.

Could you wait here until the doctor arrives?

2. Be quiet!

Will you be quiet, please?

THINK ABOUT IT

If you are asked to do something, do you like it to be in the form of an order or a request?



Exercise 1

Change the following orders into polite requests. Use the correct punctuation mark at the end of each request.

1. Buy me a wristwatch!
Could _____
2. Pass me the salt!
Can _____
3. Shut the door!
Will _____
4. Get a glass of water!
Can _____
5. Clean the table.
Could you possibly _____

Exercise 2

Arun's mother went to the market. Before leaving, she gave him instructions to prepare a glass of lemonade (*nimboo paani/shikanji*).

Select appropriate words from the box and fill in the blanks.

remove, serve, add, mix, stir, take, cut, squeeze, put

1. _____ a glass of water and _____ two tablespoons of sugar into it.
2. _____ it well with a spoon till the sugar dissolves.
3. _____ a lemon into half.
4. Carefully _____ the seeds from one half.
5. _____ the lemon to get the juice and add it to the water.
6. _____ a pinch of salt.
7. _____ it well again.
8. _____ it chilled (with ice in it).

Exercise 3

Make a request using the words in the brackets.

1. Manisha has left the window open. (you, shut)



Notes

2. Mummy, I want to bake a cake. (you, help)
3. I don't want to go to the party alone. (Could you possibly, come)
4. I have wanted to read this book for a very long time. (I wonder if, lend)
5. I want to drink lemonade. (you, make)



LET US DO 27.4

In the story *The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk*, Aunt Ruby's nephew took the decision to set the parrot free. He didn't ask his grandparents or think about what his aunt would say or do or feel. How did he make his decision?

In life, we are always required to make decisions. You too will have to make decisions to solve all kinds of problems. The problems could be simple and small, such as what dress to wear, or they could be important like what career to choose, which job to accept. Like the young boy in the story, you may have to make decisions knowing full well that some people who are important to you (family members, friends, etc) will not like that decision. How will you make decisions?

Imagine that you are travelling in a crowded bus with a friend. As a passenger gets up from his seat, his wallet falls down. Before you can call out to the man, your friend puts the wallet in his/ her bag. What would you do in such a situation? **Write down your decision. Explain how you made this decision in 80 – 100 words.**

Given below are some tips that will help you to make your decision.

- First, think carefully about the problem or situation.
- Make a list of **all** the different things you could do such as tell your friend to give the wallet back, tell the man that your friend has taken his wallet, and other options. Write them down.
- Think of the good and bad effects of each one. For example, your friend might be angry with you or the man might shout at your friend and call the police.
- Reduce the number of options keeping only the best ones.
- Think carefully about the best options keeping in mind what your goals are or what is important to you.
- Make the decision. Choose one option according to what is the correct thing to do.
- Do what you have decided to do.
- Be prepared to face the consequences.



27.4 LET US WRITE



Notes

A. Describing People

Suppose you were travelling in a bus and were standing face-to-face with a man. Suddenly that man snatches the purse of a co-passenger and jumps off the bus. The police ask you for his description. How would you describe him?

The first thing you talk about is **physical appearance**. You should describe his height, build, colour of hair, type of hair, length of hair, eyes, face, complexion and facial features, clothes, age, and any other special feature.

If you are asked to describe someone you know, you can also describe his/her behaviour, personality traits, what she/he is like. A detailed description can include the person's profession.

Exercise

Go to a market near your house. Look carefully at the vendors selling vegetables. Write a short description of any one of them in about 60-80 words. Remember, the more observant you are, the better your description will be.

Given below are some words that will help you.

- **Height:** tall, short, medium height
- **Build:** thin, fat, stocky, frail, well-built
- **Colour of hair:** black, grey, white, brownish-red
- **Type of hair:** bald, straight, curly, spiky, wavy
- **Length of hair:** long, short, medium length, bald, crew cut
- **Eyes:** big, close-set, small, beady, yellow, dark brown
- **Nose:** straight, crooked, hooked, bulbous
- **Lips:** pursed, thin, thick, dark, rosy
- **Face:** round, oval, square, heart shaped
- **Complexion and Facial features:** fair, dark, scars, swarthy, wrinkles, freckles, sun-burnt, pale
- **Clothes:** shabby, smart, tidy; shirt, pant, dhoti, saree, etc.; colour of the clothes



Notes

- **Age:** young, elderly, middle-aged, teenager, in 20s, in 30s, in 40s
- **Special feature:** mole, lame, blind, wearing spectacles, stammer
- **Describing personality:** hardworking, cheerful, broadminded, active, curious, secretive, gentle, shrewd, energetic, confident, mean, intelligent, friendly, sensitive

B. Summarising

Writing a good summary shows that that you have understood the text well, and that you can communicate that understanding to others. A summary is a short paragraph/s that presents only the main points. When you summarise, you mention the theme (central idea) and important details of the text. All the unnecessary details are left out.

How to write a summary:

1. Read the text carefully. Give special attention to the beginning, middle and ending. Focus on the heading or sub-headings (if any). Try and understand the main theme of the text.
2. If the text is very large, divide it into sections, and then read, section-wise.
3. Reread. With a pencil, underline key (important) words and facts/details, or write them on a separate sheet of paper. Cross out unnecessary sentences/details.
4. Once you know the text very well, write down the main idea of each section.
5. You may write a short conclusion (one or two sentences), mentioning the purpose or message of the text/ story.
6. Read what you have written. Check if you have missed out on something important. Check if the facts (dates, time, etc.), punctuation and grammar are correct.
7. Revise the summary.

Points to remember:

- Write in the present tense.
- Include the name of the author and the title of the text.
- Be brief.
- If you use the author's words, put them in inverted commas.
- Do not put in any of your own thoughts, feelings or opinions into the summary.



Exercise 1

Given below is a summary of the story you have just read but some words are missing. Fill in the blanks and then read it aloud to a friend.

The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk is a humorous (a) _____ by the well-known author, Ruskin Bond. It is set in the pre-independence era when most people kept a parrot as a (b) _____. Ruby, the author's aunt, buys a parrot and keeps it in a (c) _____. She tries to teach the parrot to (d) _____. Once, the parrot knocks her (e) _____ off. Aunt Ruby is annoyed and says nasty things to the (f) _____. From then on, the author (who was a young boy at that time) feeds the parrot. One day, he purposely leaves the cage door (g) _____ and the parrot flies away. A few days later, it comes (h) _____. When it sees Aunt Ruby, it says the same nasty things that she had said to it. (i) _____ Ruby feels embarrassed.

Exercise 2

Write a summary of a story you have read recently.



LET US LISTEN 27.1

Jingles and rhymes are so easy to remember. You just have to hear them a few times and soon you too are humming away!

Given below is a short rhyme.

Listen to it on a tape/CD **or** ask a friend to say it aloud at a fast speed. Listen carefully.

*Chatter, chatter, talk, talk,
Like a parrot, squawk, squawk.
In a group, natter, natter,
What's that, what's the matter?
Do say, Oh no!
What's the time? Gotta go,
Must fly.
Oh hi!*

Exercise

After listening to the above rhyme:

1. Make a list of words that have been repeated.
2. Make a list of words that you would associate with 'parrot'.
3. List the pairs of rhyming words in the rhyme.

Examples of rhyming words are: say-pay, cat-bat, sing-ring.

**DO YOU KNOW**

- Birds are protected by the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA) 1972.
- It is illegal to keep any birds in captivity (in a cage or any locked space) except lovebirds and blue rock pigeons.
- It is illegal to colour birds (as is done by bird sellers to make them look more attractive). The chemical colour is toxic and possibly carcinogenic (causes cancer).
- Caging and displaying parrots and parakeets, as fortune-tellers often do, is illegal and is punishable by a fine and up to five years in prison.
- Most of the birds bought and sold in India are parakeets caught from the wild. This is against the Indian Wildlife Act.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

In this story, the author Ruskin Bond shows us how humour can be used to convey an important message. The message of this story is: Be kind to your pets, and behave towards others as you would like them to behave towards you. If we need to or want to train our pets to do something, we should teach them with love and patience. We should be empathetic towards animals, especially pets, because they depend on us. Empathy means understanding and feeling what others feel. You have also learnt that nobody likes captivity and that pets too have feelings.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. Name all the birds that are mentioned in the story.
2. Can you think of another title for this story? Give reasons for your choice in 30 - 40 words.
3. In the story, sometimes the author calls the bird parakeet and sometimes parrot. Is that a mistake?
4. Do you think Aunt Ruby's method of teaching the parrot to talk was correct? If you were Aunt Ruby, how would you have taught the parrot?
5. Find phrases in the text that tell you that the parrot was not happy in the cage.

The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk



Notes

6. Suppose you were a parrot and somebody caged you and kept you as a pet. How would you feel? Give two reasons to support your answer.
7. Do you think Aunt Ruby's nephew (the author) made the right decision when he left the cage door open? What decision would you make if you were Aunt Ruby's nephew? Give at least two reasons for your answer.
8. 'You're no beauty! Can't talk, can't sing, can't dance!'

The story begins with these words. But when they are repeated at the end of the story, it adds humour to it and makes us laugh. Why?



ANSWERS

LET US DO 27.1

1.

P	I	G	E	O	N	T	A	Q
C	A	N	A	R	Y	U	M	G
I	D	R	H	U	I	R	T	M
C	K	A	R	C	V	T	Y	E
K	Z	B	A	O	W	L	Z	D
Q	R	B	Y	C	T	E	F	O
G	U	I	N	E	A	P	I	G
F	Y	T	O	B	V	T	S	X
H	A	M	S	T	E	R	H	Q

2. canary, cat, dog, fish, guinea pig, hamster, parrot, pigeon, rabbit, turtle

27.2.1 PART 1

INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.1

1. a. Aunt Ruby is saying these words to her pet parakeet.
b. 'Can't' is being repeated. It is being repeated to emphasise what is being said.
2. The parakeet's cage was kept at one end of a long veranda of Granny's bungalow in North India.



Notes

3. Aunt Ruby had bought the parakeet from a bird-catcher selling various types of birds.
4. d. Caged birds were deprived of their freedom.
5. c. it did not want to be kissed by Aunt Ruby.
6. Once, when Aunt Ruby was near the parakeet's cage, it lunged forward and knocked off her spectacles. After that incident, Aunt Ruby became hostile towards the bird.

LET US LEARN NEW WORDS 27.1

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

27.2.2 PART 2

INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.2

1. The boy gave the parakeet green chillies, ripe tomatoes and sometimes, slices of mango.
2. d.
3. One afternoon, when everyone was resting, Aunt Ruby's nephew purposely left the cage door open. Soon, the parakeet flew away.
4. b.
5. Individual responses. Accept all answers.
6. As soon as the parrot saw Aunt Ruby, it screeched, "You're no beauty! Can't talk, can't sing, can't dance!" Aunt Ruby was embarrassed and turned red when she heard these words. Therefore, she ran inside.

LET US LEARN NEW WORDS/PHRASES 27.2

Exercise 1

1. under their wing 2. spread his wings 3. took wing

Exercise 2

1. waiting in the wings – be close by in the background, available at short notice to do something or take up a position
2. wing it – speak or act without preparation, improvise

LET US DO 27.3

Bird Sounds

1. c) vii)
2. g) iv)
3. f) v)



- 4. d) vi)
- 5. b) ii)
- 6. a) iii)
- 7. e) i)

27.3 LET US LEARN GRAMMAR

A. Modals

Exercise 1

- 1. Shall 2. must not 3. Would 4. Could 5. May

Exercise 2

- 1. would 2. will 3. can't 4. must 5. ought to
- 6. dare 7. could 8. can 9. shouldn't 10. May

B. Present Perfect Continuous Tense and Past Perfect Continuous Tense

Exercise 1

- 1. has been sleeping 2. has been living 3. has been speaking
- 4. have been waiting 5. has been reading

Exercise 2

- 1. had been watching 2. had been getting 3. had been eating
- 4. had been waiting 5. had been teaching

Exercise 3

- 1. We have been waiting for Rajesh for two hours.
- 2. Anjali had been washing the dishes.
- 3. Shashi has been applying for different jobs.
- 4. The art gallery has been exhibiting his paintings.
- 5. I had been cleaning the house all day.

C. Requests, Orders and Instructions

Exercise 1

- 1. Could you buy me a wristwatch, please?
- 2. Can you pass me the salt, please?
- 3. Will you shut the door, please?
- 4. Can you get me a glass of water?



Notes

5. Could you possibly clean the table?

Exercise 2

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. Take, put/add | 2. Mix/ Stir | 3. Cut | 4. remove |
| 5. Squeeze | 6. Add/ Put | 7. Mix/Stir | 8. Serve |

Exercise 3

1. Will you shut it, please?
2. Will you help me, please?
3. Could you possibly come with me?
4. I wonder if you could lend it to me.
5. Will you make it, please?

LET US DO 27.4

Individual responses

27.4 LET US WRITE**A. Describing People**

Individual responses

B. Summarising**Exercise 1**

- (a) story (b) pet (c) cage (d) talk (e) spectacles (f) parrot (g) open (h) back (i) Aunt

Exercise 2

Individual responses

LET US LISTEN 27.1**Exercise**

1. chatter, talk, squawk, natter, what's
2. chatter, talk, squawk, group, fly
3. talk-squawk, natter-matter, no-go, fly-hi

TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. The birds mentioned in the story are: parrot, parakeet, lovebird, budgerigar, munnia, sparrow and nightingale.
2. Individual responses.



3. No, it's not a mistake. The bird that Aunt Ruby had bought was a parakeet. But a parakeet is a type of parrot. So it can be called either a parrot or a parakeet.

4. Individual responses

Suggested response: I don't think Aunt Ruby's method was correct. If I were Aunt Ruby, I would develop a bond (friendly relationship) with the parakeet and then try to teach it to talk. I would always speak to it gently and make sure it was comfortable in its surroundings. I would choose simple and short words to start with. I would repeat them clearly and with enthusiasm. I would be very patient and never get angry with my pet. I would not scold it if it didn't learn well. I would praise it, give it a gentle pat or something special to eat if it learnt well.

5. From phrases such as 'unfortunate parakeet', 'glared morosely at everyone' and 'eyes getting smaller with anger', we know that the parrot was not happy to be in the cage.

6. Individual responses.

Suggested response: I would not like it at all. We usually see parrots in groups. If I were put into a cage I would be lonely and would miss my friends, the other parrots. I would not be able to fly like other birds.

7. Individual responses.

Suggested response: Yes, I think Aunt Ruby's nephew made the right decision.

I would also set the bird free because the bird was unhappy, Aunt Ruby was saying unkind things to it, she was not feeding it, she was unfriendly to it.

8. Individual responses.

Suggested response: At the beginning of the story, Aunt Ruby tries to teach the parakeet to talk. When it doesn't learn to talk, she makes fun of it. The bird is locked up in a cage and forced to listen to her unkind words. At the end, the parakeet is free, but comes back to the garden one day. On seeing Aunt Ruby, it repeats the very same words which she used to say to it. The parakeet learns to talk, but what it says does not make Aunt Ruby happy. It makes her uncomfortable. It appears as if the parakeet says unkind words to her because she was unkind to it when it was in the cage. It seems as if the parakeet makes fun of her to teach her a lesson. The same words said in contrasting situations make the story humorous.