



Lesson 3

The Aged Mother

Pre-reading

Dictionary Reference : Learning New Words



Activity 1

Look up the following words in a dictionary. You should seek the following information about the words and put them in your WORDS notebook.

1. Meaning of the word as used in the lesson (adjective/noun/verb, etc.)
2. Pronunciation (The teacher may refer to the dictionary or a mobile phone for correct pronunciation.)
3. Spellings

despotic	suggestive	failing	prompted	barbarous	abandoning	widowed
humble	reckless	snapped	hastened	blaze	abolished	frailty

Reading

Let us read the story

The Aged Mother

Long, long ago there was a province in Japan called **Shining**. It was governed by a despotic leader. He was a good warrior but he had a great dislike for anything suggestive of failing health and strength. This prompted him to make a cruel law for the province. The entire province was given strict orders to immediately put all the aged people to death. Those were barbarous days and the custom of abandoning old people to die was not uncommon.

In the same province lived a poor farmer and his aged widowed mother at the foot of the mountain. They owned a bit of land which supplied them with food. They were humble, peaceful and happy. The poor farmer loved his aged mother and dealt with her very tenderly. The order by the despot filled his



heart with sorrow. Other people did not think twice about obeying the order of the governor but this farmer was very unhappy. However, he had to obey the order so the farmer prepared for what at that time was considered the kindest way of death.

Just at sunset, when his day's work ended, he took some unwhitened rice which was the main food for the poor and cooked it, dried it and tied it in a cloth which he swung in a bundle around his neck along with a pot filled with cool water. Then he lifted his helpless old mother on his back and started on his painful journey up the mountain. The road was long and steep. The narrow road was crossed and re-crossed by many paths made by the hunters and the woodcutters. At some places, they got lost and confused but he did not think about it. He was about to abandon his dear mother so it did not matter which path he took to reach the mountain top. On he went, climbing blindly upward — ever upward towards the high bare summit known as **Obatsuyama**, the mountain where the aged were abandoned.

The eyes of the old mother were not so dim that they could not notice the reckless hastening from one path to another and her loving heart grew anxious. Her son did not know many paths of the mountain and his return might be dangerous so she stretched forth her hand and snapped twigs from bushes as they passed. She quietly dropped a handful every few steps of the way so that as they climbed, the narrow path behind them was dotted with tiny piles of twigs. At last, the summit was reached. Weary and heartsick, the youth gently released his burden and silently prepared a place of comfort as his last duty to the loved one. Gathering fallen pine needles, he made a soft cushion and tenderly lifted his old mother onto it. He wrapped her padded coat more closely about her stooping shoulders and with tearful eyes and an aching heart, he bade farewell to his mother.

The trembling voice of his mother was full of unselfish love as she gave her last instructions. "Let not thine eyes be blinded, my son," she said. "The mountain road is full of dangers. Look carefully and follow the path where you see piles of twigs. They will guide you to the familiar path farther down." The son's surprised eyes looked back over the path, then at the poor old shrivelled hands, all scratched and soiled by her work of love. His heart broke within and bowing to the ground, he cried aloud, "Oh, honourable mother, your kindness breaks my heart! I will not leave you. Together we will follow the path of twigs and together we will die!"

Once more he shouldered his mother and hastened down the path to their little hut in the valley. Beneath their kitchen floor was a walled closet for food which was covered and hidden from view. There the son hid his mother, supplying her with everything she needed, continually watching and fearing she would be discovered. Time passed and he was beginning to feel safe when again the governor sent forth messengers bearing an unreasonable order, seemingly as a boast of his power. His demand was that his subjects should present him with a rope of ash.

The entire province of Shining trembled with fear. The order had to be obeyed but how could anyone make a rope of ash? One night, in great distress, the son whispered the news to his hidden mother. "Wait!" she said, "Let me think... Let me think". On the second day, she told him

what to do. "Make a rope of twisted straw," she said. "Then stretch it upon a row of flat stones and burn it on a windless night." He called the people together and did as she had said. When the blaze died down, there upon the stones, with every twist and fiber showing perfectly, lay a rope of ash.

The governor was pleased at the wit of the youth and praised greatly but he demanded to know where he had obtained his wisdom from. "Alas! Alas!" cried the farmer, "the truth must be told!" and with deep bows, he narrated his story. The governor listened and then meditated in silence. Finally, he lifted his head. "Shining needs more than the strength of youth," he said gravely. "Ah, how could I have forgotten the well-known saying, "With the crown of snow, there cometh wisdom!" That very hour, the cruel law was abolished as he realised that old age meant experience of life and not frailty.

adapted from MATSUO BASHO

Post-reading

Vocabulary Expansion



Activity 2

Put a tick on the option that brings out the meaning of the underlined word.

1. It was governed by a despotic leader.
 - a. A person who expects everyone to obey all his orders.
 - b. A person who loves his people.
2. He had a great dislike for anything suggestive of failing health and strength.
 - a. giving an idea of
 - b. typical
3. This prompted him to make a cruel law for the province.
 - a. encouraged to do something
 - b. made a rule
4. Those were barbarous days.
 - a. uncivilized
 - b. crude
5. The custom of abandoning old people to die was not uncommon.
 - a. to leave or desert
 - b. to discontinue
6. The narrow road was crossed and re-crossed by many paths made by the hunters and the woodcutters.
 - a. small width
 - b. big

7. She stretched forth her hand and snapped the twigs from bushes.
 - a. broke
 - b. pulled
8. His demand was that his subjects should present him with a rope of ash.
 - a. people
 - b. studies
9. That very hour the cruel law was abolished.
 - a. came to an end
 - b. destroyed
10. He realised that old age meant experience of life and not frailty.
 - a. physical weakness
 - b. strength

Learning to Read and Comprehend



Activity 3

Rearrange the sentences given below in the correct sequence. Write the numbers in the given brackets. The first one is done for you.

1. The son decided to take his mother back home. []
2. A farmer decided to leave his old mother on the top of a mountain. []
3. The governor realized his mistake and abolished the law. []
4. Once in Shining, a cruel ruler made a law that all the old people must be put to death. [1]
5. Using the idea of his old and experienced mother, the farmer made a rope of ash. []
6. When the farmer turned to go back home, the mother advised him to return home with the help of twigs. []
7. Filled with fear, he hid his mother in his home. []
8. The mother dropped the small twigs as markers on the way to help her son return home safely. []



Activity 4

Answer the following questions in one or two sentences.

1. What was the cruel announcement made by the despotic leader?

2. Why was the farmer sorrowful?

3. What things did the farmer carry to the top of the mountain?

4. What made the mother anxious as they climbed up the mountain?

5. What did the mother drop along the way?

6. What was the advice given by the farmer's mother for the safe return of her son?

7. Where did the farmer hide his mother?

8. When did the Governor realize his mistake?



Activity 5

Identify the underlined character(s).

1. He gave orders for the aged to be put to death.
2. He considered the order to be the kindest mode of death.
3. She quietly dropped some twigs on the way.
4. Together we will follow the path, together we will die.
5. He listened and meditated in silence.

Learning Language

The Determiners

To 'determine' means **to mark, to fix or to limit**. Therefore, a determiner is a word which limits or fixes the meaning of a noun. It is also called a **Noun- marker**.

Examples:

1. He helped **his** friend.
2. **My** friend gave me a pen.

In sentence 1, 'his' is a **determiner**. It tells us that 'he' helped only 'his' friend and no one else. In sentence 2, the word 'my' is a determiner.



Note : A determiner limits or fixes only the noun and not any other part of speech. There may be an adjective or an adverb before a noun, that is, between the determiner and the noun, but still the determiner is concerned with the noun only. For example:

Reema is a good girl.

In this sentence 'a' refers to the noun 'girl' and the adjective 'good' makes no difference to the function of 'a'.

Kinds of Determiners

There are five types of determiners:

1. Articles - a, an, the
2. Possessives - my, our, your, his, her, their, its
3. Numerals - one, two, three, four, first, second, etc.
4. Quantitative - all, any, little, a little, much, some, etc.
5. Demonstratives - this, that, these, those

Articles

There are two types of articles:

1. Indefinite articles - 'a', 'an'
2. Definite article - 'the'

Indefinite articles : 'A' and 'an' are indefinite articles. They are used before a countable common noun in singular number. They are called indefinite articles because they are used with indefinite names.

Examples : a boy, a pencil, an apple, etc.

Use of 'a' and 'an'

1. 'An' is generally used with countable common nouns in singular numbers before words beginning with a vowel sound.
For example: **an** apple, **an** egg, **an** MLA, **an** umbrella, **an** incident
2. If a word begins with a silent h, 'an' is used before it.
For example: **an** hour, **an** honest man
3. When a word begins with a vowel letter 'u' sounding like 'you', 'a' is used before 'it' instead of 'an'
For example: **a** university, **a** union
4. If a word begins with a vowel letter 'e' sounding like 'you', 'a' is used instead of 'an'.
For example: **a** European
5. If a vowel gives the sound of 'w', 'a' is used.
For example: **a** one-eyed man, **a** one-rupee coin



6. 'A' and 'an' are used in expressions denoting price, speed, ratio etc.

For example:

thirty miles **an** hour

twenty rupees **a** day

two of **a** trade

7. 'A' is used in some numerical expressions.

For example:

a great deal, **a** lot of, **a** dozen, **a** hundred

8. 'A' is used with 'few' and 'little'.

For example:

I borrowed **a** few books from him.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Definite Article:

'The' is called the definite article because it points out to a definite person or a thing.

1. I met **a boy**.
2. **The boy** told me **a story**.
3. **The story** was very interesting.

In the first sentence '**a boy**' means any boy and not a particular person.

In the second sentence, '**the boy**' refers to a particular person. Similarly, in the second sentence '**a story**' means any story. But in the third sentence '**the story**' means a particular story.

Use of 'the'

'The' is used to denote a particular person, place or thing. For example:

1. He is **the boy** who won **the prize**.
2. She has gone to **the bus stop**.

'The' is used when a person, place or thing has already been mentioned.

For example:

I bought a bicycle. **The bicycle** cost me ₹ 5000.

'The' is used to denote the whole class or community. For example:

The horse runs fast.

Special use of 'the'

1. Before the names of rivers, mountain ranges, oceans, groups of islands, bays, descriptive names of states and countries:

the Ganges

the Ravi



- the Shivaliks
the Indian Ocean
the Andaman and Nicobar Islands
the Bay of Bengal
the USA
2. **Before the names of newspapers, magazines, companies, corporations, organizations:**
The Tribune
The Hindustan Times
The Life Insurance
The National Book Trust
The Punjab Roadways
3. **Before the names of sacred books:**
the Ramayana
the Guru Granth Sahib
the Quran
the Vedas
the Bible
4. **Before musical instruments:**
the sitar
the veena
5. **Before the names of unique things:**
the sun
the moon
the stars
6. **Before adjectives in superlative degree:**
He is the best doctor of the college.
Mumbai is the biggest city in India.
7. **Before adjectives used as nouns:**
the sick
the poor
8. **As part of the phrase made of the comparative degrees:**
The higher we go, the colder it gets.
9. **When a family name is used to refer to the whole family:**
The Malhotras are a happy family.



The position of the Article

Generally the article is placed before the noun it refers to. But when an adjective or an adverb appears before a noun, the article comes before the adjective or the adverb. For example:

She is **a** teacher. (before a noun)

She is **a** good teacher. (before an adjective)

She is **a** very good player. (before an adverb)

But when the adjective is preceded by 'as,' 'so', 'too' and 'how', the article is used between the noun and the adjective. For example:

so beautiful **a** house

too hot **a** day

When the noun is preceded by 'such', 'both' and 'all', the article is placed after them. For example:

I have not seen such **a** fool.

Both **the** brothers were present.

All **the** boys had left.



Possessives

These determiners are possessive forms of personal pronouns.

They can be used both before singular and plural nouns. For example :

1. I do not lend **my** books to anyone.
2. We love **our** teacher.
3. One should do **one's** duty.
4. **My** mother is a doctor.



Numerals

Numerals are words that relate to numbers. There are three types of numerals:

Definite Numerals : They refer to a definite or exact number. The definite numerals are further divided into two kinds :

- a. **Cardinals** : one, two, three, five, etc.

These words can be used before nouns which are countable:

1. Please bring one pen for me.
2. He gave him ten coins.

- b. **Ordinals** : first, second, third, etc.

These words are used to indicate order:

1. **The first** book was very boring.
2. He was **the last** man to come.

Indefinite Numerals : They refer to vague or indefinite number such as 'many', 'few', 'a few', 'the few', 'several', 'all', etc.

1. I have many things to do.
2. Several people witnessed the accident.
3. He has few friends in the city. (almost none)
4. He does have a few friends in the city. (a small number)
5. The few friends he has are loyal to him. (whatever small number)

Distributive Numerals : These words refer to each of a group, such as 'each', 'every', 'either', 'neither', etc.

1. Each of us must do so.
2. Each of the boys must do his duty.
3. Either Gurpreet or Harpreet has won the prize.

Quantitatives

Words like 'some', 'any', 'little', 'much', etc. are determiners of quantity.

- a. Some and Any:** 'Some' has positive implications and 'any' has negative implications. Questions with negative implications take 'any'. While questions with positive implications take 'some'.

Examples:

1. I want to have some milk. Is there any milk in the kitchen?
2. I spent some holidays with my uncle.
3. There is hardly any milk.
4. Did you hear any noise?
5. Do you want books? We have some very good books.
6. I don't have any money with me.
7. I have hardly any money.
8. There was hardly any boy in the school.
9. I can lend you some money.

- b. Much :** 'Much' is used to denote quantity.

He has **much** money.

Don't think about it too **much**.

- c. Little, a little, the little :** 'Little' has a negative implication. It means 'hardly any'. 'A little' means 'some'. 'The little' means whatever little exists, but the whole of it. I want to have some water. But there is **little** water in the pitcher.

However, there is **a little** in the bucket.

I have drunk **the little** water the jug had.

Demonstratives

'This', 'that', 'these' and 'those' are called **Demonstrative determiners**. They point out the object denoted by the nouns that follow them. 'This' and 'that' are singular; 'these' and 'those' are plural. They show which person, place or thing is being talked about. For example:

1. **This** book is mine and **that** is yours.
2. **These** men are hardworking.
3. **Those** girls sing very well.



Activity 6

Fill in the blanks with suitable determiners.

1. I went to _____ window which commanded a large green garden.
2. I have _____ work to do.
3. Look out of the window for _____ minute.
4. _____ shirt is costly but _____ shirt is cheap.
5. _____ books she had were all lost.
6. _____ pen costs two rupees.
7. But I had _____ idea of all this.
8. He didn't make _____ mistakes in the essay.
9. I borrowed _____ books from him.
10. It educates both _____ blind and the helpers.
11. We should look into _____ depth of the problem.
12. It was _____ daring idea.
13. _____ boys attended the class.
14. This is _____ good home for him.
15. _____ teachers were asked to be present on Sunday.
16. _____ sum cannot be solved by _____ silly boys.
17. Besides them stood Pasteur, holding a narrow tube in _____ hand.
18. They took samples from _____ brain of a dog that had died.
19. _____ little knowledge is _____ dangerous thing.
20. He takes _____ interest in me.



Activity 7

Rewrite the following sentences after correcting them by adding/deleting a word wherever necessary in each sentence:

1. Only few men are honest.

2. The man is mortal.

3. He acted like man.

4. Beas flows in Punjab.

5. You are in wrong but he is in right.

6. He is by far ablest boy.

7. Nobody likes a person with bad temper.

8. The iron is useful metal.

9. Not word was said.

10. He has too high a opinion of you.

11. Learn this poem by the heart.

12. Never tell lie.

Learning to Listen

Dictation



Activity 8

Listen to your teacher carefully. She/he will tell you a story. Write the story in the given space as you hear it. Listen carefully to the pauses and tone and use appropriate punctuation marks. (Refer to Appendix I at page no. 165.)

Learning to Speak

Role Play

Making Telephone Calls in Emergency

There are special emergency numbers that you can dial in an emergency. For example, to call the police you need to dial 100 from your phone. Other emergency calls could be made to the ambulance service, fire station, trauma centres, etc. When making such calls, we must give quick and adequate information. Our address or location and our contact details are most important. We must also be able to tell them the reason for our call i.e. what kind of emergency we are dealing with. Look at the following conversation for proper understanding :



Police station : Hello, this is Mullanpur Police Station.

You : Hello, there is a hit and run case. A boy is lying injured on the road.

Police station : Please give us your location details.

You : I am standing near the main office of Ormaxe Township. I will send you my mobile location.

Police station : That will be very helpful!

You : Can you also call an ambulance please? He needs immediate medical attention.



Activity 9

Create a dialogue between yourself and the Fire station informing them about the fire near your house. Once you have written the dialogue in your notebooks, practise it with your partner. You must take turn to play both roles.

Learning to Write

Story Writing



Activity 10

Write a short story. You may use some of the following words and phrases.

- felt scared
- heard the sound in the cupboard
- thought it must be a thief

- might be a killer
- lay still
- could hardly breathe
- felt someone touched my foot
- shouted with fear
- parents came and switched on light
- saw a rat

Begin your story with:

Suddenly, I woke up. It was very dark. I felt there was someone in my room. I tried to

Learning to Use the Language (Groupwork)



Activity 11

Suppose your classroom has been attacked by a swarm of bees. It is time to go back home. Get into groups of five and think of how you will take your bags from the classroom full of bees. You will get 5 minutes to discuss.

When you have finished discussing, your chosen group leader will present your ideas in front of the class. The teacher will observe and discuss good, practical and impractical points.

