

The Beautiful Spots of Kulu Valley

A. Lead-in :

- Do you like to visit different places ? With a partner, discuss five things that you notice when you go to a new place. Tell your points to the class.
- Discuss with your partner.

Now read the first paragraph and match your points with the description.

B. The Text :

Summer, it seems, is coming to the Kulu Valley a little early this year. I'm sitting on the roof wearing a T-shirt, under a perfect and cloudless blue sky, the temperature a pleasant 20 degree centigrade. Although the sharp sun makes it feel warmer, technically, it is still winter. From here, I can see the snow still lying in clumps at the foot of the Deodar in the forest opposite. As this is the windy season, (everything has a season in Manali), there are gusts of wind with a nip to them blowing in from the 'cold' side. The 'cold' side is the ridge of rock behind Old Manali that marks the direction of Dharamsala, and from where the cold weather always comes, or so local wisdom has it. Winter habits are hard, and I can smell the smoke from the next-door chimney. Their room is likely to be warmer than ours as it is made in the local style of wood, stone and plaster that is cool in summer and warm in winter. The concrete roof I am sitting on is icy chilly that takes the burning of half a forest to warm through.

If this were the U.K., the weather would be joking. We'd all throw off the winter woollies for a week and persuade ourselves it was going to be a great summer, and then - bang - six solid weeks of rain and cold before a lousy, wet English summer. But if nothing else in India is predictable, the weather can usually be relied on not to change its mind once it is made up. It will probably get warmer in Manali day by day with only the odd day of rain to keep us guessing.

Like the weather, the view is close to perfect from up here on this roof - once you look past the neighbour's satellite dish and water tank 360 degrees of snow peaks, pine forests, orchards with their still bare trees and the villages and lone houses clinging to the hillside. In front of me, I can see the waterfall behind Vashist, spouting from the barren rock face that towers over the road to Rohtang pass. To my right, on the bank of the river. I can see the triangle of forest planted by my friend and chess opponent, Tej Ram, when he worked for the forestry department.

Some way to the left of the forest stands a small Tibetan gumpa. Its yellow roof stands in a sharp contrast to the surrounding expanse of soft browns and greens. And way behind and may be 300 metres above the gumpa stands a small house, set well apart from Vashist village. The light from the house stands out at night because its sharp point is so much higher than the diffuse glow of the village. It is the kind of place that makes you think: What is it like to have such a grueling walk every time you want to go to the shop? Does the owner resent his father leaving him this piece of land, while his brother may get a piece next to the road, and perhaps makes good money running a hotel for Indian tourists? Do you develop a better memory so you don't have to get home from the shops and think "Oh, no, I forgot the fags"??

The snow has disappeared so fast this year, and the lower slopes of the mountains toward Rohtang are already stripped of most of their snow. Even the higher rock faces are showing bald patches much earlier than I remember seeing before. Global warming is apparently killing the Himalayan glaciers. Is it also melting the snow too quickly? There will be problems for the farmers of India's plains if these bald patches mean they are deprived of precious pre-monsoon water.

There are other signs of summer coming up. Mustard flowers are already beginning to show the tips of their yellow flowers, and the first group of western tourists is starting to appear - looking shocked at the cold after the

warmth of Goa's beaches. For some it will be the tail end of the trip, a quick glance at the mountains before heading home.

There is always something special about arriving in the Kulu Valley early, before the madness of the party-hell summer season hits and the place begins to look like a theme park. The place feels like it has just been freshly unwrapped, ready for a new summer. The locals have recharged their batteries, forgotten how sick they were of the crowds by September last year. For most, winter will have used up their spare cash and they will be looking forward to pick up a fresh source of living.

Arriving this early, you can imagine a little of what Manali must have been twenty years ago, when there were no guest houses and Manu Cafe was the only restaurant. There were no convenient village shops selling everything from bottled water to chocolates... Entertainment for travellers came in the form of a book or a guitar.

C. Notes and Glossary :

lying in small piles : (here) the peak of a mountain

clump : (here) a small group of plants standing together.

UK : United Kingdom (Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England)

predictable : to say in advance that something will happen, to forecast

spouting : water coming out with great force

global warming : the increase in temperature of the earth's atmosphere caused with certain gases, especially, carbon dioxide

glacier : a huge mass of ice which moves very slowly down a mountain valley.

unwrapped : uncovered.

D. Points for discussion.

- What kind of view has been described in the first paragraph ?
- Which season is it in Manali ?
- What are the early signs of summer approaching the valley ?

- The author says : "But technically, it is still winter". What does he mean ?
- Which of the following do you think the author will talk about in the next two paragraphs ?
 - cold weather
 - difficulties people face during winter
 - beauty of the valley
 - all of the above

E. Let's talk :

Read paragraphs 2 and 3. Match your prediction with your reading.

- Discuss the natural beauty of the valley with two partners. Report your discussion to the class as a team.
- How is the English weather different from the Indian weather ?
- Are there any problems living at a higher level up the hills ? Discuss with a partner.
- What general impression about the summer in the valley do you get from the unit ?
- Find out the effect of global warming on the glacier.
- Why would the farmers far away be affected by global warming ?

F. Let's understand the text better :

1. In the first paragraph, there are descriptions that relate to sight, smell and touch. Can you find those ? Write your response briefly.
2. What does the author mean when he says, "Winter habits die hard". (Clue: What do people do in winter to beat the cold ?)
3. The author has made a comparison between the local materials used to build some houses and the concrete houses. Which ones does he say are better ? Why ?
4. Make a list of the natural beauties that the author points out in paragraph 3.

5. How does the author remember his chess partner ?
6. Would you think living at a higher place in the mountains a disadvantage/ advantage ? Why ? (paragraph 3)
7. Why does the author say that it is better to come to the Kullu valley earlier than the tourists ?
8. What is your opinion of the progress' that has come to Manali ?
9. Do you think tourism and ecology can go together ?

G. Let's learn some new words :

A part of knowing a word is to know how it collocates with other words.

What is collocation ?

Collocation is an arrangement of words especially those that commonly occur together. Examples : *rainy day, bosom friend, hot sun, bread and butter*

In the text, many collocations have been used : *English summer, cloudless sky*, and so on.

Find out five more collocations from the text.

1. Which word collocates with all the words given ? (one word per row)
 - fried, poached, fresh, scrambled, boiled _____
 - summer, warm, winter, dry, wet _____
 - huge, crowded, packed, outdoor, indoor, sports _____
2. Which verb does not go with 'answer' ?

Manali has changed in any number of ways in twenty years, many of them doubtless not for the better, but looking out from this roof, all of the concrete and tin that is 'progress' is a tiny and insignificant patch on the 360 degree beauty that is the Valley of the Gods.

- Describe the signs of summer (paragraph 5) in Kulu.

- What is the response of the locals towards the tourists ?
- How was Manali twenty years ago ? What are the changes in Manali in twenty years ?

H. Let's learn language

1. Yes-No questions

'Yes-No' questions are questions that expect either a 'yes' or a 'no' as a reply. Here are a few examples of yes-no questions from the text and the answers:

- Does global warming affect the glaciers? Yes, it does.
- Is Goa hotter than Kulu? Yes, it is.
- Did Tej Ram own a shop? No, he didn't.

As you can see from these examples, a yes-no question starts with an auxiliary verb.

To form a yes-no question from a statement, first count the number of verbs.

Kasturi is a doctor.

One verb: is (be)

Suresh drives a sports car.

One verb: drives

Rita is eating her dinner.

Two verbs: is eating

My friends have rented an apartment.

Two verbs: have rented

Amrit has been living there since 2006.

Three verbs: has been living

- If there is one verb in the statement and the verb is a form of be, simply switch the positions of the subject and verb. The rest of the sentence remains the same.

Statement

Kasturi is a doctor.

There are enough mangoes in the basket.

Question

Is Kasturi a doctor?

Are there enough mangoes in the basket ?

- If there are two or three verbs, simply switch the positions of the subject and the first verb.

Rita is eating her dinner.

Is Rita eating her dinner?

My friends have rented an apartment.

Have my friends rented an apartment?

Amrit has been living there since 2006.

Has Amrit been living there since 2006?

- If there is one verb, and the verb is not a form of *be*, add *Do* to the beginning of the sentence.

The Jenas live in that house.

Do the Jenas live in that house?

- If the main verb "carries" a third person singular *s*, move the *s* to *Do*, making it *Does*.

Suresh drives a sports car.

Do Suresh drives a sports car?
(not correct !)

Does Suresh drive a sports car?
(good question!)

- If the main verb "carries" past tense, move the *past tense* to *Do*, making it *Did*.

Jinny played basketball last night.

Did Jinny played basketball last night? (not correct)

Did Jinny play basketball last night? (right!)

I. Play time with Yes-No questions

Sit with a partner, and play some guessing games. Ask your partner to think of a famous person. She should not tell you the name of that person. You can ask her/ him a maximum of six questions to which your partner can give only "Yes" or "No" answers. Your questions can be: Is it a woman? Is she an Odia? etc. If you guess the name of the person, you win. Then it'll be your partners turn to guess.

You can play this game using animal names / an activity / a game (e.g. Are there eleven players?)

J. Let's write :

Read the text once more. Match the text with the map. Now, sit in a group of four and discuss a class trip to Manali. Use the following points for your discussion.

- How many days
- When
- What to carry
- How: by train, bus
- Where to stay
- What to visit/other activities
- How much money per person
- Any other related point

Write down your plan for a trip in a paragraph (250 words). Read out your plan to the class.

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