2.2 The Boy Who Broke The Bank

Warming up!

Chit-Chat

- *'A lie can run round the world before truth has got its boots on.'*
  The above quotation expresses how fast rumours spread.
- Talk with your group about some recent rumour, when people believed at first and suffered for it, later.
- Also discuss, how one can decide whether some news is a fact or fake.
- Who, do you think, are responsible for spreading false news?
- Do you believe in all the news that you come across?
- Give one example of a rumour which seemed to be fact in the beginning, later it was proved false.

2. Read the following statements. Describe whether they are facts or rumours. Justify your decision.

Statements	Fact	Rumour	Explanation
1. Cow gives birth to a calf.			
2. In 2025 the sun will swallow the earth.			
3. You receive a message that you have won rupees five crores in a lottery.			
4. Bees beat their wings 270 times in a second.			
5. Many ships and aeroplanes have disappeared in Bermuda Triangle.			
6. Driverless cars are no more a dream.			
7. Sophia is world's first robot citizen.			
8. Ghosts dwell in banyan trees.			
9. Do not step out on a new moon day			
10. Aliens will conquer the earth.			

The Boy Who Broke The Bank

Ruskin Bond (1934) is an Indian author of British descent. He lives with his adopted family in Landour, in Mussoorie, India, The Indian Council for child Education has recognised his role in the growth of children's literature in India. He got the Sahitya Academi Award in 1992 for 'Our trees still grow in Dehra!' He was awarded Padmashri and Padma Bhushan respectively in 1999, 2014.

- **grumbled :** showed ones critical attitude

✦ Name the characters of the story.

✦ Which action of Nathu shows his annoyance?

✦ How do you show your annoyance?

Nathu **grumbled** to himself as he swept the steps of the Pipalnagar Bank, owned by Seth Govind Ram. He used the small broom hurriedly and carelessly, and the dust, after rising in a cloud above his head settled down again on the steps. As Nathu was banging his pan against a dustbin, Sitaram, the washerman's son, passed by.

Sitaram was on his delivery round. He had a bundle of freshly pressed clothes balanced on his head.

'Don't raise such dust!' he called out to Nathu. 'Are you annoyed because they are still refusing to pay you an extra two rupees a month?'

'I don't wish to talk about it,' complained the sweeper-boy. 'I haven't even received my regular

pay. And this is the twentieth of the month. Who would think a bank would hold up a poor man's salary? As soon as I get my money, I'm off! Not another week I work in this place.' And Nathu banged the pan against the dustbin several times, just to **emphasize** his point and giving himself confidence.

'Well, I wish you luck,' said Sitaram. 'I'll keep a lookout for any jobs that might suit you.' And he **plodded** barefoot along the road, the big bundle of clothes hiding most of his head and shoulders.

At the fourth home he visited, Sitaram heard the lady of the house mention that she was in need of a sweeper. Tying his bundle together, he said; 'I know of a sweeper boy who's looking for work. He can start from next month. He's with the bank just now but they aren't giving him his pay, and he wants to leave.'

'Is that so?' said Mrs. Srivastava. 'Well, tell him to come and see me tomorrow.'

And Sitaram, glad that he had been of service to both a customer and his friend, **hoisted** his bag on his shoulders and went his way.

Mrs. Srivastava had to do some shopping. She gave instructions to the *ayah* about looking after the baby, and told the cook not to be late with the mid-day meal. Then she set out for the Pipalnagar market place, to make her **customary** tour of the cloth shops.

A large shady tamarind tree grew at one end of the bazaar, and it was here that Mrs. Srivastava found her friend Mrs. Bhushan sheltering from the heat. Mrs. Bhushan was fanning herself with a large handkerchief. She complained of the summer, which she affirmed, was definitely the hottest in the history of Pipalnagar. She then showed Mrs. Srivastava a sample of the cloth she was going to buy, and for five minutes they discussed its shade, texture and design. Having exhausted this topic, Mrs. Srivastava said, 'Do you know, my dear, that Seth Govind Ram's bank can't even pay its employees? Only this morning I heard a complaint from their sweeper, who hasn't received his wages for over a month!'

- **emphasize** : draw attention to
- **plodded** : walked heavily
- ✦ To whom did Sitaram talk about Nathu?
- **hoisted** : raised to a higher position
- **customary** : usual, habitual
- ✦ Why was Mrs. Bhushan uncomfortable?

'Shocking!' remarked Mrs. Bhushan. 'If they can't pay the sweeper they must be in a bad way. None of the others could be getting paid either.'

She left Mrs. Srivastava at the tamarind tree and went in search of her husband, who was sitting in front of Kamal Kishore's photography shop, talking with the owner.

'So there you are!' cried Mrs. Bhushan. 'I've been looking for you for almost an hour. Where did you disappear?'

'Nowhere,' replied Mr. Bhushan. 'Had you remained **stationary** in one shop, I might have found you. But you go from one shop to another, like a bee in a flower garden.'

'Don't start grumbling. The heat is trying enough. I don't know what's happening to Pipalnagar. Even the bank's about to go **bankrupt**.'

'What's that?' said Kamal Kishore, sitting up suddenly. 'Which bank?'

'Why the Pipalnagar bank of course. I hear they have stopped paying employees. Don't tell me you have an account there, Mr. Kishore?'

'No, but my neighbour has!' he exclaimed; and he called out over the low partition to the keeper of the barber shop next door. 'Deep Chand, have you heard the latest? The Pipalnagar Bank is about to collapse. You'd better get your money out as soon as you can!'

- **stationary :** stable, not moving

- **bankrupt :** without enough money to pay what you owe financially ruined.

✦ Which shop was just next to the photography shop?

Deep Chand who was cutting the hair of an elderly gentleman, was so startled that his hand shook and he **nicked** his customer's right ear. The customer yelped with pain and distress: pain, because of the cut and distress because of the awful news he had just heard. With one side of his neck still unshaven, he sped across the road to the general merchant's store where there was a telephone. He dialled Seth Govind Ram's number. The Seth was not at home. Where was he, then? The Seth was holidaying in Kashmir. Oh, was that so? The elderly gentleman did not believe it. He hurried back to the barber's shop and told Deep Chand: 'The bird has flown! Seth Govind Ram has left town. Definitely, it means a collapse.' And then he dashed out of the shop, making a **beeline** for his office and chequebook.

The news spread through the bazaar with the rapidity of forest fire. From the general merchant's it travelled to the shop, circulated amongst the customers, and then spread with them in various directions, to the betel-seller, the tailor, the free vendor, the jeweller, the beggar sitting on the pavement.

Old Ganpat the beggar, had a **crooked** leg. He had been **squatting** on the pavement for years, calling for alms. In the evening someone would come with a **barrow** and take him away. He had never been known to walk. But now, on learning that the bank was about to collapse, Ganpat astonished everyone, leaping to his feet and actually running at top speed in the direction of the bank. It soon became known that he had a thousand rupees in savings!

Men stood in groups at street corners discussing the situation. Pipalnagar seldom had a crisis, seldom or never had floods, earthquakes or **drought**; and the **imminent** crash of the Pipalnagar Bank set everyone talking and **speculating** and rushing about in a **frenzy**. Some **boasted** of their **farsightedness**, congratulating themselves on having already taken out their money, or on never having put any in; others speculated on the reasons for the crash, putting

- **nicked** : cut slightly

✦ Who did Deep Chand call a bird?

✦ Who was Mr. Shrivastava talking to?

- **beeline** : the direct route

Guess the meaning of :

- awful
- seldom
- rapidity of forest fire

- **crooked** : not straight
- **squatting** : occupying
- **barrow** : a cart
- **drought** : shortage of rainfall
- **imminent** : standing above others in quality or position
- **speculating** : chewing over
- **frenzy** : fury
- **boast** : show off
- **farsightedness** : longsighted

✦ Who surprised everyone and how?

- **indulged in :** took part in something

✦ What were the four rumours about Seth Govind Ram?

- **dilemma :** a difficult situation, a situation which makes problems
- **persuade :** make someone to believe

- **aggravated :** annoyed
- **placate :** stop someone from feeling angry

- **disgust :** hatred
- **hooligans :** bully
- **smote :** made a heavy blow with a tool

it all down to excesses **indulged in** by Seth Govind Ram. The Seth had fled the State, said one. He had fled the country, said another. He was hiding in Pipalnagar, said a third. He had hanged himself from the tamarind tree, said a fourth, and had been found that morning by the sweeper-boy.

By noon the small bank had gone through all; its ready cash, and the harassed manager was in a **dilemma**. Emergency funds could only be obtained from another bank some thirty miles distant, and he wasn't sure he could **persuade** the crowd to wait until then. And there was no way of contacting Seth Govind Ram on his houseboat in Kashmir.

People were turned back from the counters and told to return the following day. They did not like the sound of that. And so they gathered outside, on the steps of the bank shouting 'Give us our money or we'll break in!' and 'Fetch the Seth, we know he's hiding in a safe deposit locker!' Mischief makers who didn't have a paisa in the bank, joined the crowd and **aggravated** their mood. The manager stood at the door and tried to **placate** them. He declared that the bank had plenty of money but no immediate means of collecting it; he urged them to go home and come back the next day.

'We want it now!' chanted some of the crowd. 'Now, now, now!'

And a brick hurtled through the air and crashed through the plate glass window of the Pipalnagar Bank.

Nathu arrived next morning to sweep the steps of the bank. He saw the refuse and the broken glass and the stones cluttering the steps. Raising his hands in a gesture of horror and **disgust** he cried: '**Hooligans**! Sons of donkeys! As though it isn't bad enough to be paid late, it seems my work has also to be increased!' He **smote** the steps with his broom scattering the refuse.

Good morning, Nathu,' said the washerman's boy, getting down from his bicycle. 'Are you ready to take up a new job from the first of next month?

You'll have to I suppose, now that the bank is going out of business.'

'How's that?' said Nathu. 'Haven't you heard? Well you'd better wait here until half the population of Pipalnagar arrives to claim their money.' And he waved cheerfully he did not have a bank account and sped away on his cycle.

Nathu went back to sweeping the steps, muttering to himself. When he had finished his work, he sat down on the highest step, to await the arrival of the manager. He was determined to get his pay.

'Who would have thought the bank would collapse!' he said to himself, and looked thoughtfully into the distance. 'I wonder how it could have happened …

- Who was the last to know about the Pipalnagar Bank going bankrupt?

Discuss and share.

- How are rumours spread? Are the rumours harmful? Why?/Why not?

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. Who am I? (Identify the character from the extract.)

(a) I am the washerman's son. Who am I? Sitaram

(b) I am the owner of the bank, who am I? .....

(c) I am the sweeper, who am I? .....

(d) I am the friend of Mrs. Srivastava, who am I? .....

(e) I am the hair dresser. Who am I?

(f) I have a crooked leg, who am I?

2. Make a list of customers of Pipalnagar Bank, from the extract.

....

....

3. Match the following and write the complete meaningful sentences.

	Group A		Group B
i.	Sitaram was looking out for any job...	(a)	holidaying in Kashmir.
ii.	According to Mrs.Bhushan...	(b)	to go home and come back the next day.
iii.	Govind Ram was...	(c)	that might suit Nathu.
iv.	The manager told the customers...	(d)	it was the hottest summer in the history of Pipalnagar.

4. Write who said to whom.

(a) "Don't raise such dust!"

(b) "Who would have thought the bank would collapse!"

(c) "Where did you disappear?"

(d) "The bird has flown!"

5. Why was the Manager of the Bank in a dilemma? Write down in 5 to 6 lines in your notebook.

6. Cross out the odd man.

(a) sweeper, hooligan, beggar, declare, locker

(b) hurriedly, carelessly, salary, definitely, suddenly

(c) imminent, latest, pavement, awful, shocking

(d) morning, scattering, raising, collecting, shouting

7. Find the describing words for the following from the text.

- ..... tour
- ..... shop
- ..... window
- ..... leg

8. Complete the following table.

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
.....	payment	.....	.....
×	.....	.....	suddenly
declare	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	cheerful	.....

9. Write in your own words a few sentences about each of the following :

(a) Nathu

(b) Mrs. Shrivastava

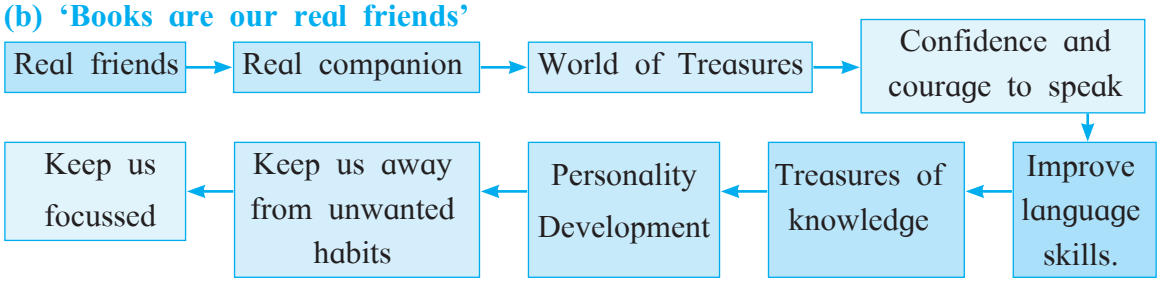
(c) Seth Govind Ram

(d) Sitaram

10. Expand the theme in a write-up of about 20 lines.

(a) 'Rumours are spread by fools and accepted by greater fools'.

(b) 'Books are our real friends'



11. Project : Collect the names of books written by Ruskin Bond.

Language Study

1. I know of a sweeper boy who's looking for work.

Observe the underlined part of the sentence. It tells us more about the sweeper boy. An adjective clause begins with words such as how, that, what, whatever, who, which, where, why etc.

Now, complete the sentences given below using your own adjective clauses.

- I know of a school boy ..... .
- I know the joke ..... .
- I know of a doctor ..... .
- I know of a place ..... .
- I know the reason ..... .

2. Rewrite the following sentences joining them with 'when', 'where', 'which', 'why'.

(a) Sitaram had a bundle of freshly pressed clothes. He balanced it on his head.

(b) A large shady tamarind tree grew at one end of the bazaar. Mrs. Srivastava found her friend Mrs. Bhushan there.

(c) The Pipalnagar Bank has stopped paying employees. It is about to collapse.

(d) He had finished his work. He sat down on the highest step.

Tense is the form of a verb which shows the time at which an action takes place – the Past (She **went**) the Present (She **goes**) and the Future (She **will go**)

Verb forms show both tense (past, present, future) and aspect (perfect, progressive). The progressive (continuous) aspect is formed by using 'be + v – ing' (They **are/were** go**ing**). The perfect aspect is formed by using 'have + v-ed/-en' (They have/had gone) .

The Present Tense

Simple Present	:	I **go** home. She **goes** home.
Present Progressive	:	I **am** going. They **are** going.
Present Perfect	:	He **has** gone. They **have** gone.
Present Perfect Progressive	:	He **has been** going. They **have been** going.

The Past Tense

Simple Past	:	She **went.** They **went.**

Past Progressive	:	**I was** going.
		We **were** going.
Past Perfect	:	We **had** gone.
		He **had** gone.
Past Perfect Progressive	:	I **had been** going.
		They **had been** going.

The Future Tense

Simple Future	:	I **will** go.
		You **will** go.
Future Progressive	:	We **will be** going.
		She **will be** going.
Future Perfect	:	He **will have** gone.
Future Perfect Progressive	:	I **will have been** going.
		They **will have been** going.

Subject verb agreement

The appropriate form of the verb is to be used according to the subject. In the simple present tense, -s/-es will be added to the verb, only when the subject is third person singular. Read the following.

I/me/you/they **want** a pen.

He/she **wants** a pen.

He/she **goes** home in time.

Similarly, the form of the auxiliary verb will have to be used according to the subject, in present progressive, past progressive, present perfect, etc. Read the following :

I **am** writing an essay.

We **are** writing an essay.

He/she **is** writing an essay.

I **have** written an essay.

He/she **has** written an essay.

I **was** writing an essay.

We **were** writing an essay.

AUGKWA