

16. 'Know' Formalities, Please.



Part I

The students of Class IV greeted their teacher, Mrs Desai, before they sat down. It was time for their English Lesson. “Shall we bring out our ‘Balbharati’ textbook, teacher?” asked Shruti.

“Not now,” said the teacher. “We are going to learn letter-writing today. Some special types of letters! Come here, Javed and Nisha. Please distribute these notebooks.”

“And while they give out the books,” continued Mrs Desai, “let me give you some good news.”

The students were all ears, now. Their teacher announced with a smile, “New arrivals in the library and plenty of them! Story books of every kind, informative books with lovely pictures, books of puzzles, jokes! All have been displayed in the library so you will know which ones to ask for the next time you are in the library.”

‘Oooh!’ ‘Lovely!’ ‘I can hardly wait!’ were some of the eager responses to this piece of news. All were excited except one.

“What’s the use?” complained Felix. “We have only one library period in a week, and hardly for half an hour too. Just when the story gets interesting, we have to leave the book and go back to class....”



Now, Varsha joined in to say, “For two weeks, I’ve been waiting to know what happened to the Pied Piper of Hamelin. There was a holiday, last Thursday, and we missed the library period.”



Mrs Desai realized that what her students said was perfectly true. She decided to request the Principal to allow a home issue facility for Class IV. After all, they were big enough to look after the books they took home.

‘Hey, wait!’ thought Mrs Desai. ‘There’s a better way to do it. Why not let the students themselves write a letter of request to the Principal?’ After all, that was what she had planned to teach that day – how to write polite, formal letters.

‘What an opportunity! A good subject for a formal letter. And of course, a real situation would make the learning more effective and interesting.’

When Mrs Desai suggested this to her class, they were very excited.

Without losing much time, Mrs Desai began to teach her class how to write a formal letter.

“The sender’s address and the date should be written in the upper right corner of the page,” she taught.

“The next step is to write the name or post of the receiver near the left margin. Then write his or her address below that.”

“And after that, you must write the subject of the letter in short, below the receiver’s address,” she further instructed.

“That’s something new,” remarked Sharon. “We do not mention a subject in our friendly letters, do we?”

“Of course not,” said Mrs Desai.

“What do we do next, teacher?” Shruti wanted to know.

“You address the receiver, writing ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Madam’. Remember, the rest of the letter also should be written in polite language. Write to the point,” Mrs Desai explained.

“And should we end it with, ‘Yours lovingly’?” asked Renu.

“Oh, no!” said teacher, “You can write that to your friends, or parents or even to me. But when you are writing as a student to the Principal, you may write, ‘Yours faithfully,’ or ‘sincerely’. Do not forget to thank the receiver appropriately before you close the letter. Come on, now, let’s draft this letter together.”

After quite a few errors, cancellations and changes, here’s the letter Class IV wrote to their Principal. It was written very neatly...



Pragati Vidyalaya
Pustak Marg
Vachanpur
06 July 2014

To,
The Principal
Pragati Vidyalaya
Pustak Marg
Vachanpur

Subject : Request for home issue facility.

Dear Madam,

We, the students of Class IV, have a request. Our English teacher, Mrs Desai, has informed us about many new books that have arrived in our school library. We are eager to read them.

However, it is not possible for us to finish reading a book during the Library period, which is only once a week.

May we have your kind permission, Madam, to take the books for home-reading? We promise that we shall take utmost care of the books and return them on time.

Yours faithfully,
All Students of Class IV

