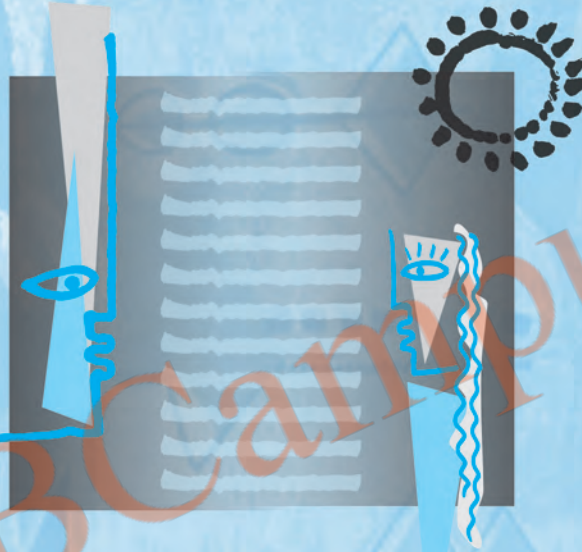


# First Flight

Textbook in English for Class X



1059



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

**First Edition**

February 2007 Magha 1928

**Reprinted**

November 2007 Kartika 1929  
 January 2009 Pausa 1930  
 December 2009 Agrahayana 1931  
 November 2010 Kartika 1932  
 January 2012 Magha 1933  
 December 2012 Agrahayana 1934  
 November 2013 Kartika 1935  
 November 2014 Agrahayana 1936  
 December 2015 Pausa 1937  
 February 2017 Phalguna 1938  
 November 2017 Kartika 1939  
 December 2018 Agrahayana 1940

**PD 500T BS**

© National Council of Educational  
 Research and Training, 2007

₹ 80.00

Printed on 80 GSM paper with  
 NCERT watermark

Published at the Publication Division  
 by the Secretary, National Council of  
 Educational Research and Training,  
 Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016  
 and printed at Laxmi Print India,  
 519/1/23, Sansar Compound, Dilshad  
 Garden Industrial Area, Shahdara,  
 Delhi -110 095

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# Foreword

THE National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centered system of education outlined in the National Policy of Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater





consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in languages, Professor Namwar Singh, and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor R. Amritavalli, for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, materials and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinements.

New Delhi  
20 November 2006

*Director*  
National Council of Educational  
Research and Training



# To the Teacher

*First Flight*, a textbook in English for Class X, is based on the new syllabus in English which was prepared as a follow-up to the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. The English curriculum lays emphasis on providing a variety of rich, comprehensible inputs to learners to enable their engagement in learning; and on recognising the multilinguality of everyday experience in India. This textbook aims at helping the learner to read for meaning in context, thus providing a bank of language to serve as a base for communication in English.

- This book presents you with texts in a variety of genres, including the diary, the formal address, the travelogue, and the play, on literary, cultural and sociological themes that touch upon aspects of life relevant to adolescents. Questions and ideas about the individual and society, the understanding and management of one's emotions, and of one's place in a larger time and space, are here presented both by such voices from contemporary history as Nelson Mandela and Anne Frank, and in fiction from India and abroad, chosen for their enduring value. There are units that present glimpses of our country, and depict our relationship with the natural world.
- The units in the book have been loosely structured in the following way. An introductory section, **Before You Read**, gives information or activates knowledge about the text to be read, and suggests some warm-up activities. Let children participate in these to the fullest extent; where necessary or possible, add some activities of your own.
- An innovation made in consultation with teachers is a while-reading activity, the **Oral Comprehension Check**, which aims at a quick, ongoing check that learners are indeed following the text up to that point, so that they can progress meaningfully to the parts of the text that





follow. Let learners briefly share their understanding by orally answering the questions in this section.

Reflection, expression of individual opinion and deeper understanding of the text can occur later, when the text has been read and understood in its totality, in the section **Thinking about the Text**. The questions in the latter section are designed to enable the learner to move from factual understanding to critical thinking.

- **Thinking about Language** provides exercises or tasks that follow naturally from the contexts suggested by a particular unit, for enrichment of vocabulary and other language skills. Exploit them well and also create your own activities. Exercises for the communicative skills of listening, speaking, and writing have been given in contexts that support group or pair activity. A variety of writing tasks have been aimed at.
- While dealing with poems, let children understand and enjoy the theme and the language by reading a poem with close attention, more than once, silently or along with the teacher or a partner. Where some information has been provided about the poet or the background to the poem, this should not stand in the way of the learner accessing the poem directly, and attempting to make sense of it.

How do we read poetry? Here is what one teacher says.

All poetry requires patience. Be patient with the text; read carefully for nuance and inference. Know what the words mean. Look up words that are unfamiliar — look up words that are familiar but you cannot specify. Pay attention to words or phrases that resonate with other things you know and try to identify the connection. Be patient and read slowly, and you will be amply rewarded.

- Each unit includes some guidelines for your assistance, under the head **In This Lesson**, organised under two subsections — **What We Have Done**, and **What You Can Do**. The first subsection summarises the theme of the unit, and/or its activities. The second suggests interesting possibilities for you to go beyond the text, using the text as a springboard for a variety of language activities appropriate to your particular group of learners. Suggested here, for example, are group activities for speaking or making a ticket collage, as well as dictation. As you follow these suggestions and take these activities forward along your own lines, you will be able to enrich your students' learning.

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# Acknowledgements

THE National Council of Educational Research and Training is grateful to Professor M.L. Tickoo, formerly of the CIEFL, Hyderabad and the Regional Language Centre, Singapore; Professor Jayasheelan formerly of the CIEFL, Hyderabad; and Professor Rajiv Krishnan of the CIEFL, Hyderabad, for their valuable suggestions and advice in the development of this book.

We thank Dr Shyamla Kumaradoss for developing the teacher's guidelines for each unit so as to maximise learning.

For permission to reproduce copyright material in this book, NCERT would like to thank the following: Sahitya Akademi for 'A Baker from Goa' by Lucio Rodrigues from *Modern Indian Literature: An Anthology*, (Volume Three — Plays and Prose); Media Transasia India Limited, New Delhi, for 'Coorg' and the accompanying photographs by Lokesh Abrol; Little Brown and Company, London, for the extract 'Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom' from *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*; National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, for 'Madam Rides the Bus' by Vallikannan and for 'Tea from Assam' from *Story of Tea* by Arup Kumar Dutta; R. K. Laxman for the illustrations in 'Madam Rides the Bus'; Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, for 'The Ball Poem' by John Berryman and for 'Fire and Ice' and 'Dust of Snow' by Robert Frost from the *Anthology of American Literature II : Realism to the Present* (Third Edition); Puffin Books, London, for 'From the Diary of Anne Frank', an extract from *The Diary of a Young Girl*; Longmans for the extract, 'Mijbil the Otter' from *Ring of Bright Water*; Random House, New York, for the poem 'The Panther' by Rainer Maria Rilke, edited and translated by Stephen Mitchell; Amitai Etzioni, George Washington University, for the text 'Good Grief'; Holt, Rinehard and Winston Inc., New York, for the text 'The Sermon at Benares' by Betty Renshaw.

Special thanks are also due to the Publication Department, NCERT, for their support. NCERT gratefully acknowledges the contributions made by Neena Chandra, *Copy Editor*; Mohammed Harun and Arvind Sharma, *DTP Operators*; Parash Ram, *Incharge*, Computer Resource Centre, NCERT; and Mathew John, *Proof Reader*.







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