5

0647CH05

Before you read

- *Do you know these words? If you don't, find out their meanings: bandage, crutch, cripple, honour, misfortune, system.*
- *Look at the pictures in this unit and guess in what way this school may be different from other schools.*

A Different Kind of School



1. I HAD heard a great deal about Miss Beam's school, but not till last week did the chance come to visit it.
2. When I arrived there was no one in sight but a girl of about twelve. Her eyes were covered with a bandage and she

in sight: to be seen

was being led carefully between the flower-beds by a little boy, who was about four years younger. She stopped, and it looked like she asked him who had come. He seemed to be describing me to her. Then they passed on.

3. Miss Beam was all that I had expected — middle-aged, full of authority, yet kindly and understanding. Her hair was beginning to turn grey, and she had the kind of plump figure that is likely to be comforting to a homesick child. I asked her some questions about her teaching methods, which I had heard were simple.

4. "No more than is needed to help them to learn how to do things — simple spelling, adding, subtracting, multiplying and writing. The rest is done by reading to them and by interesting talks, during which they have to sit still and keep their hands quiet. There are practically no other lessons."

5. "The real aim of this school is not so much to teach thought as to teach *thoughtfulness* — kindness to others, and being responsible citizens. Look out of the window a minute, will you?"

6. I went to the window which overlooked a large garden and a playground at the back. "What do you see?" Miss Beam asked.

kindly: friendly

plump: stout, pleasantly fat

responsible: aware of their duties

7. "I see some very beautiful grounds," I said, "and a lot of jolly children. It pains me, though, to see that they are not all so healthy and active-looking. When I came in, I saw one poor little girl being led about. She has some trouble with her eyes. Now I can see two more with the same difficulty. And there's a girl with a crutch watching the others at play. She seems to be a hopeless cripple."

8. Miss Beam laughed. "Oh, no!" she said. "She's not really lame. This is only her lame day. The others are not blind either. It is only their blind day."

I must have looked very surprised, for she laughed again.

9. "This is a very important part of our system. To make our children appreciate and understand misfortune, we make them share in misfortune too. Each term every child has one blind day, one lame day, one deaf day, one injured day and one dumb day. During the blind day their eyes are bandaged absolutely and they are on their honour not to peep. The bandage is put on overnight so they wake blind. This means that they need help with everything. Other children are given the duty of helping them and leading them about. They all learn so much this way — both the blind and the helpers.

at play: playing

hopeless: unfortunate; without hope

lame day: day on which she acts as if she was lame

misfortune: unfortunate condition; bad luck

their eyes are bandaged: they are blindfolded

are on their honour: have promised

10. "There is no misery about it," Miss Beam continued. "Everyone is very kind, and it is really something of a game. Before the day is over, though, even the most thoughtless child realises what misfortune is.

misery: difficulty; unpleasantness

thoughtless: careless

11. "The blind day is, of course, really the worst, but some of the children tell me that the dumb day is the most difficult. We cannot bandage the children's mouths, so they really have to exercise their will-power. Come into the garden and see for yourself how the children feel about it."

12. Miss Beam led me to one of the bandaged girls. "Here's a gentleman come to talk to you," said Miss Beam, and left us.

come to talk: who has come to talk

13. "Don't you ever peep?" I asked the girl.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "That would be cheating! But I had no idea it was so awful to be blind. You can't see a thing. You feel you are going to be hit by something every moment. It's such a relief just to sit down."

awful: bad

"Are your helpers kind to you?" I asked.

14. "Fairly. But they are not as careful as I shall be when it is my turn. Those that have been blind already are the best helpers. It's perfectly ghastly not to see. I wish you'd try."

"Shall I lead you anywhere?" I asked.

15. "Oh, yes", she said. "Let's go for a little walk. Only you must tell me about things. I shall be so glad when today is over. The other bad days can't be half as bad as this. Having a leg tied up and hopping about on a crutch is almost fun, I guess. Having an arm tied up is a bit more troublesome, because you can't eat without help, and things like that. I don't think I'll mind being deaf for a day—at least not much. But being blind is so frightening. My head aches all the time just from worrying that I'll get hurt. Where are we now?"

troublesome: difficult

16. "In the playground," I said. "We're walking towards the house. Miss Beam



is walking up and down the garden with a tall girl."



"What is the girl wearing?" my little friend asked.

"A blue cotton skirt and a pink blouse."

"I think it's Millie?" she said. "What colour is her hair?"

"Very light," I said.

"Yes, that's Millie. She's the Head Girl."

"There's an old man tying up roses," I said.

"Yes, that's Peter. He's the gardener. He's hundreds of years old!"

"And here comes a girl with curly red hair. She's on crutches."

"That's Anita," she said.



17. And so we walked on. Gradually I discovered that I was ten times more thoughtful than I ever thought I could be. I also realised that if I had to describe people and things to someone else, it made them more interesting to me. When I finally had to leave, I told Miss Beam that I was very sorry to go.

"Ah!" she replied, "then there is something in my system after all."

E.V. LUCAS
(*abridged and simplified*)

gradually: slowly

WORKING WITH THE TEXT

A. Put these sentences from the story in the right order and write them out in a paragraph. Don't refer to the text.

- I shall be so glad when today is over.
- Having a leg tied up and hopping about on a crutch is almost fun, I guess.
- I don't think I'll mind being deaf for a day — at least not much.
- But being blind is so frightening.
- Only you must tell me about things.
- Let's go for a little walk.
- The other bad days can't be half as bad as this.

B. Answer the following questions

1. Why do you think the writer visited Miss Beam's school? (1)

2. What was the 'game' that every child in the school had to play? (9)
3. "Each term every child has one blind day, one lame day..." Complete the line. Which day was the hardest? Why was it the hardest? (9, 11, 15)
4. What was the purpose of these special days? (5, 9)

WORKING WITH LANGUAGE

A. Match the words and phrases with their meanings in the box below.

	paragraph numbers
1. homesick	(3)
2. practically	(4)
3. it pains me	(7)
4. appreciate	(9)
5. thoughtless	(10)
6. exercise	(11)
7. relief	(13)
8. ghastly	(14)

almost it hurts me terrible test the strength of
understanding the difficulties wanting to be home
a welcome change not very caring

B. Re-word these lines from the story:

1. I had heard a great deal about Miss Beam's school.
2. Miss Beam was all that I had expected — middle-aged, full of authority.
3. I went to the window which overlooked a large garden.
4. "We cannot bandage the children's mouths, so they really have to exercise their will-power."

C. 1. Given below is a page from a dictionary. Look at it carefully and

(i) find a word which means the same as *ghastly*. Write down the word and its two meanings.

(ii) find a word meaning *a part of the school year*.

(iii) find a word that means *examination*.

term *noun*
1 a fixed length of time: *He was made captain of the football team for a* **term** *of one year.*
2 a part of the school year: *There are three* **terms** *in a school year.*
terms *plural noun* the things you are asking for: *If you agree to my* **terms**—*free meals and good wages—I will work for you.*
terrace *noun*
1 a level area cut out from the side of a hill
2 a flat area outside a house: *We sat on the* **terrace** *in the evening.*
3 a row of houses joined together
terraced *adjective*: a **terraced** *house*
terrible *adjective*
1 causing fear: *We saw a* **terrible** *storm.*
2 very bad: *Your writing is* **terrible.**
terribly *adverb*: *It is* **terribly** (= very) hot.
terrify *verb*
(*present participle* **terrifying**, *past* **terrified**) to fill with fear: *The animals were* **terrified** *by the storm.*
terror *noun* (*no plural*)
great fear: *a feeling of* **terror**
territory *noun*
(*plural* **territories**)
1 land ruled by one government: *This island is British* **territory**.
2 an area belonging to one person or animal: *Wild animals will not allow other animals to enter their* **territory**.
test[1] *verb*
1 to look at something to see if it is correct or will work properly: *Before he bought the car, he drove it to* **test** *it.*
2 to ask someone questions: *The teacher* **tested** *the children on their homework.*

test[2] *noun*
an examination: *I passed my driving* **test** *today.*
test tube *noun* small thin glass tube: We put *chemicals in* **test tubes** in our *chemistry class.*
text *noun*
1 the words used in a book
2 a few words from a book
textbook *noun*: A **textbook** *is a book we use to learn about something.*
than
(used when we compare things, in sentences like these): *My brother is older* **than** *me. Mary sings better* **than** *anyone else in the class.*
thank *verb*
to say we are grateful to someone: I **thanked** *her for the present she sent me.* **Thank you** *for the present you sent me.* **No, thank you**, *I don't want any more tea.*
thankful *adjective* very glad; grateful
thanks *plural noun* word used to show that we are grateful: **Thanks** *for helping me. It was* **thanks to** *John* (= because of him) *that we won the game.*
that
1 (*plural* **those**) the one over there; the one further away than this one: *This is my bowl*; **that** *bowl is yours.*
2 (*plural* **those**) (used to point out someone or something; used to mean the one known or mentioned already): *Did you bring* **that** *photograph? We played football and* **after that** (= next) *we went home.*
3 (used instead of **who, whom**)

2. Now make lists of
   (i) all the words on the page (plus any more that you can think of) that begin with *terr-*
   (ii) five words that may follow the last word on the page, *that*.
   (iii) write down your own meaning of the word *thank*. Then write down the meaning given in the dictionary.

D. A poem for you to read

All but Blind*

All but blind
In his chambered hole
Gropes for worms
The four-clawed Mole.

All but blind
In the evening sky
The hooded Bat
Twirls softly by.

All but blind
In the burning day
The Barn Owl blunders
On her way.

And blind as are
These three to me,
So, blind to Someone
I must be.

WALTER DE LA MARE

* as good as blind

SPEAKING AND WRITING

A. Make a short list of things you find difficult to do.

For example:

turning a somersault 

 threading a needle

Compare your list with the others' in the class. Can you explain why you find these things difficult to do?

B. Look at your hands carefully. Now, write down for each finger one action for which that finger is particularly important. For example, the second (or index) finger helps to hold the knife down firmly when cutting.

Know Your Country

1. Which states border Andhra Pradesh?
2. Which is India's largest island?

Answers on page 105

Where Do All the Teachers Go?

For a little child a teacher is special. It is difficult for a small child to think of his/her teacher as an ordinary person.

Where do all the teachers go
When it's four o'clock?
Do they live in houses
And do they wash their socks?

Do they wear pyjamas
And do they watch TV?
And do they pick their noses
The same as you and me?

Do they live with other people
Have they mums and dads?
And were they ever children
And were they ever bad?

Did they ever, never spell right
Did they ever make mistakes?
Were they punished in the corner
If they pinched the chocolate flakes?

Did they ever lose their hymn books
Did they ever leave their greens?
Did they scribble on the desk tops
Did they wear old dirty jeans?

I'll follow one back home today
I'll find out what they do
Then I'll put it in a poem
That they can read to you.

PETER DIXON

WORKING WITH THE POEM

1. Answer these questions.
   (i) Why does the poet want to know where the teachers go at four o'clock?
   (ii) What are the things normal people do that the poet talks about?
   (iii) What does he imagine about
      (a) where teachers live?
      (b) what they do at home?
      (c) the people with whom they live?
      (d) their activities when they were children in school?
   (iv) Why does the poet wonder if teachers also do things that other people do?
   (v) How does the poet plan to find out? What will he do once he finds out?
2. What do you think these phrases from the poem mean?
   (i) punished in the corner
   (ii) leave their greens