



The Parrot who wouldn't Talk



WARM UP

Look at these birds. Use the words to say what each bird can do.



- ★ can run for half an hour without stopping
- ★ can learn to copy human voices
- ★ can beat their wings very fast
- ★ can turn their heads all the way around

When I was growing up in Mussoorie, almost all our neighbours kept a pet parrot or parakeet. Sometimes, these birds would learn to talk. They would say things like, "Study, child, study," or "Don't be greedy! Don't be greedy!" These words and phrases were, of course, learned after some member of the household had repeated them many times in front of the bird.

But our parrot refused to talk.

He had been bought by Aunt Ruby from a birdcatcher who visited all the houses on our road. Grandmother and Grandfather did not want a caged bird as a pet, but Aunt Ruby insisted.

parakeet a small bird of the parrot family, usually with a long tail
insisted said firmly that she wanted to buy the parrot





So she bought the parrot and tried to teach him to talk. But the parrot did not like her at all. “Kiss, kiss,” Aunt Ruby would say, putting her face close to the bars of the cage. But the parrot would move back, his beady eyes getting smaller with anger.

One day, he lunged forward and pushed my aunt’s spectacles off her nose.

After that, Aunt Ruby did not like the parrot any more. She started making faces at him and calling out, “You’re useless. Can’t talk, can’t sing, can’t dance!”

Grandmother then put me in charge of feeding the parrot. He was quite happy to take green chillies, pieces of papaya and ripe tomatoes from my hands. I also gave him slices of mango—this gave me a chance to eat a few mangoes while feeding the parrot!

One afternoon, while everyone was in the dining room, I gave the parrot his lunch. By mistake, I left the cage door open. Seconds later, the bird flew away to sit on the mango tree.

At the same time, Grandfather came to the verandah, and said, “I see your aunt’s parrot has escaped.”

“I’m very sorry. I left the door open by mistake,” I said.

Aunt Ruby was upset. She wanted to buy another parrot. We promised to buy her a bowl of goldfish instead.

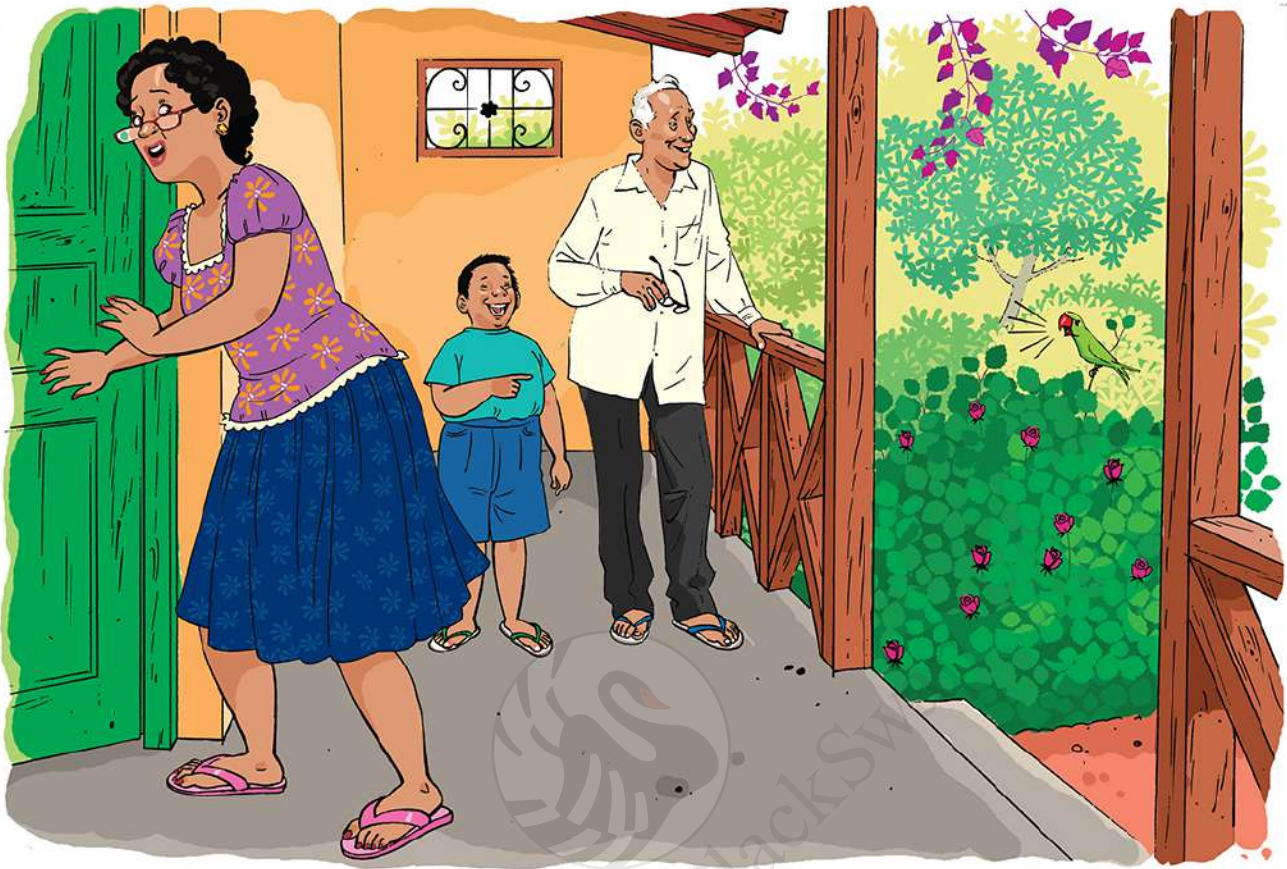
I thought that we would never see the parrot again. But maybe he missed his green chillies. A few days later, I found the bird sitting on the verandah railing and looking at me. Unselfishly, I gave him half my mango.

Just then, Aunt Ruby came outside and cried out, “Look, it’s my parrot! He must have missed me!”

beady (of eyes) small, round and bright; watching everything closely **lunged** moved forward suddenly, to catch or attack something **making faces at him** she was moving her mouth, nose, and eyes in strange ways to show that she did not like the parrot **railing** fence made of metal or wooden bars **unselfishly** in a way that shows that he cares about others and not just himself



Quickly, the parrot flew to the nearest rose bush. He looked angrily at my aunt and shrieked, “You’re useless. Can’t talk, can’t sing, can’t dance!”



Aunt Ruby turned ruby-red and ran inside. The parrot became a regular visitor to our garden. Whenever he saw Aunt Ruby, he would call out, “You’re useless. Can’t talk, can’t sing, can’t dance!”

The parrot had learned to talk after all.

Ruskin Bond

shrieked spoke in a loud, high voice **turned ruby-red** Aunt Ruby’s face turned red because she was feeling ashamed **after all** used when someone is able to do or say something after not being able to do or say it

Ruskin Bond (1934–) is one of India’s best-loved storytellers. He has spent most of his life in Dehradun and loves writing about the forests, hill stations and people of this region. Many of his stories are autobiographical. His most popular works are *The Room on the Roof* and *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. He now lives in Landour, Mussoorie.





COMPREHENSION

A. Answer these questions.

1. How do parrots and parakeets learn to talk?
2. Where did Aunt Ruby get the parrot from?
3. Why did Aunt Ruby stop liking the parrot?
4. How did Aunt Ruby treat the parrot?
5. How did the parrot escape?
6. What made Aunt Ruby turn 'ruby-red'?

B. Match A and B to form complete sentences.

A	B
1. Grandmother and Grandfather did not want to keep birds	a. that we would never see the parrot again.
2. The parrot knocked off the spectacles	b. when I fed it green chillies and ripe tomatoes.
3. The parrot was quite happy	c. when the parrot said the unkind words back to her.
4. I was sure	d. that were in a cage.
5. Aunt Ruby was upset	e. that were on Aunt Ruby's nose.

C. Think and answer.

1. Why do you think Grandmother and Grandfather did not want to buy the parrot?
2. What made the speaker think that they would never see the parrot again?
3. Do you think that the parrot liked the speaker? What makes you think so?



KNOW YOUR VALUES



In the text, the speaker honestly admitted his mistake when he left the cage door open and the parrot flew away.

Imagine that you and your friend worked hard on your history project. Your teacher thought it was only yours and praised you. You did not tell your teacher that both of you had worked together on the project.

Discuss with your partner.

★ How would your friend feel?

★ What will you do now?

It is important to be honest and tell the truth even if it sometimes hurts us.
It is the right thing—and the only thing—to do.



Read these sentences.

- ★ Our parrot refused to talk.
- ★ The parrot pushed **her** spectacles off **her** nose.
- ★ **Your** aunt's parrot has escaped.
- ★ I gave it half **my** mango.

The words in colour are **possessive adjectives**. We use these words before nouns to show that something belongs to someone.

- ★ Ritesh is drawing with **his** pencil.
- ★ The children are waving **their** flags.



Possessive adjectives do not change with singular or plural words.

- ★ her parrot ✓
- ★ her parrots ✓

A. Underline the possessive adjectives in these sentences.

1. Modern Day School is our school.
2. Asha and Harry are my cousins.
3. We went on a trip to their house in Mumbai.
4. "Open your notebooks," said our teacher.
5. Lata has lost her keys.
6. Ravi is talking to his friend.
7. The bird is in its nest.



B. Choose the correct words from the box to complete these sentences.

his my their her our

1. Kuntal and Prachi are doing their homework.
2. _____ teacher did not come to school today.
3. Ruchi borrowed the book from _____ classmate.
4. Kunal said, "Collecting coins is one of _____ hobbies."
5. Rakesh has lost _____ lunchbox.

Read these sentences.

- ★ The parrot belonged to Aunt Ruby. The parrot was **hers**.



Mine, yours, his, hers, ours, its and theirs are **possessive pronouns**. We use these words in place of nouns to show that something belongs to someone.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ★ This book is mine . ✓ | ★ This book is mine book. ✗ |
| ★ This city is ours . ✓ | ★ This city is ours city. ✗ |



Possessive pronouns are used without the apostrophe (').

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ★ The toys are hers . ✓ | ★ The toys are her's. ✗ |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|

C. Tick (✓) the correct words to complete these sentences.

1. The red scooter belongs to Rohit. It is **his** / hers / yours. ✓
2. These books are **your** / our / ours. We got them from the bookshop.
3. I have completed my work but Sushma is yet to complete **hers** / her / its.
4. Mr Sharma's car has a radio and so does **our** / ours / him.
5. Ritu and Riya cried when the parrot flew away because it was not **yours** / mine / theirs any more.
6. Jassi's desk looks tidier than **my** / mine / our.



VOCABULARY

Look at this word and its meaning.

- ★ **birdcatcher** a person who catches and sells birds to earn money



Two different words can be brought together to form one single word. These are called **compound words**.

Make compound words from these phrases.

1. a box to carry lunch in **a lunchbox**
2. a cloth that is laid on a table
3. a boat that is driven by steam
4. a horse that is trained to run in races
5. a person whose job it is to sell things
6. a person who tells stories



PUNCTUATION

Read these sentences.

- ★ Sometimes, these birds would learn to talk.
- ★ One day, he pushed my aunt's spectacles off her nose.



The **comma** shows a short pause and separates a word or a group of words from the rest of the sentence.

Here are some more uses of the comma—

1. A comma separates the words **yes, oh, well, thank you, no, and so on**, from the rest of the sentence.
 - ★ Yes, please come in. ★ Well, I think you should come with us.
2. A comma is used to separate words or phrases in a list of things. Usually, we do not put a comma before **and**.
 - ★ I went to the market to buy apples, oranges, mangoes and pineapples.

Put commas in the correct places in these sentences.

1. It was a hot humid and unpleasant day.
2. One day Anita Rakesh Lalita and Poonam went to watch a film together.
3. No Lata did not reach school on time.
4. What is the name of that small black fish?
5. Oh I didn't know you were coming today.
6. Sadaf ate an egg an apple and two pieces of toast for breakfast.



Listen to a conversation between Justin and Tarun. As you listen, tick (✓) the correct answers.

1. Justin's grandfather's house is
 a. old. b. small. c. beautiful.
2. The garden has
 a. flower beds. b. fruit trees. c. vegetable plants.
3. Justin's grandfather has
 a. a pet canary. b. a pet parakeet. c. a pet parrot.
4. The pet is quite
 a. friendly and talkative. b. rude and talkative. c. quiet and shy.
5. The best part of Justin's visit was
 a. climbing trees. b. playing with the pet. c. feeding the pet.



Read this conversation.

Grandfather: Your aunt's parrot has escaped.

Ruskin: I'm very sorry. I left the door open by mistake.



We must apologise if we have hurt someone or made a mistake, even if we did not do it on purpose.

Here are some ways to say sorry—

- ★ I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings.
- ★ I didn't mean to shout at you. Please forgive me.
- ★ I'm really sorry I broke your spectacles. It was an accident.

When we apologise to someone, he / she may accept the apology.

- ★ That's all right.
- ★ That's okay, but please don't do this / say that again.



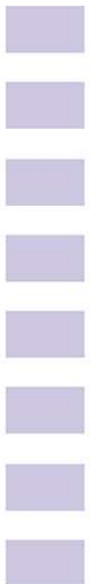
Role-play these situations with your partner. Take turns to apologise and respond.

1. You were playing cricket with your friends and you broke your neighbour's flower pot.
2. You were rude to your brother.
3. You have spilled milk on the floor.
4. You forgot to bring your Maths book to school.
5. You have lost a book that you had borrowed from a friend.



Rearrange these sentences in the correct order by numbering them from 1 to 8. Write them as a paragraph in your notebook.

- a. Suddenly, the parrot moved forward and pushed her spectacles off her nose.
- b. In the end, he learned to repeat Aunt Ruby's unkind words.
- c. Aunt Ruby started speaking to the parrot rudely.
- d. The parrot did not talk.
- e. But he came to visit them after a few days.
- f. Aunt Ruby bought a parrot from a birdcatcher.
- g. One day, the parrot escaped from its cage.
- h. One day, Aunt Ruby put her face next to the parrot's cage.



Vaishali really wanted a pet, so she asked her parents again and again to buy her a kitten. Finally, they got Vaishali a kitten for her birthday. She loves playing with her pet but does not help her parents to clean or feed it.

Discuss with your partner.

- ★ Do you think this is right?
- ★ What would you have done in her place?
- ★ Can you think of some duties that a pet-owner has?



after all in spite of earlier problems or doubts: **We were able to present a play for the school function after all.** *similar words: finally, ultimately*

insisted (verb) firmly decided to do something: **Mitali insisted on completing her project on her own, even though her sister offered to help her.** *similar words: asserted, stood firm*

refuse (verb) say no to: **I can never refuse an ice cream!** *similar words: decline, turn down*

shrieked (verb) spoke in a loud, high voice: **Tara shrieked when she saw the large cockroach in the room.** *similar words: screamed, screeched*

unkind (adjective) not friendly: **Tina was hurt by Priya's unkind words.** *similar words: cruel, harsh*

Indian ringneck parrots are found in many parts of India and are also known as rose-ringed parakeets. They are intelligent birds and make great pets. They learn concepts quickly and love to talk. They have a very sweet and expressive quality to their voices.





WARM UP

Festivals are a time of celebration and togetherness.

Here are some ways in which we celebrate festivals. Add three more ways to celebrate.



Discuss with your partner.

★ Which is your favourite festival?

★ How do you celebrate it?

Ma, Baba and I were travelling to Guwahati to visit Aunt Ratna's family. I was very excited to visit Assam. Aunt Ratna had once told me that Assam is one of the most beautiful states in India. She had also said that Assam is very rich in agriculture, and the three harvest festivals of Bihu are its most important celebrations.

I asked Baba to tell me more about Bihu. He said, "The Assamese celebrate three types of Bihu in a year—Rongali Bihu, at the start of the sowing of seeds; Kongali Bihu, when the sowing is completed; and Bhogali Bihu, at the end of the harvesting period."

★ **harvest festivals** celebrations of the food grown on the land
 ★ **sowing** planting or spreading seeds in or on the ground



“In fact, we are going just in time for Rongali Bihu,” said Ma, with a twinkle in her eye.

When we reached Guwahati, we were welcomed warmly by Uncle Pramod and Aunt Ratna. My parents told them how eager I was to know about Bihu and they enthusiastically described the festival to me.

“Rongali Bihu is the Assamese New Year,” began Uncle. “It marks the arrival of spring. We usually celebrate it in the middle of April every year. It is called Rongali Bihu because of the happiness it brings to people.”



“Actually, we celebrate Rongali Bihu over several days,” continued Aunt Ratna. “Since Bihu is about farming and cultivation, farmers spend a whole day decorating their cattle. They bathe their cows and bulls with *maah-halodhi*, a paste of some black gram and a little turmeric. After this, they decorate the animals with a few garlands.”



The next day, we all wore new clothes and welcomed Aunt and Uncle’s friends and relatives. I couldn’t stop eating the tasty *laru* and *pitha*, traditional Assamese sweets. I saw many people gifting each other handwoven cotton towels called *gamosas*.

Aunt Ratna explained, “On this day, the Assamese greet each other, welcome their guests and pay their respects to elders in the family by presenting them with new *gamosas*.” She gifted me a lovely red and white *gamosa* as a keepsake.



eager very interested and excited about something **enthusiastically** with a lot of excitement and interest **cultivation** the preparation and use of land for growing crops **turmeric** yellow spice used in cooking **garlands** circles of flowers and leaves worn around the head or neck as decoration **keepsake** a small object that someone gives you so that you will remember them

The next day, we went along with Aunt and Uncle to watch a cultural programme in a nearby park. We watched many performances of Bihu songs, known as Bihu *geet*, and a few traditional Bihu dances.



dhol, pepa and taal

I watched the Bihu dance, performed by both men and women. It was so *joyous*! I loved its *brisk* steps and hand movements and joined in the dance. I was shy at first but soon began to thoroughly enjoy the music and the steps. Everyone clapped when the dance ended. It was a truly *delightful* end to the day.

Uncle Pramod said, “In the past, people celebrated Bihu only in the villages. These days, Bihu celebrations are common even in cities and towns. Old Bihu songs are wonderful to listen to. You know, they have been passed on from one generation to the next. Bihu dances are performed to the music of instruments like the *dhol*, *pepa*, *taal*, *gogona* and *toka*.”



Before leaving Guwahati, I promised Aunt Ratna that I would visit them again to participate in the two other Bihu festivals as well—Kongali Bihu, when farmers light *saki* or earthen lamps in the paddy fields and pray for a good crop; and Bhogali Bihu, with its *feasting* and *bonfire*.

dhol a musical instrument, similar to a drum **pepa** a wind instrument made from a buffalo horn
taal a musical instrument, where two metal plates are clashed together to produce sounds
gogona a small string instrument, made of bamboo **toka** a musical instrument made of bamboo, that makes a clapping sound **joyous** very happy, making others happy **brisk** quick
delightful very pleasant **feasting** a large number of people enjoying a special meal
bonfire a large outdoor fire as part of a celebration



COMPREHENSION

A. Answer these questions.

1. Before visiting Assam, what did the speaker learn about the state from Aunt Ratna?
2. When is Rongali Bihu celebrated? What is special about this name?
3. How do farmers take care of their cattle during Bihu?
4. How is the festival celebrated among families?
5. How has the speaker described the Bihu dance?
6. How are the two other Bihu festivals celebrated?

B. Mark these sentences as true (T) or not true (NT).

1. Bihu is celebrated all over the world.
2. Rongali Bihu is associated with sadness.
3. People pay their respects to elders by giving them *gamosas*.
4. *Pepa* and *gogona* are traditional sweets prepared during Bihu.
5. Bihu *geet* are folk stories associated with Bihu.

C. Think and answer.

1. Why do you think the care of cattle is an important part of the celebrations?
2. How is the entire family involved in celebrating Bihu?
3. Do you think Rongali Bihu is a joyous festival? Give reasons for your answer.



KNOW YOUR VALUES



In the text, we read how Assamese families show respect to their elders.

Talk to your partner about what it means to treat people with respect.

- ★ In what ways do you show respect for your parents, grandparents, teachers and friends?
- ★ What happens when people are treated with respect?

Caring for others is not just about love. We must also be understanding and respectful.

Look at these words.

- ★ some black gram ★ a lot of sweets ★ a little turmeric ★ many people



We use the words in colour with countable and uncountable nouns to say **how much** or **how little** of something there is.

We use **some** with countable and uncountable nouns.

- ★ He gave me **some** pencils. ★ I made **some** tea.

We also use **any** with uncountable nouns to say 'not even a little'.

- ★ The shop did not have **any** butter. (It had no butter.)

We use **a little** when there is a small amount of something.

- ★ a little oil ★ a little sand

We use **a lot of** when there is too much of something.

- ★ a lot of mud ★ a lot of coins

We use **many** and **a few** for things we can count.

- ★ many mangoes ★ a few leaves

We use **not much** with uncountable nouns to say 'not a lot'.

- ★ not much water ★ not much flour



Sometimes, we use **much** incorrectly.



- ★ We spent **much** time working on the project. ×
★ We spent **a lot of** time working on the project. ✓

A. Complete these sentences with a little, some or any.

1. Let's wait for **some** time. Ravi is late but he's sure to come.
2. Kiran cannot help me with my work. She does not have _____ time.
3. May I have _____ water, please?
4. It rained _____ last night.
5. There is _____ milk in the fridge.
6. There isn't _____ rice on your plate. Why don't you eat _____ rice?



B. Complete these sentences with the correct words.

1. I met her **many** (**much** / **many**) years ago. She had long hair then.
2. Hurry up! We don't have _____ (**much** / **a few**) time. We'll be late for the train.
3. _____ (**Much** / **A few**) students were waiting in the classroom.
4. There are _____ (**much** / **many**) books in this library.
5. Priya was here only for _____ (**a few** / **many**) minutes. She was in a hurry.
6. I drank _____ (**a few** / **a lot of**) juice yesterday.



 **VOCABULARY**

Read these sentences.

- ★ **Every year**, Rongali Bihu is celebrated over several days.
- ★ **In the past**, Bihu was celebrated only in the villages.

The words in colour are **time phrases**. These groups of words talk about time.

Choose the correct time phrases from the box to complete these sentences.

how long ago every year many years ago
once upon a time at that time hundreds of years ago

1. **Hundreds of years ago**, Ashoka came to the throne.
2. Nobody is quite sure _____ the Pyramids of Giza were built.
3. Do you recognise me? I was your classmate _____.
4. _____, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is remembered by the children of India on Children's Day.
5. _____, Goldilocks found a little cottage in the woods.
6. My grandfather remembers his childhood and how _____ there were no aeroplanes in the sky!

★ SPELLING

Look at these words.

- ★ lovely ★ tasty

We can add -y or -ly to nouns to make adjectives.

- ★ hill + y = hilly ★ friend + ly = friendly

Sometimes there are changes to the spelling.

- ★ anger – angry ★ sun – sunny

Complete these words by adding -y or -ly. You may need to change the spellings of some words.

1. rain____ 2. health____ 3. live____ 4. oil____ 5. silk____
6. year____ 7. juice____ 8. salt____ 9. elder____ 10. spice____

★ SPEAKING



Read this conversation.

Aunt Ratna: Please come home for dinner tonight.

Ravi: I would love to come. Is it a special day?

Aunt Ratna: Yes, we are celebrating Bihu. Our friends usually join us for dinner.

Ravi: Thank you for inviting me. I will certainly come.

This table shows us ways to invite someone and also to accept or refuse an invitation politely.

inviting	accepting	refusing
★ Would you like to...?	★ I'd like / love to. Thank you very much.	★ I'm sorry, I can't. Thanks for asking me.
★ Please visit / join us...	★ That will be very nice, thank you.	★ I'm afraid I can't.
★ How would you like...?	★ I'd be glad to.	★ Thank you, but I'm busy./ I'm going out.

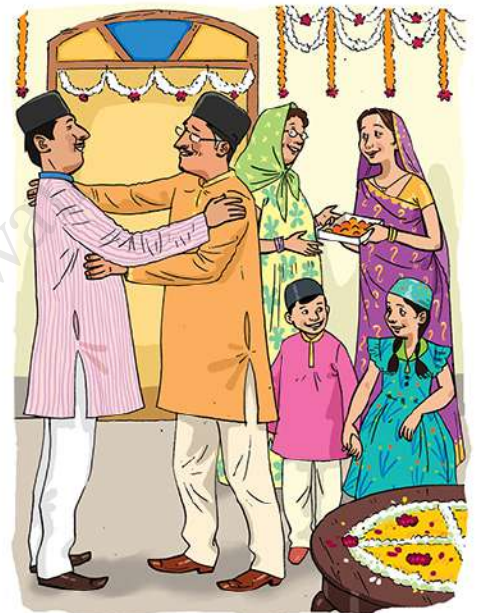
Role-play these situations with your partner. You can practise inviting, accepting and refusing.

1. Your friend invites you to her house to play with her new game. (You can go.)
2. You invite your neighbour to watch a football match. (He / She cannot go.)
3. Your uncle invites you to stay in his house for a few days. (You can go.)
4. You invite your cousin to attend a programme in your school. (He / She can go.)



Listen to a passage on celebrating Navroz, a Parsi festival. As you listen, write Yes or No next to these sentences.

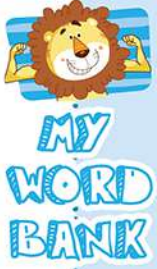
1. Navroz is the Parsi new year. _____
2. Before the sun rises on Navroz day, Parsi families visit the fire temple. _____
3. Friends and family members wish each other 'Navroz Mubarak'. _____
4. They carry sandalwood sticks to offer to the fire. _____
5. *Rava* and *Falooda* are special rice dishes prepared for Navroz. _____
6. Parsis share food and enjoy themselves on Navroz. _____



Imagine that you have been invited to be a part of the Bihu celebrations in Guwahati by your friend Anushka. Write a paragraph in your notebook to describe your experience.

You can talk about—

- ★ how Anushka's family prepared for the festival
- ★ how it was celebrated
- ★ the most special part of the festival, according to you



brisk (adjective) quick: My father walked towards the house with brisk steps.

similar words: lively, swift

decorate (verb) to make something look more beautiful or attractive: We decorate our house with candles during Diwali. similar words: adorn, deck up

present (verb) to give a gift: The principal presented the chief guest with a bouquet.

similar words: offer, hand out

shy (adjective) uneasy or afraid to be with or talk to other people: Poonam is very shy and does not like to take part in debates. similar words: coy, timid

A traditional meal in Assam begins with a *khar*, a dish made of raw papaya, pulses or any other main ingredient. The meal usually ends with a *tenga*, a sour dish. Lemons or tomatoes are usually added to give this dish a sour taste. A traditional meal in Assam always includes these two dishes.



AMAZING
INDIA



Flower on the Road



Spring has come,
said the bougainvillea
Crimson, orange, cream
and yellow
Making a flower wall
along the road
I bring happiness
to all.


Wait, said the
little flower
on the edge of the kerb
I, too, blossom
though I am small.

Every now and then
a little child walks past,
sees me
at her height
And happily smiles.
Doesn't that make us comrades
on the road!

Chitra Padmanabhan



 **bougainvillea** a climbing plant which has brightly-coloured flowers, commonly found in warm countries; say *bo-gun-villy-aa* **crimson** dark red **kerb** the edge of the footpath
blossom to produce flowers **comrades** friends, especially those who work closely together

 **Chitra Padmanabhan** has been a journalist for several years and has worked with many major Indian newspapers. She has also written many books for children.

In this poem, the bougainvillea flowers blooming in spring bring happiness to all. The little flower also feels happy that it can bring happiness to a little child.

A. Answer these questions.

1. Where were the bougainvillea and the little flower?
2. How does the bougainvillea look?
3. What did the bougainvillea say? Why do you think it said this?
4. Why did the little flower ask the bougainvillea to wait?
5. How does the little flower make small children happy?
6. How are the bougainvillea and the little flower 'comrades'?

B. Think and answer.

1. Which plant would attract more attention? Say why you think so.
2. Which plant would you prefer? Why?

C. This poem is in the form of a conversation. Work with your partner and write a poem in the form of a conversation.

Your poem can be a conversation between—

- ★ a teacher and a student.
- ★ two friends.
- ★ a child and a parent.