

# ARTICULATION

(A Textbook for B.Sc Third Semester Basic English)

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*Lesson-1*

# **'THE QUEST OF MAN'**

**Jawaharlal Nehru**

June 10, 1932

Four days ago I wrote to you from Bareilly Gaol. That very evening I was told to gather up my belongings and to march out of the prison - not to be discharged, but to be transferred to another prison. So I bade good-bye to my companions of the barrack, where I had lived for just four months, and I had a last look at the great twenty-four-foot wall under whose sheltering care I had sat for so long, and I marched out to see the outside world again for a while. There were two of us being transferred. They would not take us to Bareilly station lest people might see us, for we have become purdahnashins, and may not be seen! Fifty miles out they drove us by car to a little station in the wilderness. I felt thankful for this drive. It was delightful to feel the cool night air and to see the phantom trees and men and animals rush by in the semidarkness, after many months of seclusion.

We were brought to Dehra Dun. Early in the morning, we were again taken out of our train, before we had reached the end of our journey, and taken by car, lest prying eyes should see us. And so here I sit in the little Gaol of Dehra

Dun and it is better here than at Bareilly. It is not quite so hot, and the temperature does not rise to 112 degrees, as it did in Bareilly. And the walls surrounding us are lower and the trees that overlook them are greener. In the distance, I can even see, over our wall, the top of a palm tree, and the sight delights me and makes me think of Ceylon and Malabar. Beyond the trees there lie the mountains, not many miles away, and, perched up on top of them, sits Mussoorie. I cannot see the mountains, for the trees, hide them, but it is good to be near them and to imagine at night the lights of Mussoorie twinkling in the far distance. Four years ago - or is it three? - I began writing these series of letters to you when you were at Mussoorie. What a lot has happened during these three or four years, and how you have grown! With fits and starts and after long gaps I have continued these letters, mostly from prison. But the more I write the less I like what I write, and a fear comes upon me that these letters may not interest you much, and may even become a burden for you. Why, then, should I continue to write them? I should have liked to place vivid images of the past before you, one after another, to make you sense how this world of ours has changed, step by step, and developed and progressed, and sometimes apparently gone back; to make you see something of the old civilizations and how they have risen like the tide and then subsided; to make you realize how the river of history has run on from age to age, continuously, interminably, with its eddies and whirlpools and backwaters, and still rushes on to an unknown sea. I should have liked to take you on man's trail and follow it up from the early beginnings, when he was hardly a man, to today, when he prides himself so much, rather vainly and foolishly, on his great civilization. We did begin that way, you will remember, in the Mussoorie days, when we talked of the discovery of fire and of agriculture, and the settling down in towns, and the division of labour. But the

farther we have advanced, the more we have got mixed up with empires and the like, and often we have lost sight of that trail. We have just skimmed over the surface of history. I have placed the skeleton of old happenings before you and I have wished that I had the power to cover it with flesh and blood, to make it living and vital for you. But I am afraid I have not got that power, and you must rely upon your imagination to work the miracle. Why, then, should I write, when you can read about past history in many good books? Yet, through my doubts, I have continued writing, and I suppose I shall still continue. I remember the promise I made to you, and I shall try to fulfill it. But more even than this is the joy that the thought of you gives me when I sit down to write and imagine that you are by me and we are talking to each other. Of man's trail, I have written above since he emerged stumbling and slouching from the jungle. It has been a long trail of many thousands of years. And yet how short a time it is if you compare it to the earth's story and the ages and aeons to a time before man came! But for us man is naturally more interesting than all the great animals that existed before him; he is interesting because he brought a new thing with him which the others do not seem to have had. This was mind - curiosity - the desire to find out and learn. So from the earliest days began man's quest. Observe a little baby, how it looks at the new and wonderful world about it; how it begins to recognize things and people; how it learns. Look at a little girl; if she is a healthy and wide-awake person she will ask so many questions about so many things. Even so, in the morning of history when man was young and the world was new and wonderful, and rather fearsome to him, he must have looked and stared all around him and asked questions. Who was he to ask except himself? There was no one else to answer. But he had a wonderful little thing - a mind - and with the help of this, slowly and painfully, he went on storing his experiences

and learning from them. So from the earliest times until to-day man's quest has gone on, and he has found out many things, but many still remain, and as he advances on his trail, he discovers vast new tracts stretching out before him, which show to him how far he is still from the end of his quest - if there is such an end. What has been this quest of man, and whether does he journey? For thousands of years men have tried to answer these questions. Religion and philosophy and science have all considered them, and given many answers. I shall not trouble you with these answers, for the sufficient reason that I do not know most of them. But, in the main, religion has attempted to give a complete and dogmatic answer, and has often cared little for the mind, but has sought to enforce obedience to its decisions in various ways. Science gives a doubting and hesitating reply, for it is of the nature of science not to dogmatize, but to experiment and reason and rely on the mind of man. I need hardly tell you that my preferences are all for science and the methods of science. We may not be able to answer these questions about man's quest with any assurance, but we can see that the quest itself has taken two lines. Man has looked outside himself as well as inside; he has tried to understand Nature, and he has also tried to understand himself. The quest is really one and the same, for man is part of Nature. "Know thyself", said the old philosophers of India and Greece; and the Upanishads contain the record of the ceaseless and rather wonderful strivings after this knowledge by the old Aryan Indians. The other knowledge of Nature has been the special province of science, and our modern world is witness to the great progress made therein. Science, indeed, is spreading out its wings even farther now, and taking charge of both lines of this quest and coordinating them. It is looking up with confidence to the most distant stars, and it tells us also of the wonderful little things in continuous motion - the electrons

and protons - of which all matter consists. The mind of man has carried man a long way in his voyage of discovery. As he has learnt to understand Nature more he has utilized it and harnessed it to his own advantage, and thus he has won more power. But unhappily he has not always known how to use this new power, and he has often misused it. Science itself has been used by him chiefly to supply him with terrible weapons to kill his brother and destroy the very civilization that he has built up with so much labour.

**Source:**

Jawaharlal Nehru: *Glimpses of World History*; *An Autobiography*; *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*

**Notes:**

Nehru frequently interacted with his daughter, Indira Priyadarshini, through letters especially when he was serving a prison sentence during the British rule in India. The first sets of letters were written in the summer of 1928 when the ten-year-old Indira was in the Himalayan hill station of Mussoorie and Nehru was in the plains. These were published in book form in 1929, with the title *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, subtitled "Being a brief account of the early days of the world written for children." Nehru points out in his preface to the original edition of *Glimpses of World History*. These early letters were subsequently published in book form and they had a generous reception. The idea of continuing them hovered in my mind. "The result was *Glimpses of World History* published in two volumes, 1934-1935, with the subtitle "Being further letters to his daughter written in prison, and containing a rambling account of history for young people". All the 196 letters here, and his book *The Discovery of India* were written in prison. The first such

letter he wrote her was from the Central Prison in Naini, in 1930. The letter you are about to read was written two years later, in 1932, from Dehra Dun jail. While in prison, cut off from active life and from his beloved daughter, Nehru decided to make use of the available time to write a brief and simple account of the history of the world. Nehru himself admits that he is not a historian but has attempted to put together facts and ideas he had culled from books. Very often, the facts of history are overrun by his own ideas and philosophic thinking. "*The Quest of Man*", the fifty-sixth in the series of letters in *Glimpses of World History* and the first that he wrote from the district jail of Dehra Dun, takes us back to the origins of human civilization that had been preceded by the Earth's story for many thousands of years. The distinctive feature of human civilization is that it owes its existence and perpetuation to the genius of the human mind. It is the eternal curiosity of the human mind to find out and learn more and more about the world that started the man on this quest. In this letter, Nehru goes beyond historical dates and facts to focus on man's innate quest to know and understand the world around him.

### **Glossary:**

- Quest** : the act of seeking or searching; an undertaking with the purpose of achieving or finding some definite object.
- Barrack** : A group of large buildings for soldiers to live in (here for the prisoners to be confined).
- Purdahnashins** : an Urdu word meaning people who live behind the veil
- Wilderness** : an uninhabited place.
- Phantom** : ghost; any imagined thing.

<b>Prying</b>	: inquiring with too much curiosity into other people's affairs
<b>Perch</b>	: to sit on something high and narrow
<b>Series of letters</b>	: he is referring to Letters from a Father to his Daughter
<b>Eddy(eddies-plural)</b>	: a circular movement of water, air or dust
<b>Whirlpools</b>	: a place in a river or the sea where there are strong currents moving in circles.
<b>Backwaters</b>	: a part of a river not reached by the current, where the water does not flow
<b>Trail</b>	: the path to be followed for a particular purpose.
<b>skeleton</b>	: framework.
<b>Slouch</b>	: to stand or sit in a lazy way, often not upright.
<b>Aeons</b>	: a very long period; many thousands or millions of years.
<b>Dogmatic</b>	: insisting that one's beliefs are right and that others should accept them.
<b>Electrons</b>	: tiny pieces of matter with a negative electric charge present in atoms.
<b>Protons</b>	: tiny pieces of matter with a positive electric charge present in atoms
<b>Utilize</b>	: to use for a practical purpose.
<b>Harness</b>	: to control and use the force or strength of something to produce power or to achieve something.

## Comprehension

### I. Answer the following in a sentence or two:

1. Where was Nehru before he was brought to Dehra Dun gaol?
2. Which place is hotter than Dehra Dun?
3. What reminds Nehru of Ceylon ?

4. What is the fear that the author has about writing letters?
5. What is man's pride?
6. Why is a man very interesting?
7. When does a girl ask many questions?
8. What are the questions that men have tried to answer for long?
9. Where do you find their record of strivings to "know thyself"?
10. What are the components of matter?
11. What is the new power that man has not learnt to use?

**II. Answer the following in a paragraph:**

1. Describe the author's current place of imprisonment.
2. Is the author sceptical about the worth of his writings?
3. How does Nehru recreate the history of the world from pre-historic times to modern days?
4. Trace the journey of Man in his long quest to know about his world.
5. What has helped Man in his quest to know more about his world?
6. Describe the twin approaches to understand the world.

**III. Answer the following (Essay Type) :**

1. Describe Nehru's presentation of the glimpses of world history?
2. What picture of India and the world Nehru presents to his daughter?

**IV. Grammar and composition**

**LETTER WRITING**

The letters we write can either be 'personal'- the informal, relaxed or even chatty letters we write to close relatives or intimate friends or 'business'-the formal, matter of fact letters written to or by offices, business firms etc. All letters, whether

formal or informal, follow certain conventions. It is important for letter writers to know and observe these conventions.

Following are the two letters written by the same person for different purposes. See whether they have the same tone, format and content.

### **Letter 1**

Apt # 505  
Himalaya Apts,  
Sector-9, Dwarka  
N. Delhi – 75.

Date: 23rd February 20xx

Dear Jatin,

How are you? I hope you are fine. Guess what happened the other day?! I met the film actress Priyanka at a birthday party of a mutual friend. I was so excited to meet her, more so because it was unexpected. The food was good and the music great, but all the guests were taken up with Priyanka. She looked pretty and as attractive as she does on the screen. All the boys (including me of course) were crowding around her and trying to shake her hand or talk to her. I was very impressed by the fact that she was friendly and did not mind people jostling around asking for her attention. After signing countless autographs, she danced to the songs from her films which were played repeatedly as a sort of tribute to her.

How are your parents and others at home? Are you still working for Satyam? When are you coming to Delhi? Do make it soon so that we can meet. Convey my regards to your parents.

With love  
**Samar**

## Letter 2

To  
The Marketing Manager  
The Entertainers  
Jhandewalan  
Delhi

Date: 22nd February 20xx

Sir,

I had recently bought an HD LCD TV from your showroom. However, after using it for less than even a month, I find that the high definition picture quality is simply not there. At times there is a distortion of the picture too. I find it extremely disturbing that our new and expensive TV is malfunctioning. As the set is within a two-year warranty period, I request you to send someone immediately to repair/replace the TV.

Yours Sincerely

**Samar Singh**

(Apt # 505, Himalaya Apts,  
Sector-9, Dwarka, N. Delhi – 75)

Both letters are examples of external correspondence but the second letter is formal in tone and the content is in the nature of a complaint in a business context. The first letter is informal, casual and non-business in content and context.

### Differences between Formal and Informal Letters

Formal letter	Informal letter
It is written to make a specific point to a person/ organization known or unknown to us.	It can address different topics and is written to people you know.

<p>Its primary aim is to convey information</p>	<p>Generally, it deals with private thoughts, feelings and topics of interest to the person to whom the letter is addressed.</p>
<p>It contains certain linguistic features which are formal in nature.</p>	<p>It contains expressions which characterize conversation – exclamatory expressions (Guess what happened the other day?!), questions (How are your parents and others at home?), contracted forms (It'll take some time), etc.</p>
<p>It is generally brief, clear, precise and complete. It is well-organized and points are arranged in a logical sequence.</p>	<p>It may talk about different subjects and even ramble a bit. Its organization and logical continuity are more loosely structured.</p>

**IV. Homophones** : is a combination of two words 'homo' means 'same' and 'phone' means 'sound.'

- \* Words having similar sound but having different spelling and meaning are called homophones
- \* It is desirable for the learners to be familiar with such words and this will enrich their vocabulary
- \* Let us see how the homophones can be used for different meaning and context

- 1) Altar-Alter  
 1) They made Altar for the religious ceremony (heightened place)

- 2) Alter- To change  
We altered the plan
- 2) Bale-Bail  
They were released on bail (money paid as security)  
The farmer made bales (Bundle)  
of cotton
- 3) Berth-Birth  
We reserved a berth in a train (Sleeping place)  
Buddha took birth at Lumbini (Being born)
- 4) Bough-Bow  
The bird sat on the bough (Branch of a tree)  
We should bow our heads (Bend)  
before elders
- 5) Break-Brake  
1) The party was broken into (Make into pieces)  
two groups  
2) The driver applied brakes (Appliance for  
reducing speed)
- 6) Canvas-Canvass  
He made a painting on (A cloth)  
a canvas  
The coordinator is canvassing (Asking for vote)
- 7) Cast-Caste  
1) We should uplift (A social class)  
backward castes  
2) The fishermen cast their (Throw)  
nets into the sea
- 8) Cell- Sell  
1) The boy was kept in a cell (Small room)  
2) They want to sell their house (Give something  
for money)
- 9) Check- Cheque  
We should check the over (To stop)  
growth of population  
I received a cheque of five (A slip for payment)  
thousand rupees

- 10) Complement-Compliment  
 1) Love is a complement to life (Support)  
 2) He made a compliment on her beauty (A word of praise)
- 11) Course-Coarse  
 She completed a post graduate course (Progress of study)  
 The towel is very coarse (Rough)
- 12) Dear-Deer  
 The girl is dear to her parents (Beloved)  
 We saw deers in a zoo (Kind of stag)
- 13) Fare-Fair  
 The lady has a fair face (Beautiful / white complexes)  
 We paid bus fare (Travelling expense)
- 14) Hair -Heir-Hare  
 1) She has curly hair  
 2) The boy is the only heir to his ancestor property  
 3) We saw a hare in the grass (Rabbit)
- 15) Heel-Heal  
 1) His wounds are healing (Recover)  
 2) She has pain in heels (Part of the foot)
- 16) Lose-Loose  
 1) We should not lose patience (To be deprived)  
 2) She prefers loose dress (Not tight)
- 17) Pray-Prey  
 1) She prayed to God (Beg or repent)  
 2) The deer become prey to tiger (Victim)
- 18) Soar-Sore  
 The bird soars in the sky (Fly high)  
 She's throat suffered from sore (Painful)
- 19) Steal-Steel  
 He steals money from his father  
 The utensils are made of steel (Iron)

20) Vain-Vein

All his efforts went in vain

(Useless)

Blood flows through veins

(Blood vessels)

*Lesson-2*

# **MY SONS ARE REMOTE; I NO LONGER KNOW WHAT THEY EAT FOR BREAKFAST**

**Kamala Das**

My father has been dead for 19 years. Rummaging through his cupboards, my sister discovered that he had preserved, in numbered files, every letter that we wrote him, beginning with the scribbles of our childhood.

From the letters I wrote while at a convent, I realise that I was a materialistic child. In each letter, I asked my parents to send me silk frocks, preferably blue, and red shoes. I asked for new schoolbags and handkerchiefs. I asked for Yardley's Talc. My elder brother only demanded notebooks and pencils made in Germany. As the years rolled by, we began to state our problems and pleaded for financial help. A list of illness. The names of the medicines taken...

Such candid letters form the history of a family.

Nobody seems to write letters these days. Once or twice a month, my sons phone me. "How is your health?" is the