

3.2 The Welcome

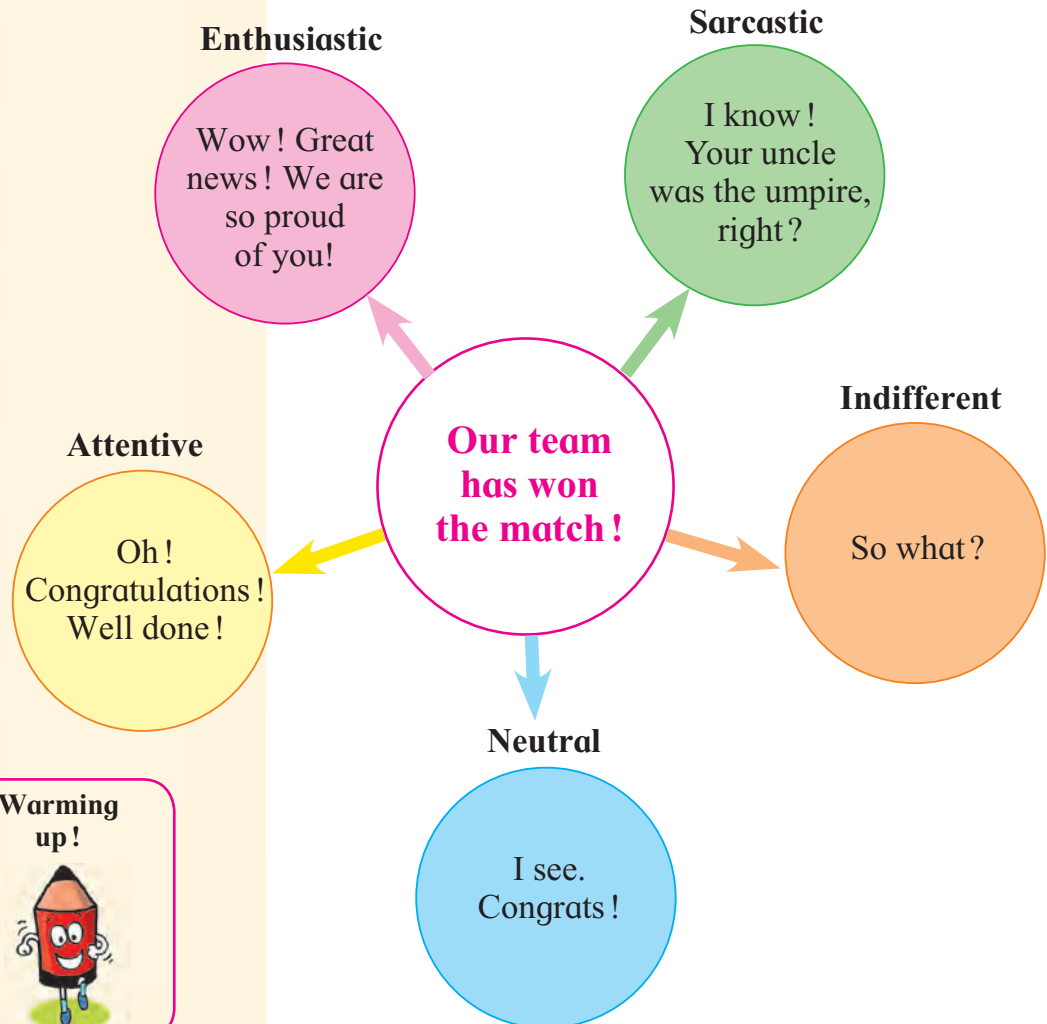


Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was a great writer, musician and thinker. He is known for his songs, poems, novels, short stories, plays, etc.

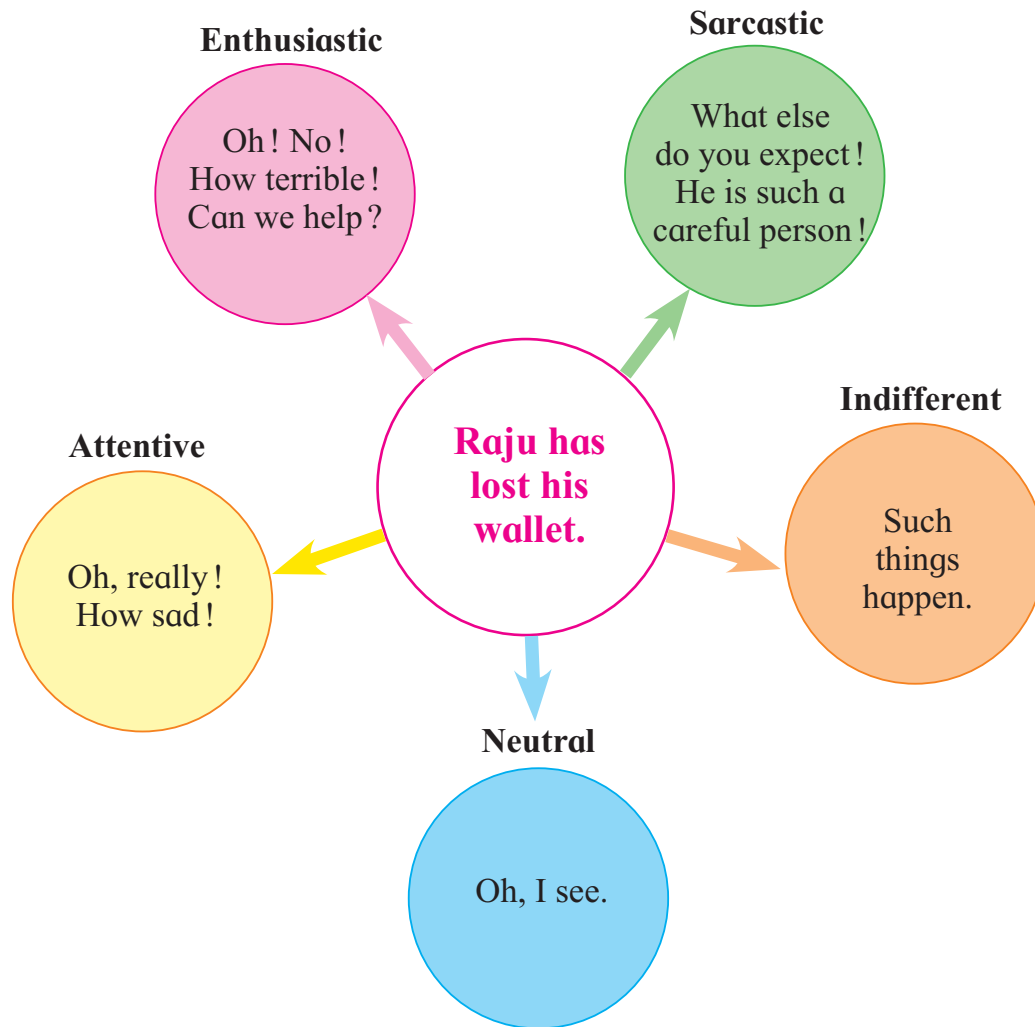
‘The Welcome’ is a funny one-act play, in which a young man wants to tell the people in his village that he has passed M.A. But everybody talks to him about his cat! Have you ever had such an experience?

- Read aloud the central statement and the responses in A and B.

(A)



(B)



Now you have five conversations each for both 'A' and 'B'. Play a guessing game using these conversations. Different pairs of students should present these different conversations in the class. Others rate the response in each conversation using the following table, by putting a tick mark (✓) in the appropriate box.

	Enthusiastic	Attentive	Neutral	Indifferent	Sarcastic
Words					
Gestures					
Tone					

See that all types of response are presented in the activity.

THE WELCOME

Scene I

(A village road. Chaturbhuj Babu has come back to the village after passing his MA examinations, hoping that everyone will make a great fuss over him. There is a plump Afghan cat with him. Enter Nilratan.)

Nilratan : Hello there, Chatur Babu. When did you arrive ?

Chaturbhuj : Directly after the MA exams were over. I –

Nilratan : Ah, you've got a fine cat there !

Chaturbhuj : This year the exams were very –

Nilratan : Tell me, where did you find that cat ?

Chaturbhuj : Bought it. The subjects I'd offered –

Nilratan : How much did you pay for it ?

Chaturbhuj : I don't remember. Nilratan Babu, has anybody passed any exams in our village ?

Nilratan : Oh, lots of them. But you won't see a cat like that in these parts.

Chaturbhuj : (to himself) Confound him, he can't talk about anything but the cat ! It doesn't seem to matter that I've just passed my MA !
(Enter the Zamindar.)



- **make a great fuss over him** : give him a lot of respect, praise, attention
- **plump** : fat
- **Confound him** : Words used to show anger.

Listen and answer :

- ⊗ Where does this scene take place ?
- ⊗ What examination has Chaturbhuj passed ?
- ⊗ What does Chaturbhuj have with him ?

- Zamindar** : Ah, Chaturbhuj – what have you been doing in Calcutta all this time?
- Chaturbhuj** : I’ve just finished my MA, sir.
- Zamindar** : Oh, this cat of yours is a stunner, I must say. Why don’t you drop by my place with your cat some time this evening? The boys would be delighted.
- Chaturbhuj** : Of course – I quite understand. They haven’t seen me for a long time.
- Zamindar** : Yes, I suppose so ... but what I mean is, even if you can’t come yourself, send Beni round with the cat – I want the boys to see it. (Exit Zamindar)
(Enter Uncle Satu.)
- Satu** : How are you, my boy? Been away a long time, haven’t you?
- Chaturbhuj** : That’s right. There were so many examinations –
- Satu** : This cat of yours –
- Chaturbhuj** : (furiously) I’m going home. (About to leave–)
- Satu** : Hey, wait a minute – this cat –
- Chaturbhuj** : No, Sir, I’ve got work to do.
- Satu** : Oh come on, now, answer a civil question. This cat –
(Chaturbhuj strides away without another word.)
- Just look at that. It’s education that’s ruining these young people. We know what they’re worth, but they’re stuffed full of conceit!

- **drop by my place** : visit my house
- **furiously** : angrily
- **stunner** : very beautiful
- **delighted** : very happy
- **We know what they are worth** :
We know that they don’t have merit or good qualities.
- **a civil question** : a polite question
- **stuffed full of conceit** : very very proud of oneself

Think and answer :

- ⊗ Who is Beni?
- ⊗ Do you think Uncle Satu is highly educated?
- ⊗ What is the meaning of ‘strides away’?

Scene II

(Inside Chaturbhuj's house.)

- Maid** : Mother, Dada Babu has come home in a blazing temper.
- Mother** : Why, what's the matter?
- Maid** : I don't know. (Enter Chaturbhuj.)
- Little Boy** : Dada, can I have this cat?
- Chaturbhuj** : (slaps him hard.) Cat, cat, cat the whole day long, is it?
- Mother** : No wonder the poor boy's angry! He comes home after such a long time and these brats start annoying him at once. (To Chaturbhuj) Let me have the cat, son. I'll give it some rice and milk that I've put by.



- Chaturbhuj** : (furiously) Here, mother, you can have the cat and feed it all you want. I shan't stop to eat – I'm leaving at once.
- Mother** : (plaintively) What makes you say such a thing? – Your meal's ready and waiting, dear. You can sit down to it as soon as you've had your bath!

- **in a blazing temper** : very angry
- **brats** : naughty kids
- **plaintively** : in a sad, complaining way

Think and answer :

- ⊗ Who is Dada Babu?
- ⊗ Why does Chaturbhuj get angry with his mother?

Chaturbhuj : No, I'm leaving. You're all crazy about cats in these parts. No one cares for men of worth. **(Kicks out at the cat.)**

Aunt : Don't hurt the cat – she hasn't done any harm.

Chaturbhuj : When it comes to a cat you're all heart, but you have no pity for human beings! **(Exit)**

Little Girl : **(looking out)** Come and see, Uncle Hari – what a big fat tail!

Hari : Whose tail – Chaturbhuj's?

Girl : No, the cat's!

Scene III

(On the road. Enter Chaturbhuj, bag in hand, without the cat.)

Sadhucharan : Sir, where's that cat of yours?

Chaturbhuj : It's dead.

Sadhucharan : How sad! How did it happen?

Chaturbhuj : **(irritably)** I don't know!

Paran : Hello! What's happened to your cat?

Chaturbhuj : It's dead.

Paran : No, really! How?

Chaturbhuj : The same way all of you'll die – by swinging at the end of a rope!

Paran : Good God, he's positively furious!

(A swarm of urchins run after Chaturbhuj, clapping and teasing him with cries of 'Pussy cat, Pussy cat'.)

- Curtain -

I pity Chaturbhuj. His family and friends know the true worth of things!



- Adapted from the translation of a play

by Rabindranath Tagore



- **men of worth** : great, valuable men
- **you're all heart** : you're very kind.
- **positively** : very
- **swarm** : a noisy group
- **urchins** : kids in the street.

Think and answer :

- ⊗ Is the cat really dead?
- ⊗ Why do the urchins tease Chaturbhuj?



ENGLISH WORKSHOP

- List the characters in this play. Write how each is related to Chaturbhuj.
- Find and list the incomplete sentences of Chaturbhuj.
- Form groups. Discuss and write what Chaturbhuj would like to hear from the following people :

Chaturbhuj : I have passed my MA examination.

- **Nilratan :**
- **Zamindar :**
- **Uncle Satu :**
- **Mother :**
- **Aunt :**
- **Sadhucharan :**
- **Paran :**

- Enact the play.
- Form pairs. Each person in the pair writes down a simple story, news item, report, etc. Then one of the partners tries to tell it to the other person. The other person shows through gestures that he is not interested – by yawning, looking away, frowning, doing something else, etc.

Repeat the activity after changing the roles of the listener and the speaker. Then prepare two tables.

- How to be a good listener.
 - How NOT to be a good listener.
- Play the game of **Right question, wrong answer :**
Form pairs : One person puts any one question to the other.
The other person has to give a wrong answer QUICKLY.
He / She is out if he / she gives the relevant / correct answer, or waits too long to give an answer.

Example :

A : How much water do you need?

B : Near S. P. College.

A : Where's S. P. College?

B : At two o'clock.

A : Who was there?

B : I don't know.

A : Out!

What do you eat?

Three books.



Which books?

On the tree.



Can you climb trees?

Of course!



Out!



Auxiliary Verb : Be

• ‘Be + main verb (v + -ing)’ shows that the action is/was not complete; it goes on. This is known as the **progressive** or **continuous** tense.

Present Progressive be + main verb (v + -ing)	Past Progressive be + main verb (v + -ing)
I am writing.	I was writing.
You are reading.	You were reading.
They are playing.	They were playing.
She is singing.	She was singing.



Auxiliary Verb : Have

• ‘Have + main verb (v + -ed /-en)’ shows that the action about which we are talking now is / was complete. This is known as the **perfect** tense.

Present Perfect have / has + main verb (v + -ed /-en)	Past Perfect had + main verb (v + -ed /-en)
I have seen the film.	I had seen the film.
He has passed the examination.	He had passed the examination.
They have gone back.	They had gone back.

Many verbs have separate forms for the past and the perfect. For example, the past and perfect of the verb ‘see’ is ‘saw’ and ‘seen’ respectively.

Note some more examples given alongside and keep adding to the table. Look up the forms in a good dictionary.

Verb	Past	Perfect
see	saw	seen
do	did	done
go	went	gone
write	wrote	written
sing	sang	sung

TOW

Two minutes of Oral Work

1. Try to think of as many words ending in ‘-ing’ as possible within two minutes.
2. Select any ten of the words ending in ‘-ing’ that you have come up with. Try to make a meaningful sentence using one or more of them, till you have a sentence for all ten words. Do it within two minutes. Write down the sentences.