

NCERT Book Notes
Class 10th English (First Flight)

Chapter 11 – The Proposal

Activity

1. The word ‘proposal’ has several meanings. Can you guess what sort of proposal the play is about?

(i) a suggestion, plan or scheme for doing something

(ii) an offer for a possible plan or action

(iii) the act of asking someone’s hand in marriage

Ans: The word ‘proposal’ here means the act of asking someone’s hand in marriage.

2. Do you think Indian and Russian weddings have any customs in common? With the help of a partner, fill in the table below.

Ans: Wedding Ceremonies in Russia and India

Customs similar to Indian ones	Customs different from Indian ones
Wedding procession	Making posters, writing speeches, organizing contest
Stealing of the shoe	Ceremonial testing
honeymoon	Climbing stairs and answering question
reception	City tour
Grooms paying	Kissing the bride

Thinking About the Play

1. What does Chubukov at first suspect that Lomov has come for? Is he sincere when he later says “And I’ve always loved you, my angel, as if you were my son”? Find reasons for your answer from the play.

Ans: Chubukov initially assumed Lomov had come to borrow money. He was lying when he said he had always adored Lomov and that he was like his own child. He'd resolved that if Lomov tried to borrow money from him, he wouldn't give him any. He would not have dreamt of not giving him money if he believed what he said. He only said it because Lomov had come to propose to his daughter.

2. Chubukov says of Natalya: “... as if she won’t consent! She’s in love; egad, she’s like a lovesick cat...” Would you agree? Find reasons for your answer

Ans: Lomov was a good marriage potential for Chubukov's daughter, according to Chubukov. This was the proposal he had been waiting for. Chubukov told Lomov she loved him right away when he expressed his fears about Natalya's willingness to accept the proposal. This was not the case, though. At no point during the performance did Natalya appear to be in love with Lomov. She appeared to be more attached to her land, meadows, and dogs than she was to Lomov. Their constant bickering over petty topics implies that neither Lomov nor Natalya was in love with one other.

3. (i) Find all the words and expressions in the play that the characters use to speak about each other, and the accusations and insults they hurl at each other. (For example, Lomov, in the end, calls Chubukov an intriguer; but earlier, Chubukov has himself called Lomov a “malicious, double-faced intriguer.” Again, Lomov begins by describing Natalya as “ an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated.”)

Ans: The characters have utilised a variety of phrases and expressions to characterise one another. The following are a few of them:

Chubukov means "grabber," "intriguer," or "old rat." Natalya, a Jesuit, is a love-sick cat who is also an outstanding housekeeper, not bad-looking, and well-educated.

Lomov: a good neighbour; a friend; impudent; pettifogger; rascal; blind hen; turnip-ghost; a villain; a scarecrow; monster; the stuffed sausage; the wizen-faced frump; child; pup; milksop; fool

(ii) Then think of five adjectives or adjectival expressions of your own to describe each character in the play.

Ans: Chubukov: intriguer, grabber, old rat are some of the phrases and expressions used by various characters in the play to describe each other. Natalya is a love-sick cat who is also an amazing housekeeper and is well-educated. Lomov is a good neighbour, a pettifogger, a double-faced intriguer, a rascal, a blind fowl, a turnip ghost, a villain, a scarecrow, a stuffed sausage, and so on.

(iii) Can you now imagine what these characters will quarrel about next?

Ans: All of the characters appear to have a short fuse and are thus likely to get into a fight over the tiniest of matters. They'll get into a fight sooner or later, it's safe to say.

Thinking About Language

I. 1. This play has been translated into English from the Russian original. Are there any expressions or ways of speaking that strike you as more Russian than English? For example, would an adult man be addressed by an older man as my darling or my treasure in an English play? Read through the play carefully, and find expressions that you think are not used in contemporary English, and contrast these with idiomatic modern English expressions that also occur in the play.

Ans: Expressions that are not commonly used in modern English

1. "My beautiful," "my beauty," "my priceless," "my angel," and "my adored" (here, an older man is addressing an adult man)
2. "...and so forth..." (It is used after a statement to finish it)
3. "...as well as other things." (I'm not going to explain what it is; I'm just going to leave it as is)
4. "...and everything else." (I'm going to leave the sentence alone for now)

5. "the stuffed sausage," "the wizen-faced frump," "the scarecrow," "the stuffed sausage," "the stuffed sausage," "the stuffed sausage," "the stuffed sausage," "the stuffed sausage," "the (They insulted each other in this manner.)

6. "How are things going for you?" (Lomov is inquiring about Chubukov's health at this point.)

Idioms in modern English

1. "Madam," "my heart," "honoured Natalya Stepanovna," etc (used by Lomov for Natalya)

"Honored Stepan Stepanovitch" is number two (used by Lomov for Chubukov)

3. "Please accept my apologies..."

4. "My dear comrade" (Chubukov addressing Lomov)

5. "fool", "malicious, double-faced intriguer" (Chubukov insulting Lomov)

2. Look up the following words in a dictionary and find out how to pronounce them. Pay attention to how many syllables there are in each word, and find out which syllable is stressed, or said more forcefully.

palpitations	interfere	implore	thoroughbred
pedigree	principle	evidence	misfortune
malicious	embezzlement	architect	neighbours
accustomed	temporary	behaviour	documents

Ans:

Syllables	Stress or more forcefully
Pal-pi-ta-tions (4)	T
In-ter-fer-e (3)	F

Im-plore (2)	P
Thorough-bred (2)	B
Pe-di-gree (3)	B
Prin-ci-ple (3)	P
Evi-dence (2)	D
Mis-for-tune (3)	f-t
Ma-li-cious (3)	M
Em-be-zzle-ment (4)	b
Archi-tect (2)	a
Neigh-bours (2)	n
Accus-tomed (2)	k
Tem-po-rary (3)	t
Be-ha-viour (3)	h
Do-cu-ments (3)	d

3. Look up the following phrases in a dictionary to find out their meaning, and then use each in a sentence of your own.

(i) You may take it that

Ans: You may think I'm lying, but it will actually benefit you in the long term.

(ii) He seems to be coming round

Ans: He appears to be recovering from the shock of his father's death.

(iii) My foot's gone to sleep

Ans: My foot is sound asleep after a three-hour yoga session.

II. Reported Speech

You must have noticed that when we report someone's exact words, we have to make some changes in the sentence structure. In the following sentences fill in the blanks to list the changes that have occurred in the above pairs of sentences. One has been done for you.

1. To report a question, we use the reporting verb _____ . (as in Sentence Set 1).

Ans: asked.

2. To report a declaration, we use the reporting verb _____ .

Ans: declared.

3. The adverb of place here changes to _____ .

Ans: there.

4. When the verb in direct speech is in the present tense, the verb in reported speech is in the _____ tense (as in Sentence Set 3).

Ans: past tense.

5. If the verb in direct speech is in the present continuous tense, the verb in reported speech changes to _____ tense. For example, _____ changes to was getting.

Ans: past continuous tense; am getting ; was getting.

6. When the sentence in direct speech contains a word denoting respect, we add the adverb _____ in the reporting clause (as in Sentence Set 1).

Ans: respectfully.

7. The pronouns I, me, our and mine, which are used in the first person in direct speech, change to third person pronouns such as _____, _____, _____ or _____ in reported speech.

Ans: he/she, him/her, their, or his/hers.

III. Here is an excerpt from an article from the Times of India dated 27 August 2006. Rewrite it, changing the sentences in direct speech into reported speech. Leave the other sentences unchanged.

“Why do you want to know my age? If people know I am so old, I won’t get work!” laughs 90-year-old A. K. Hangal, one of Hindi cinema’s most famous character actors. For his age, he is rather energetic. “What’s the secret?” we ask. “My intake of everything is in small quantities. And I walk a lot,” he replies. “I joined the industry when people retire. I was in my 40s. So I don’t miss being called a star. I am still respected and given work when actors of my age are living in poverty and without work. I don’t have any complaints,” he says, adding, “but yes, I have always been underpaid.” Recipient of the Padma Bhushan, Hangal never hankered after money or materialistic gains. “No doubt I am content today, but money is important. I was a fool not to understand the value of money earlier,” he regrets.

Ans: 90-year-old A.K. Hangal, one of Hindi cinema's most well-known character performers, joked that we were curious about his age. He wouldn't be able to find a job if people knew he was that old. He has a lot of energy for his age. We inquired about the mystery. He said that he ate tiny amounts of everything and walked a lot. He explained that he got into the business when folks retired. He was in his forties. As a result, he didn't mind being referred to as a celebrity. When performers his age were living in poverty and without income, he was nonetheless regarded and given work. He stated that he had no grievances and that he had always been underpaid. Hangal, who was awarded the Padma Bhushan, has no desire for money or other

possessions. He admitted that he was content for the time being, but that money was crucial. He admitted that he was an idiot for not understanding the importance of money earlier.

90-year-old A.K. He was still respected and given work when actors of his age were living in poverty and without work.

Speaking and Writing

1. Anger Management: As adults, one important thing to learn is how to manage our temper. Some of us tend to get angry quickly, while others remain calm.

Can you think of three ill effects that result from anger? Note them down.

Suggest ways to avoid losing your temper in such situations. Are there any benefits from anger?

Ans: Anger has three negative consequences:

1. Anger causes blood pressure to fluctuate.
2. There are a slew of heart-related medical issues.
3. Induces anxiety and stress.

Suggestions for avoiding losing your cool too quickly and frequently:

1. Attempting to maintain a calm and serene demeanor.
2. Taking in the situation with an open mind and careful consideration.
3. Maintaining control over one's speech.

There is a case to be made that becoming angry has no advantages.

2. In pairs, prepare a script based on the given excerpt from The Home and the World by Rabindranath Tagore. You may write five exchanges between the

characters with other directions such as movements on stage and way of speaking, etc.

One afternoon, when I happened to be specially busy, word came to my office room that Bimala had sent for me. I was startled.

“Who did you say had sent for me?” I asked the messenger.

“The Rani Mother”.

“The Bara Rani?”

“No, sir, the Chota Rani Mother.”

The Chota Rani! It seemed a century since I had been sent for by her.

I kept them all waiting there, and went off into the inner apartments.

When I stepped into our room I had another shock of surprise to find

Bimala there with a distinct suggestion of being dressed up. The room, which from persistent neglect, had latterly acquired an air of having grown absent-minded, had regained something of its old order this afternoon. I stood there silently, looking enquiringly at Bimala. She flushed a little and the fingers of her right hand toyed for a time with the bangles on her left arm. Then she abruptly broke the silence. “Look here! Is it right that ours should be the only market in all Bengal which allows foreign goods?”

“What, then, would be the right thing to do?” I asked.

“Order them to be cleared out!”

“But the goods are not mine.”

“Is not the market yours?”

“It is much more theirs who use it for trade.”

“Let them trade in Indian goods, then.”

“Nothing would please me better. But suppose they do not?”

“Nonsense! How dare they be so insolent? Are you not...”

“I am very busy this afternoon and cannot stop to argue it out. But I must refuse to tyrannise.”

“It would not be tyranny for selfish gain, but for the sake of the country.”

“To tyrannise for the country is to tyrannise over the country. But that I am afraid you will never understand.” With this I came away.

Ans: Nikhil: Who sent for me, according to you?

The Rani Mother was the messenger.

Nikhil enquired, perplexed: "The Bara Rani?"

No, sir, the Chota Rani Mother, the messenger responded respectfully.

Nikhil was amused to learn this, as The Chota Rani had not sent him in a long time. Another surprise awaited Nikhil as he entered her chamber. The room, which was often in a state of mess, appeared to have achieved some organization.

The Chota Rani: Take a look! Is it fair that our market should be the only one in Bengal that accepts foreign goods?

What would be the correct thing to do, then, according to Nikhil?

Order them to be cleared away, Chota Rani (commandingly).

Nikhil (inquiring): Isn't this your market?

The Chota Rani: It is primarily theirs who trade with it.

Let them trade in Indian things, Nikhil said.

The Chota Rani: Nothing else would make me happier, but what if they don't follow?

Nikhil responded, "How could they be so arrogant?" I'm quite busy this afternoon and don't have time to debate about it, but I feel compelled to state that I refuse to tyrannize my homeland.

The Chota Rani: However, this tyranny would be for the good of the country.

Nikhil: Tyrannising for the sake of the country is the same as tyrannizing over the country, but you may not realize this.

Nikhil left the room, saying this.

3. In groups, discuss the qualities one should look for in a marriage partner.

You might consider the following points.

• Personal qualities

Appearance or looks

Attitudes and beliefs

Sense of humour

• Value system

Compassion and kindness

Tolerance, ambition

Attitude to money and wealth

• Education and professional background

Ans: Marriage is one of the most significant decisions a person makes in their adult life. The partners should be compatible with one another and work together to support and assist one another. There's no way that two people have the same approach or mindset, but what matters is that they try to adapt to the preferences of the other while maintaining their own uniqueness. In order to build a balanced companionship, the partners must be willing to judiciously share and employ monetary as well as other resources.

4. Are there parts of the play that remind you of film scenes from romantic comedies? Discuss this in groups, and recount to the rest of the class episodes similar to those in the play.

Ans: No, there are no such parts that will remind me of film scenes from romantic comedies. As we discussed in the group regarding this and by surprise they also felt the same. They said that they haven't seen any such scenes where they can remember romantic comedies.