

## A Different Kind of school

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



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.

“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.”

“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?”



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

“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**.”

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.

## NCERT: Class VI – By English Madhyam

“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.

“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.

“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.”

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.

“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.” “Are your helpers kind to you?” I asked.

“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.

“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?”

“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.



## NCERT: Class VI – By English Madhyam

---

“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.

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.”



## NCERT: Class VI – By English Madhyam

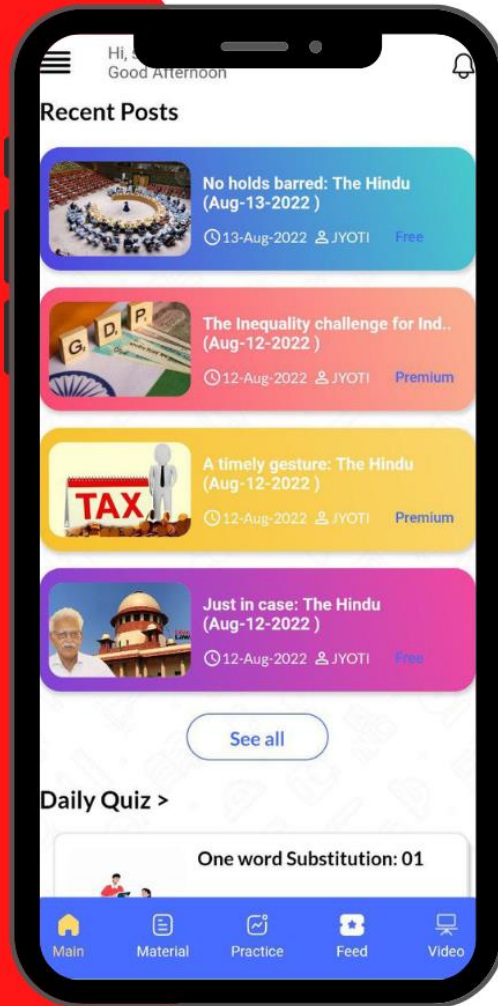
### Vocabulary

1. **A great deal** (phrase) – much : a lot  
बहुत कुछ
2. **In sight** (phrase) – within the range of vision; visible, seeable देखने में
3. **Flower-beds** (noun) – an area where flowers are planted. फूलों की क्यारी
4. **Pass on** (phrasal verb) – Forward, go, proceed in, to move in a specified direction आगे बढ़ना
5. **Plump** (adjective) – fat, fleshy, overweight, curvy मोटा
6. **Homesick** (adjective) – unhappy (child) because of being away from home for a long period
7. **Thoughtfulness** (noun) – the state of thinking carefully about something विचारशीलता
8. **Overlook** (verb) – fail to notice देखी अनदेखी करना
9. **Jolly** (adjective) – cheerful, happy, cheery, playful प्रसन्न/ खुशमिजाज
10. **Lead** (verb) – guide, show, lead the way, usher, escort, steer मार्ग दिखलाना
11. **Crutch** (noun) – a stick with a piece that fits under or around the arm which someone who is having difficulty walking leans on for support बैसाखी
12. **Hopeless** (adjective) – despairing, without hope, desperate, dejected, downhearted निराशाजनक
13. **Cripple** (noun) – A person who is unable to walk or move normally through disability or because of injury to their back or legs अपंग
14. **Lame** (adjective) – unable to walk easily, as a result of an injury or condition affecting the legs or feet लंगड़ा/ पंगु
15. **Misfortune** (noun) – failure, problem, difficulty, trouble, setback, adversity दुर्भाग्य
16. **Term** (noun) – the duration of a person's life. अवधि
17. **Deaf** (adjective) – hard of hearing, hearing-impaired बहरा
18. **Dumb** (adjective) – unable to speak. गूंगा
19. **Bandage** (verb) – bind, bind up, cover, swathe, strap up बांधना
20. **On one's honour** (phrase) – With utmost sincerity; with one's serious promise पूरी ईमानदारी से
21. **Peep** (verb) – take a secret look, have a peek, glance, peer झांकना

## NCERT: Class VI – By English Madhyam

---

22. **Put on** (phrasal verb) – Place a garment on part of one's body. पहिनना
23. **Wake** (verb) – emerge or cause to emerge from sleep; stop sleeping. जागना
24. **Misery** (noun) – pain, sorrow, unhappiness, sadness, grief, distress दुख
25. **Will-power** (noun) – a very strong determination to do something. इच्छा शक्ति
26. **Exclaim** (verb) – To speak suddenly or sharply, as from surprise पुकारना, चिल्लाना
27. **Awful** (adjective) – very bad, dreadful, terrible, frightful, atrocious, hopeless भयानक
28. **Ghastly** (adverb) – shockingly frightful or dreadful; horrible भयावह
29. **Glad** (adjective) – pleased, joyful, happy, overjoyed खुशी
30. **Troublesome** (noun) – Worrying, upsetting, difficult, annoying, irksome परेशानी/ कष्टप्रद
31. **Frightening** (adjective) – Making someone afraid or anxious; terrifying. डरावना
32. **Ache** (verb) – be in pain, hurt, be sore, be painful, throb दर्द होना
33. **Gradually** (adverb) – slowly, unhurriedly धीरे-धीरे
34. **Discover** (verb) – come to know, learn, realize, become aware of (a situation) पता चलना



# Learn Vocabulary Through Reading Articles

**English Madhyam**