



## AN APPRAISAL OF ENGLISH SYLLABUS OF THE AP STATE BOARD

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### ABSTRACT

English Language Teaching in India is one of the most serious academic activities in India. The best minds go into the syllabus design, most experienced scholars write the text books, equally experienced teachers teach in the classrooms. Indian schools and universities produce some of the most talented English scholars and teachers. Yet, in the rural areas of India, the situation is not very encouraging. On the one hand, English is used almost everywhere in India, yet, our rural students still are not at home and at ease with it. Against this scenario, we make an attempt to find how the text book of English for tenth class prepared by AP State Board of Secondary Education fares.

Key Words: syllabus, ELT, text book, assessment

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### INTRODUCTION

The role of English in India is perhaps unrivalled by any language, except perhaps Sanskrit in ancient India. As Sanskrit played an unparalleled role in ancient India in matters of education and religion, English in modern times plays a pre-eminent role in several domains such as administration, education, judiciary, science and technology, and so on. It is a conviction on the part of many people that English is a passport to bright future. As such, there is a great demand for English from all sections of people. In the opinion of many parents, their children must be educated through English medium only so that they learn English even better.

Leaving aside the impressions and opinions of laymen, it is a matter of fact that in modern times it is inescapable for everyone to be familiar with English. For this reason, English forms a necessary

part of our educational curriculum. Each state in India has its own State board of education which may be different from the other states. In addition there are two central boards namely viz; ICSE (Indian council for secondary education), CBSE (central board of secondary education). The state of Andhra Pradesh has its own state board of education which looks after all the educational programmes in the state. Though English is taught in different syllabi by all these different boards, many students still or lagging behind in learning English and sometimes fail to get a job on account of this. In our paper, we want to examine the text book of English of the State Board of Secondary Education in Andhra Pradesh.

The following are generally considered to be the qualities of a good text book.

1. It introduces vocabulary and structures in a graded manner.

2. It provides a basis for teaching and for learning.
3. It extends a linguistic experience of the students.
4. It enables teachers to measure students' achievement.
5. It stimulates interest in the minds of students with good visual appeal.

The text book of English under Andhra Pradesh State Syllabus is organized in the following way. Eight themes have been identified and under each theme three reading texts have been included for study. These eight themes, i.e. twenty four reading texts are to be completed in about a little less than nine months. In addition, eight units are given as an appendix, which are meant for listening. The goals expected to be achieved at the end of the course are

- a) To attain basic proficiency, i.e. spontaneous and appropriate use of language.
- b) To develop linguistic competency for abstract thought.
- c) To be able to construct oral and written discourses like narratives, descriptions, essays, conversations, Diary, plays, script writing, profile writing, Dramas, posters, slogans, letters and so on.

1. A review of Themes:

The eight themes included in the text book are as follows.

1. Personality Development
2. Wit and Humor
3. Human Relations
4. Films and Theatre
5. Social Issues
6. Bio- Diversity
7. Nation and Diversity
8. Human Rights

A look at the themes reveals that fiction is given low priority compared to social issues and other aspects of the society like movies, environment, and diversity of India. Especially, under environment, the pieces prescribed take the students away from India and sound too exotic for them. Instead, the focus should have been on India, since environmental pollution is a grave problem in India calling for urgent attention. Besides, fiction should

have been given more space rather than subjects and issues that look dry and unappealing to a young mind of fifteen years! After all, the basic feature of a text book, especially a language text book, is that it should stimulate interest in the minds of students and invite them to read it with enthusiasm rather than read it as a compulsory exercise. Besides, to generate interest in the minds of students, it could have been a good idea to begin the text book with some interesting stories of fiction.

The entire focus is on topics like human rights and other social issues, but surprisingly, science and technology does not find a place. There are innumerable humorous anecdotes in the history of the development of science, some of which could have found a place in the selection.

2. A review of the Lessons:

A remarkable feature of all the lessons is that most of them are in a language that is accessible to most students. The first lesson is about Nick Vujicic, but it also includes pictures of Sudha Chandran, Stephen Hawking and Helen Keller, three very inspiring people in their respective fields. But, unless the teacher takes time to get information about all of them and teaches the students about them, it is not expected of the students in rural areas to be familiar with them. There are three plays, all of which are located in English context with English characters. At least one short play depicting the Indian scene could have made the students feel at home. There are five poems in the text book. The poem entitled 'Abandoned', though a good poem, makes the task of a teacher difficult to teach the poem in a mixed class with both boys and girls.

3. A review of Exercises:

The text book abounds in various types of exercises. These exercises will give ample scope for the learners to learn good English. However, given the inadequate time for the English teacher in our existing system, it is uncertain whether the teacher and the students will be able to complete all the exercises within time. In addition, unless ample time is available for the teacher, and unless the teacher himself is experienced, and unless the students are able to speak a little of English, it may be a tough task for the teacher to practice group discussions

and role plays in the classroom, especially in rural areas.

4. A review of the Assessment:

There are two types of assessment as follows.

- 1) Formative Assessment
- 2) Summative Assessment

#### 1) Formative Assessment

This is done on the basis of four tools as follows.

- a) Observation (During classroom interaction)
- b) Written work
- c) Project work
- d) Slip-test

The teacher is expected to assess the students for each of these four for the whole year, by awarding marks for each of them. Classroom performance is to be noticed and written work is to be assessed by the teacher. Projects are expected to be given and slip-tests are to be conducted without prior notice.

#### 2) Summative Assessment

A summative assessment test is held after every term which is for hundred marks. Out of this, twenty marks are for oral test and eighty marks are for written test. Under the oral test ten marks are for listening and speaking and another ten marks are for targeted oral discourses. The teachers are expected to assess the performance of students in these areas not on the summative assessment day but over a period of time.

The assessment pattern works best if the formative assessment part is done sincerely and honestly both by the teachers and the students.

On the whole, the English text book of the State syllabus is well designed and well executed. Except that the content has less of fiction and more of social issues and environmental issues. Though, the intensions behind this type of selection are laudable, the primary purpose of an English text book is to teach English and not to teach social issues. But, the text book, taken as a whole with the issues that it covers, and the language that it includes and the exercises that are given is very well executed. It remains the duty of a teacher to make use of this text book to perform to the best of his ability in the class room.

To conclude, the purpose of English text book is not to introduce and teach social issues but, to teach language in a refreshingly entertaining way by,

perhaps, including more of stories of fiction rather than dull and dry subjects. As Bright and McGregor say, if the students do not find something interesting, they tend to drop it soon. The text book, on the whole, is of course very well executed in terms of a vast number of exercises but the themes could have been a little more interesting to the young minds.

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