



19

A PRAYER FOR HEALING

From ancient times, people across the world, belonging to different cultures and different religions, have prayed to various objects of nature – the sun, moon, stars, earth, wind, water bodies, plants, and animals. This is because man has recognised their importance from the very beginning. The earth is our home, our only home. But have we been good to it? Do we think of protecting it? Do we think of taking care of it? ‘A Prayer for Healing’ is a poem about the earth and about us. It is an appeal to all the people around the globe to make a collective effort to heal the earth. Let us read it.



OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson you will be able to:

- recognise the importance of planet earth and related environmental issues;
- spread awareness about environmental issues by writing letters, slogans, and through discussions;
- read and enjoy a poem;
- explain the central idea in the poem;
- justify the choice of words in the poem;
- identify the refrain in a poem/song;
- write a letter to the editor of a newspaper, and
- enhance your vocabulary.



19.1 LET US READ THE TEXT

A PRAYER FOR HEALING

We join with the earth and with each other

To bring new life to the land

To restore the waters

To refresh the air

We join with the earth and with each other

To renew the forests

To care for the plants

To protect the creatures



We join with the earth and with each other

To celebrate the seas

To rejoice the sunlight

To sing the song of the stars

We join with the earth and with each other

To recreate the human community

To promote justice and peace

To remember our children

We join with the earth and with each other

We join together as many and diverse expressions

Of one loving mystery, for the healing of earth and the renewal of all life.

restore: to bring back (something) to its original or former condition

refresh: to make fresh and pure again

renew the forests: to make the forests grow back (as if new)

celebrate: to show that we value and appreciate something

rejoice: to express happiness

recreate: to make it better

community: group of people living in a particular area or place

promote: to help to develop

diverse: different

mystery: something not understood

healing: making whole and healthy again

renewal: making new again



19.2 LET US UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

19.2.1 PART 1 (Stanzas 1, 2 and 3)

We join with the earth and with each other..... To sing the song of the stars.

We all need air, water and food to live. The earth and its atmosphere give us all these. If we want fresh air and water in the future, we must take care of our land, the air around us and the water sources, by not polluting them and by preventing people who try to do so.

Earth is our home and also the home of many plants, trees, animals, birds and insects. When trees are cut down and water bodies are polluted, many creatures lose their homes. Some species from the animal and plant world are already extinct and some are in danger of becoming extinct. We must protect them and take care of them. Forests, the green cover of the earth, must be looked after too.

Can you imagine the night sky without stars? Do you like looking at the shimmering waters of the oceans and seas? On a cold, winter day, have you ever wished for the sun to come out and warm you? We feel happy because we get to enjoy these wonderful gifts of nature. They are not only beautiful but they also sustain (preserve, protect and support) life.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.1

1. Tick the correct option.
‘We join with the earth and with each other’ means that
 - a. we are related to each other.
 - b. we agree to work together.
 - c. we should hold each other’s hands.
 - d. we live on the earth.
2. What do the words/phrases ‘to bring to new life’, ‘to restore’, ‘to refresh’ and ‘to renew’ suggest?
3. What ‘creatures’ are being referred to in this unit? Tick the correct option.
 - a. ghosts and spirits
 - b. all types of animals, birds and insects
 - c. human beings who are dependent upon others
4. The words ‘celebrate’ and ‘rejoice’ are expressions of joy.
We celebrate the birth of a child because we are happy. We rejoice in the fact that free and compulsory education is the right of every child now.
But why have these words been used in the context of the sea, sunlight and stars?



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LET US LISTEN 19.1

We have only one earth, so we must do our bit to protect it and keep it clean. Environmental slogans help to create awareness about environmental issues.

Form a buddy group. One by one, read aloud the slogans given below.

**Let's go green
to get our
globe clean**

**When you refuse
to reuse, it's our
earth you abuse**

**Air is nothing
but life, if
polluted how
can we survive?**

**Earth isn't
disposable**

**Earth Day
Every Day**

**Heal the world!
Make it a better
place**

**Give earth a
chance**

**When the earth
dies, where will
you live?**

**Save forests.
Save wildlife**

**Living beings are
equal, protect
wildlife to
preserve equality**

**To sit in the
shade, you have
to save paper
first**

**Reuse the past,
recycle the
present, save
the future**

**Say NO to
crackers**

**Crackers are of
no use, they are
just environment
abuse**

**Better earth,
better life,
better
tomorrow...**

**Save Your
Planet, Save
Yourself**

**Your Planet
Needs You—
Unite to Combat
Climate Change**

Now make at least two slogans on your own.

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LET US DO 19.1

Take a shopping bag made of cloth or jute. Using fabric colours, write the slogan you liked best in bold letters on the bag. If anyone asks you about it, explain to him/her the importance of the slogan.



LET US TALK 19.1

In your 'buddy group', read aloud *A Prayer for Healing*.

Ask your friends to come up with ideas to preserve the environment (for example, plants, animals, forests, water, air and others)

Write them down in your notebook.

Which ones do you already follow in your day-to-day life? Which two would you like to follow?

If you and your friends have difficulty in coming up with ideas, re-read the slogans given in the section **Let Us Listen** to help to think of ideas.



DO YOU KNOW



- Almost 24 trees are cut down to produce 1 ton of newspaper.
- Recycling 1 ton of paper saves about 17 mature trees, 7,000 gallons of water, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, and 2 barrels of oil.
- Recycling one aluminum can save enough energy to run a 100-watt bulb for 20 hours, a computer for 3 hours, or a TV for 2 hours.
- Plastic takes up to 500 years to decompose.
- Glass is 100% recyclable and can be used innumerable times.



LET US DO 19.2

A. i. Find a poem or song that is related to the environment in any language.

and/or

Compose a short poem (of at least eight lines) related to the environment.



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ii. Share it with your buddy group.

B. Different festivals are celebrated for different reasons.

- Do you know of any festival in which the sun, stars, water bodies, animals or plants are worshipped (especially in the area/state in which you live)?
- Talk to your elders and neighbours to find out.
- On a sheet of paper, write down the name of the festival, the reason it is celebrated and how it is celebrated.
- Also find out if there is a folk tale associated with it and narrate it your family or friends.

19.2.2 PART 2 (Stanzas 4 and 5)

We join with the earth and with each other.....and the renewal of all life.

The first three stanzas talk about caring for the land, air, water, plants, animals and other natural objects. In this unit, the focus is on the human world. The poet suggests that we should work together to make the human world a better place to live in. We should try to leave the earth in a good condition for the future generations. Don't you think so too? All human beings differ from each other in some way, but we share the same home – the earth, and must work collectively to protect and preserve it.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.2

1. What do you think the poet means by 'recreate the human community'?
2. Tick the correct option.
 'To remember our children' means that.....
 - a. children will be adults in future.
 - b. parents love their children.
 - c. we should leave behind for our children a better world.
 - d. naughty children can destroy peace.
3. What two things does the poet want us to promote? (Answer in 30 words.)
4. What does the poet mean by the phrase 'many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery'?



DO YOU KNOW

To spread awareness about issues related to the earth and its environment, various initiatives have been taken up worldwide. Some important days that are celebrated internationally are:

EARTH DAY – 22 APRIL

Earth Day is celebrated to make people appreciate the earth's natural environment and raise awareness about its condition. It was first held on April 22, **1970**. It is now celebrated in more than 175 countries every year.



WORLD WATER DAY – 22 MARCH

Water is a basic requirement for all forms of life. It's very important to utilise and manage this resource in a sustainable manner. In order to create awareness about it, in **1993**, March 22 was declared as World Day for Water.



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY – 5 JUNE

World Environment Day (WED) was first observed in **1972** to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment. It is commemorated every year on June 5 to stimulate awareness of the environment and to encourage political attention and action.



EARTH HOUR – Last Saturday of March

Earth Hour is a global event organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). It is held every year on the last Saturday of March. It asks households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights and other electrical appliances for one hour, to raise awareness of the need to take action on climate change. Earth Hour was jointly initiated by the WWF and the *Sydney Morning Herald* in **2007**, when 2.2 million residents of Sydney (Australia) participated by turning off all non-essential lights.





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19.3 APPRECIATION

Refrain

When a line is repeated several times in a poem, it is called a refrain. A lot of songs (which are often a form of poetry) contain a refrain. A refrain usually conveys the central idea of the song/poem.

Read the song given below.

WE SHALL OVERCOME

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
 We shall overcome some day
 Oh, deep in my heart,
 I do believe that we shall overcome some day

We shall all be free, we shall all be free,
 We shall all be free some day
 Oh, deep in my heart,
 I do believe that we shall overcome some day

We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace,
 We shall live in peace some day
 Oh, deep in my heart,
 I do believe that we shall overcome some day

The refrain in this song is: *I do believe that we shall overcome some day*

Exercise

- a) Read aloud *A Prayer for Healing*.
- b) Identify the refrain.

**LET US DO 19.3**

Given below are the names of some organisations working for the protection of the environment:

INTERNATIONAL

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Friends of the Earth

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- Green Cross International
- Greenpeace
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

NATIONAL

- Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India
- Forest Survey of India (FSI)
- Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)
- Forest Research Institute (FRI)
- The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
- Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)
- Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPI)

Task: Find out about the objectives and activities of any two of the organisations mentioned above.



LET US LEARN NEW WORDS 19.1

In this lesson you have learnt about the importance of protecting and preserving the environment.

Given below are the meanings of some words/terms that are often used in this context:

- **pollution:** the release of harmful and/or poisonous substances in the environment
- **deforestation:** clearing of forests by cutting of trees
- **conservation:** protection of a resource from harm, destruction, wastage and overuse
- **biodegradable material:** material that can be decomposed by bacteria or other living organisms. Examples: vegetable peels, paper, cloth.
- **non-biodegradable material:** materials that do not biodegrade or do not biodegrade easily. Examples:
 - a) Glass bottles – take a million years to biodegrade
 - b) Aluminium cans – take 80-100 years to biodegrade
 - c) Styrofoam glasses – take 500 years - forever to biodegrade

Now that you have understood the meanings of these words, select the appropriate word from the box and fill in the blanks to complete the sentences given below.

biodegradable, conservation, pollution, non-biodegradable, deforestation

- 1) _____ waste should be put in green dustbins and _____ waste in blue dustbins.



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- 2) Almost seventy per cent of the earth's land animals and plants live in forests, and many cannot survive the _____ that destroys their homes.
- 3) Different activities of man have caused different kinds of air and water _____.
- 4) People all over the world need to work for the _____ of natural resources.



LET US DO 19.4

After reading *A Prayer for Healing*, you have developed awareness about the need for environmental protection. Now look at the advertisement given below.



(published in the *Hindustan Times* on 25 March 2011)

- a. Who has issued this advertisement?
- b. What does the advertisement ask the people to do?
- c. Show this advertisement to your buddy group. Discuss Earth Hour in the group. Tell your buddies (friends) to talk about the advertisement to at least 5 people.
- d. Cut more such advertisements that are issued to create awareness about environmental protection and paste them in a scrap book.



19.4 LET US WRITE

Formal Letter to the Editor of a Newspaper

It is said that the pen is mightier than the sword. By writing a letter to the editor of a

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newspaper, you can share your views about important issues with a large audience. A well-written and timely letter can create awareness about environmental protection, and influence readers and even government policy.

Tips on Writing a Letter to the Editor

- A letter to the editor of a newspaper may be a response to an article in the newspaper, or it may be written to express your views and thoughts on important issues.
- When responding to an article in the paper, begin your letter by mentioning the heading and date of the original article, along with the name of the correspondent (journalist, writer).
- Always keep your letter to the editor brief, to-the-point and interesting.
- Support your letter with accurate facts and statistics.
- Open your letter with a strong statement.
- Close the letter with possible solutions/thoughts for the readers to remember.

Exercise

Write a letter to the Editor of a news paper discussing any two environmental issues that concern you the most. Outline the consequences of what might happen if no action is taken. Also give probable solutions to the problems. Use the format given below.

Format of a Formal Letter

Sender's address: _____ _____
Date: _____
The Editor The _____ _____
New Delhi-110001
Respected Sir/Madam, Subject: _____
Body of the letter
Yours sincerely/Yours truly _____ your name



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**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

For our health and happiness, we need a healthy environment — everything that surrounds us including the air, water, land, plants, animals and man-made things.

A Prayer for Healing creates awareness about the need for environmental protection. There is an urgent need to make global and united efforts to control and stop environmental damage. We should live respectfully on earth; we have no other home; earth is our only home.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. What is the main idea of the poem *A Prayer for Healing*?
2. Can you think of another title for this poem?
3. Earth is our home. It is the home of many other creatures too. Imagine that you are a bird living in a nest on a tree. Suddenly you find that the tree has been cut. How would you feel and what would you do? (Answer in about 50-75 words.)
4. Which aspect of your natural environment (water bodies, trees, mountains, birds, animals, etc.) appeals to you the most? Why? Suggest two ways in which you would take care of it.
5. This poem is an appeal for the healing of the earth. Do you think the earth needs healing (making healthy again)? Why/Why not?
6. Which stanza/s of the poem do you like the most? Why?
7. How can you contribute towards healing the earth? Read the following suggestions and tick the ones that you already follow or want to follow in the future.
 - a. Spreading awareness about environmental issues
 - b. Joining an NGO/organisation working in the field of environmental protection
 - c. Adopting environment-friendly measures in day-to-day life
 - d. Stopping people who are polluting the environment
 - e. Following some other ways _____

**ANSWERS****19.2.1 PART 1****INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.1**

1. b. we agree to work together.

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2. They suggest that life, air, water and forests should be brought back to their old condition—when the air was pure, the water was clean and plentiful, and forests were thick and full of trees, resources were not overused, animals and birds were safe in their natural habitat and not hunted by human beings.
3. b. all types of animals, birds and insects
4. The sea, the sun and the stars are wonderful gifts of nature. They are beautiful and sustain (protect, preserve and support) life. We feel happy to see them. The words ‘celebrate’, ‘rejoice’ and ‘sing’ are all used to express our happiness, and hence have been used in context of the sea, sun and stars.

LET US TALK 19.1

Suggested responses:

- Turn off all lights that don’t need to be on.
- Buy energy-efficient bulbs and appliances.
- Try to use solar water heaters.
- Water the plants in the evening.
- Use recycled products, especially paper. (Use grey paper registers instead of white)
- Re-use envelopes, jars, paper bags, scrap paper, etc.
- Take a print-out only when absolutely necessary.
- Avoid using anything made of plastic foam.
- Join a car pool or use public transport to commute if travelling long distances.
- Enjoy sports and recreational activities that use your muscles rather than petrol and/or electricity.
- Try to compost kitchen and garden waste.
- Participate in events such as the Earth Hour.
- Volunteer to support the initiatives launched by the government and NGOs for environment protection.

19.2.2 PART 2

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.2

1. It means that we should try and create a community where people live in harmony with each other and with their surroundings, where justice is valued, where all living things – animals, birds, plants and human beings are respected and cared for.
2. c. we should leave behind for our children a better world.



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3. Justice and peace
4. Individual responses.

Suggested response: No two human beings on this planet are exactly the same. They are different from each other due to their looks, temperament, culture, beliefs or religion. Yet there are many things that all human beings have in common. We need to live in harmony with each other and with nature.

19.3 APPRECIATION

Refrain: *We join with the earth and with each other*

LET US LEARN NEW WORDS/PHRASES 19.1

1. Biodegradable, non-biodegradable
2. Deforestation
3. Pollution
4. Conservation

LET US DO 19.4

- a) Department of Environment & Forests, Government of NCT of Delhi
- b) The advertisement asks people to save power for one hour on a specific date and at a specific time.

19.4 LET US WRITE

Individual responses.

TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. This poem is an appeal to everyone to work together to bring the earth back to its old healthy state, to protect it and leave it in a good condition for the future generations.
2. Individual responses
Accept all responses
3. Individual responses
Accept all responses
4. Individual responses
Accept all responses

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5. Individual responses

Suggested response

There is a need to heal the earth because over a period of time many harmful substances have been, and are being added to the environment. This has caused air, water and land pollution. Also, the earth's resources are limited but the needs of human beings are many. As a result there is a shortage of resources. Therefore resources should be conserved, especially those resources which cannot be renewed. If the earth and its resources are safe then mankind will be safe, because mankind depends on the earth's resources for all its needs.

6. Individual responses

Accept all responses

7. Individual responses

Accept all responses

8. Individual responses

Accept all responses



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