



11

MY ELDER BROTHER

Children enjoy listening to stories. Have you ever listened to bedtime stories told by your grandparents or parents? Adults enjoy reading stories. In spite of our busy routine we like to snatch some time to read stories as a pastime.

The short story is one of the most exciting and important literary forms. A short story is brief and often has an unexpected ending. 'My Elder Brother' is a short story about two brothers, how they initially relate to each other, and how a change comes about in their behaviour as the story develops.



OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson you will be able to:

- analyse the behaviour and attitude of the two characters in the story;
- explain the interpersonal relationships between siblings;
- recognise the importance of forgiveness in relationships and inculcate it in daily behaviour;
- identify noun clauses and define their functions, and
- record significant experiences in a diary or a learning journal.



11.1 LET US READ THE TEXT

I was only a year and some months younger than Valodya; we grew up, studied and played together. No distinction of elder and younger was made between us. But just about



Notes

the time I am speaking of I began to realize that I was no companion for him, either in age, in interests or in ability. It even seemed to me that Valodya himself was aware of his superiority and was proud of it. This idea (it may have been a wrong one) was inspired by my vanity which suffered every time I came in contact with him. He was better than me in everything; at lessons, in arguments and in manners, and all this took me farther from him and caused me moral anguish which I could not understand. When Valodya was given a tucked linen shirt for the first time I was unhappy for not having a shirt like that. I am sure I would have felt happier if I was convinced that every time he arranged his collar it was not done to annoy me.

What tormented me most was that it sometimes seemed to me Valodya understood what was going on inside me but tried to hide it. But perhaps my sensitiveness and tendency to analyse deceived me in this case. It may be Valodya did not feel at all as I did. He was impulsive and his enthusiasm in different hobbies did not last long.

He would suddenly develop a passion for pictures, himself take up painting, spend all his money buying them and beg them of his drawing-master, of papa and of grandmamma. Then it would be a craze for curios to decorate his table, collecting them from every room in the house, or a mania for novels which he obtained on the sly and read all day and night. I could not help being impressed by his hobbies but I was too proud to imitate him and too young and not independent enough to choose a hobby for myself. But there was nothing I envied so much as Valodya's happy large heartedness which showed itself most strikingly when we quarreled. I always felt that he was behaving well but I could not do likewise.

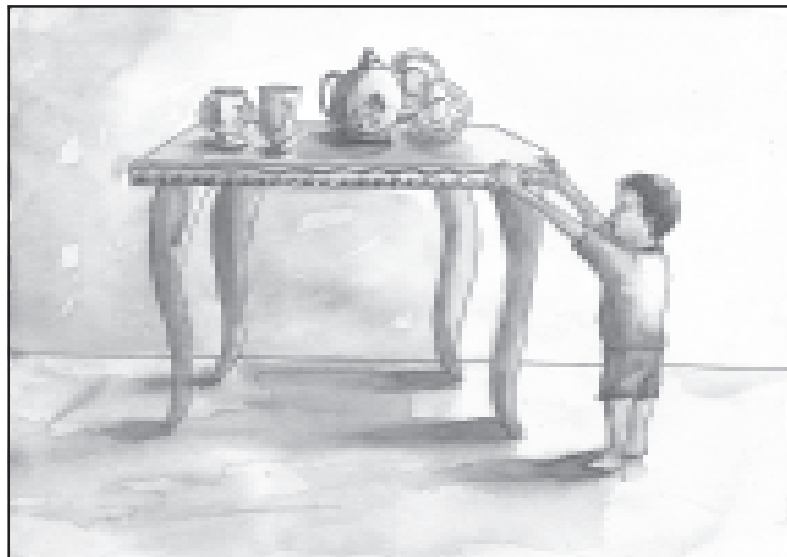


Fig. 11.1

Once when his passion of ornaments was at its height, I went up to his table and accidentally broke an empty bright-coloured little scent bottle.

“Who asked you to touch my things?” demanded Valodya coming into the room and

was no companion for him: not similar in tastes and interests

anguish: mental suffering

tormented: caused mental pain, (here) annoyed

impulsive: one who has a sudden desire to act without thinking about the result

curios: works of art valued for being unusual

mania: extreme enthusiasm

at its height: utmost degree

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seeing how I had upset the symmetry of the different treasures on his table. “And where is the scent bottle? You must have”

“I knocked it over by accident and it broke. What does it matter?”

“Do me the favour-never dare touch my things again”, he said, putting the pieces of broken flask together and looking at them sorrowfully.

“And you please don’t issue orders” I retorted, “that’s all.”

And I smiled, though I did not feel in the least like smiling.

“Yes, its nothing to you but it does matter to me,” pursued Valodya, jerking his shoulder, a gesture he had inherited from papa. “He goes and breaks it and then laughs, the nasty little brat!”

“I am a little brat; and you’re big but you’re stupid.”

“I am not going to quarrel with you,” said Valodya, giving me a slight push, “go away.”

“Don’t push!”

“Get away!”

“Don’t push, I tell you!”

Valodya took my word and tried to drag me away from the table; but I was beside myself by now; I got hold of the leg of the table and tipped it over. “There now!” And all his china and glass ornaments crashed to the floor.

“You disgusting little boy!” cried Valodya, trying to save some of his falling treasures.

“Well, now it is all over between us,” I thought as I left the room,

“we have quarreled for good.”

As soon as afternoon lessons were over I left the room. I was too scared, uncomfortable and ashamed to be alone with my brother. After our history lesson in the evening I took my exercise books and started towards the door. As I passed Valodya, though I wanted to go up to him and make friends I scowled and put on an angry expression. At that moment Valodya raised his head and, with a meaningful smile, looked me full in the face. Our eyes met and I knew that he understood me; but some irresistible feeling made me turn away.

“Nicky!” he said in a most natural voice without a scrap of pathos.

“Don’t be cross any more. Forgive me if I offended you.” And he held out his hand.



Notes

symmetry: exact match in shape and size (here) balance
treasure: a collection of valuable things
knock ... over: hit something and make it fall to the ground
brat: a person, specially a child, who behaves badly
took my word: believed me, (here) acting literally instead of understanding the spirit
was beside myself: unable to control oneself because of anger; (here) very annoyed
tipped: tilted
china: cups and plates and other things made of china clay
disgusting: very unpleasant
scowled: looked in an angry or annoyed way
irresistible: so strong that it can’t be stopped
scrap: a little bit
pathos: something which arouses a feeling of pity



Fig.11.2

Something that came higher and higher seemed to be pressing my chest and stopping my breath but this only lasted a second; tears came to my eyes and I felt better.

“Forgive . . . m-me, Val-dya,” I stammered, squeezing his hand. Valodya looked at me as if he could not make out at all why there should be tears in my eyes.

– Leo Tolstoy

(Excerpts from his autobiographical novel ‘Boyhood’ originally written in Russian, translation by C.J. Haqar)

11.2 LET US UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

11.2.1 PART 1

I was only a yearcould not do likewise.

In life we share relationships of varying intensities with different people both within and outside our family; we have the closest relationship with our family. This story is about two brothers, the narrator Nicky and his elder brother, Valodya. Initially they get along quite well studying and playing together. As they grow up, Nicky starts feeling that Valodya is proud because he believes he is better. Nicky feels quite hurt and thinks that Valodya does not understand his feelings. He resents Valodya’s ability to have different hobbies which he is unable to imitate.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.1

Answer the following questions.

A.1. The two brothers were not much different in age or built. But the younger brother says, “I was no companion for him.”

stammered: spoke with hesitation

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Notes

Give two reasons why Nicky felt so.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2. What was the effect of this feeling of inadequacy on Nicky's relationship with his elder brother?

.....

3. Nicky says, "It even seemed to me that Valodya was himself aware of his superiority and was proud of it."

Do you think Valodya was really proud? Please provide one reason for your response. What made the Nicky feel so?

.....

4. Nicky was most upset by which aspect of Valodya's personality?

.....

5. Which two qualities of Valodya have been highlighted by the author?

.....

6. Choose the right answer to fill in the blanks:

The narrator was

- (i) jealous of his brother.
(ii) angry with his brother.
(iii) critical of his brother's behaviour.

7. Describe in about 50 words a situation where you were jealous of your friend or sibling. Do you think you were right to feel so? How has it affected your relationship?



LET US LEARN NEW WORDS 11.1

1. Choose the right answer, from the choices given below, which explains the underlined word/phrase.

a. This idea was inspired by my vanity.

- (i) uselessness
(ii) bias
(iii) false pride



Notes

- b. obtained on the sly
- secretly
 - quietly
 - silently
- c. He was large hearted.
- was generous
 - had an enlarged heart
 - was caring
2. Pick out words from the text which are opposite in meaning to the following words.

Words

- inferiority
 - nothing
 - misunderstood
 - please
 - modest
 - selfish
3. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, choosing words from the list given in the box. There is one extra word.

independent, sensitive, large hearted, impulsive, proud, analytical

- In am _____ to be an Indian.
- My friend is so _____ that she keeps changing her mind all the time.
- Saira will make a good counselor as she is _____ to others other's feelings.
- It is good to be _____ about one's own conduct.
- Tasneem is very _____, she does her home work without anybody's help.

**LET US DO 11.1**

Given in the box are some describing words/phrases, some applicable to the narrator (Nicky) and some to his brother (Valodya). Put them in the respective columns.

impulsive, sensitive, fond of reading novels, fond of collecting curios,
resentful, vain, analytical, forgiving, generous, proud, well mannered



<u>NICKY</u>	<u>VALODYA</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

? DO YOU KNOW

Count Leo Tolstoy, the author of the story, ‘My Elder Brother’ was born in 1828 in a family of old Russian nobility.

Tolstoy is one of the greatest writers of Russian literature. His most famous novels are ‘War and Peace’ and ‘Anna Karenina’. He has, to his credit, many short stories and plays also. His work, ‘The Kingdom of God is Within You’ influenced Gandhiji so much that he abandoned violence and took to non-violent resistance, a debt Gandhiji acknowledges in his autobiography calling Tolstoy the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has produced.



In today’s world full of violence and hatred, Tolstoy’s philosophy can kindle in us empathy and inspire us to be tolerant, choose the path of peace and to live and let live.

11.2.2 PART 2

Once whenwe have quarrelled for good.

Do you find it difficult to apologise when you make a mistake? In this unit something similar happens to the narrator. He describes an incident wherein he breaks Valodya’s treasured scent bottle. Nicky realizes that the scent bottle was important for his brother but he pretends to smile in order to show Valodya that he is not bothered about his brother’s. As a result the brothers quarrelled and exchanged heated arguments. They pushed and pulled each other.



Notes

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.2**

1. Who had a passion for ornaments?
 2. How did the quarrel between the narrator and his brother start?
 3. How did the scent bottle break?
 4. Was the narrator sorry for his behaviour? How do you know?
 5. What annoyed the narrator most?
 6. What did the narrator do when Valodya dragged him?
 7. If you were in the narrator's place how would you have behaved?
-

**LET US LEARN NEW WORDS 11.2**

- I. Choose the right answer, which explains the underlined words/phrases.
 1. Well, now it is all over between us.
 - a. all the problems are over
 - b. everything is finished
 - c. the relationship is broken
 2. We have quarreled for good.
 - a. for ever
 - b. for good reasons
 - c. it is very good
- II. Find words in the text which mean the opposite of the following words:
 - a. intentionally
 - b. happily
 - c. frowned
 - d. intelligent

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e. pleasant

III. Fill in the blanks choosing appropriate words from the box.

smilingly, sorrowfully, accidentally, disgusted

1. While preparing tea I _____ put salt into the cup instead of sugar.
2. I feel _____ to see the poor being mistreated.
3. I bade farewell to my friend _____.
4. She always helps people _____.



LET US DO 11.2

Diary/Learning Journal

We grow through our experiences. A diary or a learning journal is a good tool to record our experiences. It can bring back many memories (happy or sad) at a later point in time. It can also help us to realize how our experiences shape our personality over a period of time. We would encourage you also to keep a diary/learning journal to record your experience.

Recall an incident when you helped someone. Record your feelings in your diary/learning journal in about 100 words.

11.2.3 PART 3

We did not tears in my eyes.

After the incident of the scent bottle the brothers stop talking to each other. Nicky is very disturbed and feels uncomfortable because he realizes that he is wrong. But Valodya is quite composed and behaves in a normal way. He asks for forgiveness for having upset Nicky. Nicky is touched by Valodya's gesture, with tears in his eyes he shakes hands with Valodya and feels better.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.3

1. How did Nicky feel after the day's incident?
2. How was Valodya's reaction different from that of Nicky?



Notes



Notes

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3. Why did Nicky feel uncomfortable and ashamed to be alone with his brother?
4. How did Valodya show that he was keen to make friends with Nicky in spite of the day's event?
5. What does Valodya's behaviour show about his character?
6. What do the tears in Nicky's eyes say about his feelings? Were they tears of joy, sorrow, anger or repentance? Please provide two reasons for your answer.
7. What did Nicky do to show that he was sorry for all that he had done in the morning?
8. Imagine that you had a fight with your friend. How would you try and apologise and become friends again? Hint: It may help if you can recall a real incident.



LET US LEARN NEW WORDS 11.3

I. Choose the right answer, which explains the underlined phrases:

1. Valodya raised his head and looked me in the face.
 - a. looked at my full face
 - b. looked straight into my eyes
 - c. looked only at my face
2. Our eyes met and I knew that he understood me.
 - a. we made eye contact
 - b. we stared at each other
 - c. we banged into each other

II. Fill in the blanks choosing words from the list given in the box.

uncomfortable, meaningful, natural, contrary

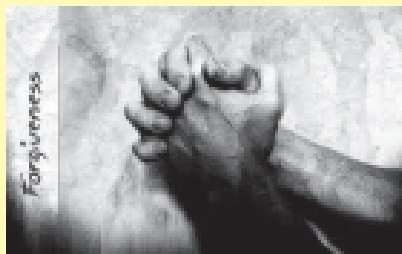
1. _____ to popular belief many cats dislike milk.
2. Though he didn't say anything to me his looks were quite _____.
3. My friend speaks in a _____ way even when she is among strangers.
4. I feel very _____ in the company of people who do not respect others.



? DO YOU KNOW

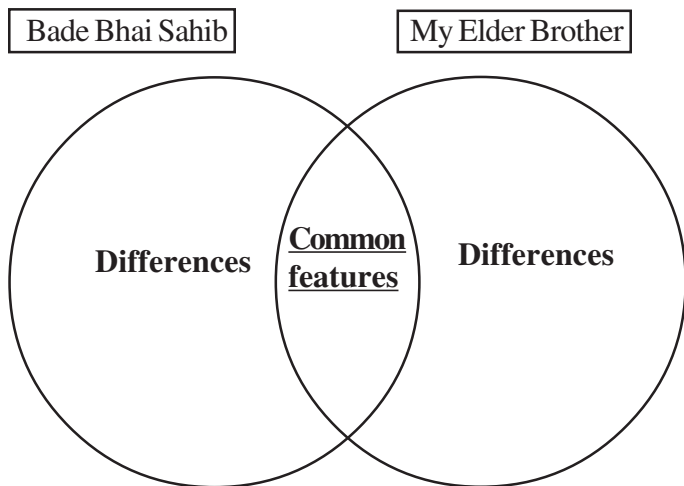
All world religions lay emphasis on the virtue of forgiveness.

- *prayashchita* (Performing atonement) and seeking forgiveness is an important part of Hinduism.
- The Mahabharata says, “What can a wicked person do unto him who carries a sabre (sword) of forgiveness in his hand?”
- Islam teaches that Allah is all forgiving and is the original source of all forgiveness.
- Christianity says, “When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven may forgive your sins.” Jesus Christ asked for God’s forgiveness for those who nailed him to the cross, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”
- Forgiveness is the most effective tool to conquer even the staunchest enemy.



LET US DO 11.3

1. Read the Hindi story ‘Bade Bhai Sahib’ (Elder Brother) by Munshi Prem Chand. You can find it on internet or in the nearest library. This story is also about two brothers and narrated by the younger brother. The narrator also has some problems with his elder brother. You will find some similarities and differences between *bade bhai sahib* and Valodya, and between the younger brother in Prem Chand’s story and Nicky.
2. Compare and contrast the two stories.





Notes



LET US TALK 11.1

Read the following dialogue and note the underlined expressions, which we use when we are sorry and want to apologise.

Reema : I'm sorry, Anu. I have damaged your watch. I know you treasured it so much. I am really very sorry.

Anu : You know it was a gift from my father. I wish you were more careful with it.

Reema : Believe me, Anu, I was not at all careless, but while I was returning home started raining. I wanted to protect the watch from the rain and tried taking it off hurriedly. In the haste, the watch slipped from my hand, fell on the ground and got damaged.

Anu : Oh, so it was an accident. Never mind. Please forgive me for what I said. Let's forget it now. You don't have to apologise again and again. I'm sure it can be repaired.

Reema : So nice of you. You are really very large hearted.



LET US DO 11.4

Recall an incident when you may have hurt another person and did not express regret and ask for forgiveness. Enact a role play talking to the person expressing regret and seeking forgiveness. Use the dialogue above as a model.



11.3 LET US LEARN GRAMMAR

Noun Clause

You have already studied about clauses in Lesson 7 "Shoe Shine". Let us revise it

Read the following sentences:

1. He was better than me.
2. I began to realise that I was no companion for him.

Note the difference between the two sentences. Sentence 1 is a simple sentence. It has a subject and a predicate. Sentence 2 is a complex sentence. It consists of two parts, each part having a subject and a predicate.

A clause is a group of words, which has a subject and a predicate with a finite verb of its own.



For example, in sentence 1 '*He*' is the subject and '*was better than me*' is the predicate with the finite verb *was*.

Read the following simple sentences.

1. Arjun fought many battles.
2. We should love our neighbours.

Note that in sentence 1, the noun '*Arjun*' is the subject (doer). If we ask the question: Arjun *fought* – what, the answer is '*many battles*'. The answer '*many battles*' is the object (the action done) of the verb *fought*.

In sentence 2, '*We*' (doer) is the subject and *our neighbours* is the object of the verb '*should love*'.

Note: The subject (doer) may be a noun (Arjun) or a pronoun (we, I, you, he, she, it, they)

Exercise 1

Identify the subject and the object in the following sentences.

Hint: To identify the subject ask the question - who.

To identify the object ask the question – what.

1. He is reading a novel.
2. My mother teaches English.
3. I love mangoes.
4. Shiela is fond of reading.
5. Shiela plays cricket.
6. The toy car made a loud noise.

You have learnt how to identify the subject and object in a sentence with one clause. Now let us learn about a complex sentence. A complex sentence has more than one clause.

Now read the following sentences from the lesson. Note that each sentence has more than one clause.

1. It even seems to me that Valodya himself was aware of his superiority.
2. I'm sure that I would have felt happier.
3. I knew that he understood me.

Independent clauses and dependent clauses

In sentences which have two or more clauses we can identify:



Notes

- a. an independent clause (also called the main clause or principal clause)
- b. a dependent clause (also called the subordinate clause)

An independent clause does not depend on other clauses to make a complete statement.

A subordinate clause cannot stand by itself and depends on the main clause to be meaningful.

Types of subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses are of three types:

- Noun clause
- Adjective clause
- Adverb clause

Subordinate Noun clause

Let us understand the noun clause and its functions.

Look at the following sentences:

1. Nicky realized that he was jealous of Valodya.
2. I was hoping that they would accept my proposal.
3. Nicky always felt that Valodya behaved very well.

In the above sentences the underlined clauses are subordinate noun clauses functioning as object to the verbs *realized*, *was hoping* and *felt* respectively.

Nicky realized (what?) that he was jealous of Valodya.

I was hoping (what?) that they would accept my proposal.

Nicky felt (what?) that Valodya behaved very well.

You would see that the noun clause does the same function in a complex sentence which a noun/pronoun does in a simple sentence.

Exercise 2

Identify the noun clauses in the following sentences and define their functions.

1. We all know that honesty is the best policy.
2. He told me that he was going to Lucknow next week.
3. Saurav told his mother that he would return late.
4. Nicky knew that Valodya was very generous.

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5. My brother said that he was working hard.
6. Jaya Lakshmi told me that she had got an award for bravery.



11.5 LET US WRITE

Writing a Diary

Is it very difficult to make up with friends with whom you have fought? How do you feel? At the end of the day Valodya and Nicky became friends again. Nicky, the younger brother writes a page in his diary to record his feelings about his brother's behaviour. Read it.

14th Sept, 20XX

6 pm.

It was very strange to see Valodya in my room after the day's incident when I had broken his scent bottle, most of his curios, china and glass ornaments. I had thought it was all over between us. But he was unusually polite and apologetic. He said sorry. At last he had forgiven me. I was moved by his behaviour. I wonder, what had happened to me! We were both changed persons.

Diary does not have signature.

When Nicky wrote his diary he mentioned:

- the date and time when he recorded his feelings
- the action of his elder brother, Valodya
- the event (the quarrel between the two brothers)
- the consequences of the event – they parted from each other as if they had quarrelled for ever
- Valodya's feelings of regret as well as his own
- he signed the page



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson you have learnt:

- The importance of accepting one's mistakes
- Seeking forgiveness and moving ahead
- Forgiving other people's mistakes



Notes



Notes

- We may fight with one another but it is essential that we accept our mistake and apologise.
- We also must be large hearted like Valodya and forgive others
- Forgiveness helps take away the anger and jealousy, and heal the hurt.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Valodya was responsible for the narrator's mental suffering and pain? (Explain in about 50 words)
2. After breaking his brother's scent bottle or dropping the curios off the table Nicky didn't say sorry because (tick the right choice):
 - i. he thought he was not wrong.
 - ii. he thought it was a petty matter.
 - iii. he wasn't large hearted like his brother.
 - iv. he pretended that it was not a mistake.
3. Why did Valodya ask his younger brother's forgiveness? Is it because (tick what you think is true to the story)
 - i. he had a large heart and was willing to forgive his younger brother and become friends again
 - ii. he was really in the wrong.
 - iii. he thought, to err is human and to forgive divine.
 - iv. he wanted to show his superiority.
4. Do you find any change or development in Nicky's character during the course of the story? Please explain the changes in 100 words.
5. What do you think brought about this change?



ANSWERS

11.2.1 PART 1

INTEXT QUESTION 11.1

- A.1.(i) Valodya was better in games.
- (ii) He was also better in arguments and manners.

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Notes

- Nicky, the narrator, felt inferior to his elder brother and they were not on good terms.
- No, Valodya was not proud. The narrator felt so because of his own vanity.
- Valodya had a tucked linen shirt, which Nicky did not have. Valodya arranged the collar which Nicky thought that he was doing so to show off his new shirt and this irritated him.
- He was candid and impulsive.
- (i)
- Individual responses. Accept all responses.

LET US LEARN NEW WORDS/PHRASES 11.1

- a. (iii) b. (i) c. (i)
- a. superiority b. everything c. understood d. annoy
e. proud f. large hearted
- a. proud b. impulsive c. sensitive d. analytical
e. independent

LET US DO 11.1

Nicky

- sensitive
- jealous
- vain
- analytical
- proud
- well mannered

Valodya

- impulsive
- fond of reading novels
- fond of collecting curios
- forgiving
- generous

11.2.2 PART 2

INTEXT QUESTION 11.2

- Valodya
- The narrator broke Valodya's scent bottle and instead of feeling sorry he was casual about it.
- Nicky knocked it over and it broke.
- The narrator was not sorry for his behaviour. We know this because he said, "What does it matter?"



Notes

5. The narrator was most annoyed when Valodya tried to drag him away from the table.
6. When Valodya dragged the narrator away from the table the latter got hold of the leg of the table and tilted it.
7. I can't say; yet I think I would have said sorry.

LET US LEARN NEW WORDS/PHRASES 11.2

- I. 1. c 2. a
- II. a. accidentally b. sorrowfully c. smiled d. stupid e. disgusting
- III. 1. accidentally 2. disgusting 3. stupidly 4. sorrowfully 5. smilingly

11.2.3 PART 3

INTEXT QUESTION 11.3

1. He felt uneasy and sorry because he realized that he was in the wrong.
2. Valodya behaved in a very normal way, he did his lessons properly and interacted with his sisters happily.
3. Nicky felt uncomfortable and ashamed because he was guilty and could not face his brother. He was afraid that the topic of their fight would surely come up when they were alone.
4. He went to Nicky and apologized in a very natural voice.
5. Valodya's behaviour shows that he was very large hearted and forgiving.
6. Nicky was emotionally moved by his brother's action. There were tears of sorrow and repentance in his eyes.
7. Nicky too asked for Valodya's forgiveness.
8. Individual response

Suggested response: send a card, call up to apologise, write a letter of apology

LET US LEARN NEW WORDS/PHRASES 11.3

- I. 1. b 2. a
- II. 1. contrary 2. meaningful 3. natural 4. uncomfortable

11.3 LET US LEARN GRAMMAR

Exercise 1

1. He – subject , novel - object
2. My mother – subject, English – object
3. I – subject , mangoes – object



4. Sheila – subject, reading – object
5. Sachin – subject, Cricket – object.

Exercise 2

1. — that honesty is the best policy. object to the verb *know*
2. —...that he was going to Lucknow next week. object to the verb *told*
3. — that he would return late, object to the verb *told*.
4. — that Valodya was very generous. object to the verb *knew*
5. — that he was working hard – object to the verb *said*.
6. — that she had got a National award — object to the verb *told*

11.4 LET US WRITE

Individual response

TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. No, it was the narrator's own vanity.
2. (iv)
3. (i)
4. Individual responses – accept all responses.

Suggested responses - In the beginning Nicky is vain, jealous and also unmindful of his brother's feelings, but during the course of the story there is a positive development in his character. He realizes his mistake, is emotionally moved by his brother's conduct and apologises to him for his behaviour.

5. Individual responses. Accept all responses.

Suggested responses.

Valodya is more likeable because he is large hearted and believes in forgiving and forgetting.

OR

Nicky is more likeable since he accepted his mistake and apologized. His character was negative in the beginning of the story but towards the end he changes for the better.