Unit 15 · Degrees of Probability

STUDY NOTES

The unit in one line

- **degrees of probability**: how sure we are that something is true, or will happen
- **might** · **may** · **must** · **will** · **can't**: different amounts of being sure

Getting started

- four pictures: what **may** happen next? (not happened yet, not sure → *may / might*)
  - dark clouds → *It **may rain** soon.*
  - a dog barking at a man → *The dog **might bite** him.*
  - a girl with an umbrella in bright sun → *It **may get** very hot.*
  - a girl peeping from behind a door → *She **might jump** out.*
- **probability** = how likely something is; **likely** = will probably happen; **unlikely** = probably won't
- *It **is likely to** rain* = it will probably rain; *It **is not likely to** (unlikely to) rain*; the plain verb after *likely to*
- the sky task: *It is not likely to rain today. I think the sun **will** shine.*

Song: a sonnet by George Santayana

- **George Santayana** (1863–1952), born in Spain, wrote in English; a **sonnet** (14 lines); the song = its first eight; *Sonnets and Other Verses* (1894)
- the world outside **may** be in **chaos** (complete disorder); his small inner world is a **paradise**
- there his dreams open out (**unfurled**, like a flag); he lies **curled** in his own nature, as in a shell, and **slumbers** (sleeps)
- not minding the sky outside, where **perhaps** (*perchance*) a new god of love flies, or an old king of the gods is thrown down; inside he is at peace
- **Eros**: Greek god of love (Roman Cupid); **Cronos**: old king of the gods, thrown from his throne by his son Zeus
- *There **may** be chaos*: possible, not certain → why the poem is in this unit
- slow and calm; rhymes in a ring: *world, unfurled, curled, hurled · lies, paradise, skies, flies*
- words: **bosom** the chest (heart and mind) · **vision** a dream, a picture in the mind · **unmindful of** not paying attention to · **hurled** thrown hard

Reading I: The Musicians of Ilam

- an old German folk tale, told with a town in Nepal

1. four animals nobody wants: an old **donkey** (his master won't feed a *useless* donkey), an old **dog** (his master plans to kill him), an old **cat** (too old to catch mice), a **cock** (to be cooked tomorrow); each told *Come with us to Ilam*: to join a **band**, be **musicians**
2. night in a big forest; a small light; a house where a **gang** of thieves eats a big meal, laughing and talking
3. the plan: they climb onto each other's backs (dog on donkey, cat on dog, cock on top), make their noises at once (donkey **brays**, dog barks, cat miaows, cock crows), crash through the window → the thieves, **terrified**, run into the forest
4. the animals eat the meal, put out the light, sleep: cock on the **beam** over the door, cat by the fire, dog behind the door, donkey on straw in the yard
5. one thief creeps back; thinks the cat's shining eyes are the fire; **pokes** his candle at them → the cat **scratches** his face, the dog bites his leg, he **stumbles**, the donkey kicks, the cock flies down screeching
6. he **limps** back with a bigger story: a **witch** (the cat), a man with a knife who **stabbed** him (the dog), a monster with a stick (the donkey), a **judge** (the cock)
7. the thieves never come back; the four never get to Ilam; they live happily in the forest house

- why the backs: to look big and make a terrible noise all at once
- why the big story: dark, fear, too fast to know what hit him; and not to be laughed at
- **neglect** = not give the care needed; the masters neglect them because they are **old and can't work**: unkind, unfair
- titles: *Four Old Friends*, *Unity Is Strength*, *The Animals and the Thieves*
- lesson: weak alone, strong **together**; the old still have value
- the real tale: *The Town Musicians of Bremen*, Brothers **Grimm**, 1819; a bronze statue in Bremen (1953)

musician: a person who plays music.

gang: a group of people, often bad ones, who do things together.

terrified: very, very frightened.

beam: a long, heavy piece of wood that holds up a roof.

poke: to push quickly with a finger, stick or pointed thing.

scratch: to make marks or cuts with something sharp.

stumble: to nearly fall while walking or running.

limp: to walk badly because one leg hurts.

- animal sounds: a donkey **brays**, a dog **barks**, a cat **miaows** (US *meows*), a cock **crows**, a cow **moos**, a goat **bleats**, a lion **roars**

Speaking: may and might

- not sure something will happen → **may** or **might** + the **plain verb**: *It may **rain**.* · *The bus might **hit** the man.*
- no *-s*, *-ed* or *to* after them: never *may rains*, *may to rain*, *might fell*
- **might** a little less sure than **may**; in everyday talk used the same way
- the pictures: *The dog might bite the man.* · *The children may fall down the slope.* · *The boy may get a headache.* · *The man might catch a cold.* · *They might start fighting.* · *They might win a prize.*

Listening: the weather expert

- a **rain gauge**: measures how much rain falls (water depth, in millimeters)
- a **meteorologist**: a scientist who studies and **forecasts** the weather; in Nepal, the **Department of Hydrology and Meteorology**

- a radio talk: the **host**, **Sita**, asks **Dr. Ali**, a famous **meteorologist**, about the week, place by place
  - the weather **will** improve in most of the **districts** tomorrow
  - rain possible in the **upper** hills (**may**: a small chance)
  - the Terai: **sunny** at the weekend; **will** be sunny, **not going to** rain
- listen for how sure he is: **will** sure · **may** possible
- your own note: short (*partly cloudy; light rain may fall*), then said in full sentences

Grammar: may, might, must, will

Word	How sure?	Example
might	possible, not very sure	*It's cloudy. It **might** rain today.*
may	possible: perhaps true, perhaps not	*I'm not sure, but I **may** come tomorrow.*
must	almost sure, from a clear clue (a **deduction**)	*He's in school uniform. He **must** be a student.*
will	sure it will happen	*He **will** win the race.*
can't	almost sure it is **not** true	*He has just eaten. He **can't** be hungry.*

- ask: **is there a clear clue?** yes → **must**; only guessing about the future → **may / might**
- two kinds of **must**: a **rule** (Unit 10: *You must wear a helmet.*) · a **clue** (*You walked all day. You must be tired.*)
- **must** for a deduction about **now** or the past (*They must have left*); for the future, *He must pass* = it is necessary → guess with *will*, *may*, *might*
- B: a **may** · b **may** (or *might*; *will* surer) · c **might** (or *may*) · d **might** (or *may*) · e **must** · f **must** · g **must** (*may* if careful: she may be an aunt) · h **may** (or *might*)
- **will** + plain verb: a prediction, or a decision; often with *I think*, *I hope*, *perhaps*, *maybe*, *probably*
  - C: *She **will come** to meet her sister. · You **will have** a good time. · I think I **will go** to Pokhara. · Perhaps I **will stay** for a while. · I **will help** you.*
- **maybe** (one word) = *perhaps*, starts a sentence: ***Maybe** I will come.*; **may be** (two words) = the verb: *It **may be** true.* · test: can *perhaps* go there? → *maybe*
- the negative: **may not / might not** = perhaps not; the opposite of **must** is **can't**, never *mustn't* (= not allowed)
  - *That **can't** be Aakriti's bag. It has Rohan's name on it.*

Writing

A. Put the paragraph right (Saroj)

- a **capital** for each sentence's first word and for names: *Saroj, Nepal Secondary School, Sonu, Muna, Sujal, Bibhan*
- a **full stop** at each sentence's end
- **commas** between names in a list; **no colon** between a verb and its list (*Some of his friends are Sonu, Muna…*)
- *hardworking*, one word
- *He replied, "Sure, I will be in time."*: a comma after *replied*, the full stop inside the quotation marks

B. A paragraph: a growing population

- clues: **cost of living** · **diseases** · **deforestation** · **pollution** · **other problems**
- **will** for what is sure, **may / might** for what is possible, **must** for what we have to do
- a title; an opening sentence; each clue in turn (*First… Second…*); an ending (*We must plan well now…*)
- the world passed **8 billion** people in 2022 (UN)

Reading II: The Arrow and the Song

- by **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** (1807–1882), American; written 1845; *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems*
- three verses of four lines; rhyming pairs (*air / where, strong / song, oak / unbroke*); a steady beat
- verse 1: he shoots an **arrow** into the air; it flies so **swiftly** his **sight** can't **follow** it; he doesn't know where it falls
- verse 2: he sings a **song** into the air; gone too; no eyes **keen** enough to follow a song
- verse 3: long, long after, he finds the arrow in an **oak**, still **unbroke** (unbroken), and the song, all of it, in the **heart of a friend**
- meaning: what we say and do to others stays with them long after; send out songs, not arrows
- true or false: knew where the arrow had gone **F** · found by others **F** (he found it himself) · found it unbroken **T**
- **oak**: a big, strong tree with hard wood; Nepal's *kharsu* and *banjh* are oaks

Project: musical instruments

- pictures with names on cardboard; in groups: **hit** (drums) · **blow** (flutes) · **strings**
- Nepal's: **madal** (barrel drum, both hands) · **dhime** (big Newar drum) · **bansuri** (bamboo flute) · **sarangi** (strings, played with a bow) · **murchunga** (iron, twanged) · **damphu** (Tamang drum)

Extra bit: may, might and must

- **may / might**: not sure, now or in the future: *He **might** be stuck in traffic. · My cousins **may** visit next week.*
- **must**: sure it is true, the only real possibility: *That **must** be Aakriti's bag. Her name is on it. · You **must** be freezing!*
- each **must** comes with a **clue**: *mud on his shoes → He **must** have walked through the fields.*

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ It may rains tomorrow.
✓ It may **rain** tomorrow.

✗ He might to come today.
✓ He might **come** today.

✗ May be she is ill.
✓ **Maybe** she is ill. (or *She **may be** ill.*)

✗ I think I will to go home.
✓ I think I will **go** home.

✗ He is working hard. He must pass the exam. (a guess)
✓ He **may** (or **will**) pass the exam.

✗ The door is locked. They mustn't be at home.
✓ They **can't** be at home.

✗ It is likely to raining.
✓ It is likely to **rain**.

✗ Dorje has a thick coat on. It might be cold. (a clear clue)
✓ It **must** be cold.