

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

First Flight



1. Watch and listen to the play

Click on the link below to watch a video of the play being read. Note the pronunciations of the words and read along using the subtitles.

[\(2\) The Proposal - YouTube](#)

2. Summary

The Proposal is a one-act comedy play written by the famous Russian playwright and short story writer, Anton Chekov (1860-1904). He is considered to be one of the greatest writers of short stories. The play is about how wealthy families in Russia marry among each other to protect or increase their property.

The play opens with Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov, a young landowner, who asks Stepan Stepanovitch Chubukov, another landowner, for permission to marry his daughter, Natalya Stepanovna. Chubukov gladly agrees and rushes off to call his daughter.

Lomov wants to get married as he is already 35 years old and not well; he gets palpitations and twitches and cannot sleep peacefully. He thinks that Natalya Stepanovna will make him a good wife as she is an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking and well educated.

However, when Natalya comes out to meet to meet Lomov, all three of them start arguing about a piece of land, Oxen Meadows. Natalya and her father, Chubukov, claim the land is theirs, and Lomov claims it is his. They start calling each other names and insulting each other's families.

Lomov gets very agitated and leaves the house. Chubukov tells him never to return. Chubukov then tells his daughter that Lomov had come to propose to her. She becomes hysterical and asks Chubukov to call Lomov back. Chubukov rushes out to bring Lomov back. When Lomov returns the three of them start arguing again, this time about whose dog is better. They again start insulting each other. Lomov faints and falls into an armchair. Natalya gets very agitated, she thinks he is dead. However, Lomov regains consciousness. Before they can argue any more, Chubukov puts Lomov's hand into his daughter's hand, and gives them his blessing for their marriage. Even though the couple are happy about getting married they immediately start arguing again!

3. Vocabulary

1. **Ceremony** – a formal event that is performed on important social or religious occasions
The wedding **ceremony** took place in the farm house near their village.
2. **Article** – a piece of writing in a magazine, newspaper, etc.; an object, especially one of many
I read a very interesting **article** in this magazine about the Red Fort.
Please keep this **article** of clothing in the cupboard.
3. **Preparations** – the things that you do or the time that you spend preparing for something
The **preparations** for the engagement ceremony have already started in Sunita's house.
4. **Planning** – the activity of thinking about and deciding what you are going to do or how you are going to do something
We are **planning** to go to Shimla for our summer holidays.
5. **Arranging** – making the necessary plans and preparations for something to happen

The school is **arranging** a bus to take the students to see the exhibition.

6. **Reception** – a formal party to celebrate a special event or to welcome someone; the place in a hotel or office building where people go when they arrive; the way people react to something or someone; the quality of a radio or television signal

The wedding **reception** was held at a big hotel in town.

Please submit this form at the **reception** desk of the office.

We were given a warm **reception** when we reached their house.

The picture is not clear as the television **reception** is very poor here.

7. **Expenses** – the money that you spend on something

The insurance company will pay all the medical **expenses**.

8. **Occasion** – a time when something happens; an important event or ceremony

I have visited their house on two previous **occasions**.

She wore a new dress for the special **occasion**.

9. **Procession** – a line of people or vehicles that moves forward slowly as part of a ceremony or public event

The wedding **procession** had blocked the road in front of our house.

10. **Organise** – to plan or arrange something

We want to **organise** a sale of used books to raise money for charity.

11. **Contests** – competitions or elections

She won all the singing **contests** in the city.

12. **Registration** – the recording of a name or information on an official list

The marriage **registration** took place in Court.

13. **Apartments** – a set of rooms for living in, that includes a kitchen and a bathroom

The **apartments** in this building are much larger than the ones in the next building.

14. **Riddles** – strange and difficult questions that have clever and often funny answers; situations or events that you cannot understand
The intelligent girl gave the answers to all the **riddles** quickly.
Scientists have not managed to solve all the **riddles** of the universe.
15. **Couple** - two people who are married or have a romantic relationship; two or a few
The newly married **couple** bought a lot of furniture for their new home.
I went to visit my aunt for a **couple** of weeks.
16. **Sights** – some things that you see, especially something interesting
After resting for some time in the hotel room, we went to see the **sights** of the city.
17. **Toasts** – an occasion at which a group of people wish somebody happiness, success, etc., and drink a glass of wine or other alcohol; a thin piece of bread that is heated on both sides to make it brown
The bride's brother and sister raised **toasts** to the newly-weds to wish them great happiness in their married life.
I like to eat **toast** and butter for breakfast.
18. **Custom** – a habit or tradition
We must follow the **customs** of the village while we are here.
19. **Tussles** – a fight or argument, especially between two people who want the same thing
There were constant **tussles** between Ravi and his brother for the television remote.
20. **One-act play** – a short play or drama consisting of only one part or act; plays consist of parts known as acts and each act can consist of one or more scenes
The class X students put on a funny **one-act play** for the school annual day.
21. **Farce** – a funny play in which a lot of silly things happen; a serious event or situation that becomes ridiculous because it is so badly organized, or just a pretense
The play was a **farce** and we all enjoyed it a lot.
The meeting between the farmers and the minister was a **farce**.

22. **Dramatist** – someone who writes plays or drama
George Bernard Shaw was a famous Irish **dramatist**.
23. **Tendency** – something that someone often does, or something that often happens
She has a **tendency** to talk for too long.
24. **Seek** – try to find or get something
They want to **seek** the advice of a lawyer about a case.
25. **Ties** – to have strong relationships
They wanted to have **ties** with the minister's family.
26. **Estates** – large areas of land in the countryside that are owned by one person or organization
There are many tea **estates** in Assam.
27. **Encouraging** – making someone more likely to do something, or making something more likely to happen; making you feel more hopeful and confident
My teacher is always **encouraging** me to do better in my studies.
The results of the Higher Secondary exams were very **encouraging**.
28. **Economic** – relating to trade, industry, and money; making a profit, or likely to make a profit
The government has introduced a new **economic** policy.
It makes **economic** sense to produce goods in large quantities.
29. **Quarrelsome** – someone who argues or fights a lot with other people
Sunita is very **quarrelsome** and has fought with everyone in her class.
30. **Petty** – not important and not worth giving attention to
The students complained constantly for **petty** reasons.
31. **Issues** – subjects or problems that people are thinking and talking about
Today we are going to discuss all the **issues** regarding the board exams.

32. **Amidst** – in the middle of, or surrounded by
I could not find the book **amidst** all the junk on the table.
33. **Ensures** – makes something certain to happen
The teacher **ensures** that every child in the class understands the lessons.
34. **Hearty** – enthusiastic, energetic, and often loudly expressed; large or in large amounts (especially food)
Her father welcomed us with a **hearty** handshake.
We ate a **hearty** breakfast before we set off on the trek.
35. **Suspicious** – making you feel that something illegal is happening or that something is wrong; doubtful or not able to trust someone or something
There are some **suspicious** looking characters hanging around outside the house.
Her father has a very **suspicious** nature.
36. **Drawing-room** – a comfortable room in a large house, used for relaxing or for entertaining guests
They were sitting in the **drawing room** and watching television.
37. **Dress-jacket** – a formal coat worn for formal occasions like a dinner party, etc.
He was looking very smart in the **dress-jacket** and bow-tie.
38. **Treasure** – very valuable things, usually in the form of a store of precious metals, precious stones, or money; someone who is very helpful and valuable to you; a friendly way of talking to someone, especially a child; to take good care of something because you value it highly
They were digging in the garden of the old house to find buried **treasure**.
Meena was an absolute **treasure** – the way she helped me when my husband was ill, was unbelievable.
Come on, my **treasure**, we are going to visit the zoo today.
I will always **treasure** the memories of my summer holidays spent with my grandparents.

39. **Honoured** – respected
The **honoured** judge gave the right judgement in the case.
40. **Precious** – of great value because of being rare, expensive, or important; here used as an endearment or a way of calling someone you love a lot
My mother gave me a very **precious** necklace when I got married.
Children are the most **precious** resource of any country.
Please do not get angry, my **precious** child.
41. **Request** – to ask politely or officially for something
They are going to **request** the principal to postpone the exams.
42. **Privilege** – an advantage that only one person or group of people has, usually because of their position or because they are rich
I had the **privilege** of meeting the Prime Minister when he visited our city.
43. **Applying** – requesting something, usually officially, especially in writing or by sending in a form; to spread or rub a substance such as cream or paint on a surface; to spread or rub a substance such as cream or paint on a surface
She will not be **applying** for a government job.
She is very careful about the way she looks. She is constantly **applying** lipstick.
44. **Pardon** – to forgive someone for something; this word is often used when speaking politely
Pardon me for interrupting, but there is someone outside waiting to meet you.
45. **Aside** – to one side; except; a remark someone makes in a soft voice because they do not want everyone to hear it
Please keep that book **aside** and listen to me.
Aside from the news, I do not watch any television.
In an **aside**, he asked me to follow him into the office.
46. **Borrow** – to get or receive something from someone with the intention of giving it back after a period of time
I am going to the library to **borrow** a book.

47. **Deserve** – to have earned or to be given something because of the way you have behaved or the qualities you have
After all your hard work, you **deserve** a holiday today.
48. **Count on** – to be confident that you can depend on someone
I am sure we can **count on** Mira to help us with this project.
49. **Assistance** – help
My grandmother needs **assistance** with cooking and shopping.
50. **Spit it out** – used to tell someone to start speaking or to speak more quickly, when they are unwilling to speak or are speaking slowly
Come on, **spit it out** – tell us who reported us to the principal.
51. **By Jove** – used to express surprise or to emphasize a statement
I think India has won the match, **by Jove!**
52. **Embraces** – to hold someone tightly with both arms to express love, liking, or sympathy, or when greeting or leaving someone
The mother **embraces** the child and takes her inside the house.
53. **Continual** – happening repeatedly, usually in an annoying or not convenient way
I have had **continual** problems with this phone, ever since I bought it.
54. **Desire** – to want something very strongly
Her only **desire** was to be left in peace to study for her exam.
55. **Sheds a tear** – cries a little
My father **sheds a tear** whenever he hears the stories of my struggles.
56. **Angel** – Some religions believe that angels are messengers of God; usually represented in human form with wings; someone who is very good, helpful, or kind; used when speaking to someone you like very much and know very well
According to the Bible, an **angel** told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus, the son of God.
The child was an **angel** and behaved very well during the party.
Come along, my **angel**, it time for lunch.

57. **Idiotic** – stupid
The politician gave some **idiotic** reply to the question asked by the student.
58. **Off my balance** – confused or uncertain about what to do next; likely to fall or be knocked down
I was thrown **off my balance** when the teacher suddenly asked me to give a speech in front of the whole school.
A strong gust of wind threw me **off my balance** and I fell down.
59. **Absolutely** – completely
You must be **absolutely** silent or the animals will not appear.
60. **All my soul** – all my heart, all my feelings
I love my little sister with **all my soul**.
61. **Greatly moved** – having very strong feelings of sadness or sympathy, because of something someone has said or done
When I heard the sad story of her father's death, I was **greatly moved**.
62. **Consent** – agreement
The students have to get their parents' **consent** before coming on the trip.
63. **Egad** – an exclamation showing surprise or anger; probably a variation of 'Oh, God'
Egad! What a terrible movie, I was completely bored!
64. **Lovesick** – sad because the person you love does not love you
He was roaming around the house like a **lovesick** teenager.
65. **Trembling** – shaking slightly, usually because you are cold, frightened, or very emotional
When she came out of the cold water, she was **trembling**.
66. **Hesitate** – to pause before you do or say something, often because you are uncertain or nervous about it
You must not **hesitate** to answer any questions during the interview.

67. **Ideal** – perfect, or the best possible
She is the **ideal** person to teach him because she is so patient.
68. **Housekeeper** – a person, whose job is to organize another person's house and deal with cooking, cleaning, etc.
Sushil's mother worked as a **housekeeper** in the hotel.
69. **Critical** – of the greatest importance to the way things might happen; saying that someone or something is bad or wrong
We have to take a **critical** decision and so I have requested the family to gather here.
My mother is always so **critical** about the way I dress.
70. **Palpitations** – the feeling that your heart is beating too hard, too quickly or not regularly
He ended up in hospital with heart **palpitations**.
71. **Excitable** – reacting quickly and strongly to things
This dog is very excitable, so do not come close.
72. **To go off** – here, to fall asleep
The baby is just about **to go off** to sleep, so we will leave after that.
73. **Lunatic** – a mad person
He drives the car like a **lunatic**.
74. **Merchant** – a person who buys and sells things
The grain **merchant** refused to buy the farmer's wheat harvest as he said that it was rotten.

75. **Apron** – a piece of clothing that you wear over the front of other clothes to keep the clothes clean while you are doing something dirty, such as cooking or cleaning



An Apron

I must put an **apron** over my party dress, otherwise it will get dirty in the kitchen.

76. **Negligée** – a woman's night dress, normally made from transparent fabric
She was sitting in the dining room wearing a very pretty **negligée**.
77. **Shelling** – the act of removing the hard outer covering of something, especially nuts, eggs, or some vegetables like peas
The cook was busy **shelling** eggs to make an egg curry.
78. **Splendid** – excellent, or beautiful and impressive
She looked **splendid** in her new dress.
79. **Stacked** – arranged things in an ordered pile
The books were all **stacked** neatly in a huge pile on the desk.
80. **A ball** – a large formal occasion where people dance
The queen was hosting **a ball** at the palace.
81. **Pause** – a short period in which something such as a sound or an activity is stopped before starting again
There was a **pause** in the play as the stage was arranged for the next scene.
82. **Brief** – lasting only a short time or containing few words
His speech was **brief**, and finished in five minutes.
83. **Late aunt** – aunt who has died
She has inherited this house from her **late aunt**.

84. **Inherited** – received money, a house, etc. from someone after they have died
Sohail has **inherited** this property from his father.
85. **Affectionate** – showing feelings of liking or love
My friend gave me an **affectionate** hug to welcome me into his home.
86. **Regard** – respect or admiration for someone or something
The entire school holds the Principal in high **regard**.
87. **Oxen** – plural of ox – a bull or an adult animal of the cattle family



A pair of oxen used to plough a field

The **oxen** that were used to plough the field were very thin and weak.

88. **Meadows** – fields with grass, and often wild flowers



A meadow

The **meadows** on either side of the path were covered with yellow and white flowers.

89. **Birchwoods** – a wood of birches - trees with smooth, often white outer covering on the trunk and thin branches



A birch tree

The strong wind bent the trees in the **birchwoods**.

90. **Interrupting** – stopping a person from speaking for a short period by something you're saying or doing
He tried to explain why he had not done his homework, but the teacher kept on **interrupting** him.
91. **Marsh** – an area of low, wet land, usually covered with tall grasses



A marsh

Many birds can be seen in the **marsh** near the lake.

92. **Documents** – papers or sets of papers with written or printed information, especially of an official type
I have lost a briefcase containing some important **documents**.
93. **Dispute** – an argument or a disagreement
There is a **dispute** between the two brothers about who owns the land.
94. **Argue** – to speak angrily to someone, telling that person that you disagree with them
They continued to **argue** with the teacher about the date for the unit test.

95. **Perpetuity** – forever
The school has been given permission to use this field as a playground in **perpetuity**.
96. **Peasants** – persons who own or rent a small piece of land and grow crops, keep animals, etc. on it
The **peasants** revolted against the cruel landlord.
97. **Reckoned** – thought or believed
Harry **reckoned** that he could finish the work in one day.
98. **Dessiatins** – old land measurement used in Russia and 1 dessiatin is equal to about 1.09 hectare
He owned ten **dessiatins** of land just outside the city of Moscow.
99. **Roubles** – the standard unit of money used in Belarus, Russia, and Tajikistan
I bought this doll in the market for ten **roubles**.
100. **Unfairness** – not treating people in an equal way, or of being morally wrong
The teacher's **unfairness** made all the students very angry.
101. **Implore** – to ask someone to do or not do something in a very sincere, emotional, and determined way
We **implore** you not to go out during the night as it is quite dangerous.
102. **Bake bricks** – to make bricks by drying them in an oven or under the sun
She worked at a brick kiln and helped **bake bricks**.
103. **Pleasant** – enjoyable, attractive, friendly, or easy to like
It was very **pleasant** sitting in the park in the sun.
104. **Make head or tail** – understand something
Her mother could not **make head or tail** of what she was saying.
105. **Proving** – showing that something is true
It was very difficult **proving** that he had committed the crime.

106. **Principle** – a moral rule or standard of good behaviour
I cannot tell a lie as it is against all my **principles**.
107. **Behaviour** – the way that someone behaves or acts
The children were on their best **behaviour** when the Principal visited the class.
108. **To say the least** – used to show that what you are describing is in fact much more serious or important than you have suggested
It is going to be awkward to ask for more help, **to say the least**.
109. **Threshing-machine** – A threshing machine or a thresher is a piece of farm equipment that threshes grain; it removes the seeds from the stalks and husks. It does so by beating the plant to make the seeds fall out.



A Threshing Machine

The crop had been harvested and was being threshed in the **threshing machine**.

110. **Although** – despite the fact that
She walked home alone, **although** she knew that it was dangerous.
111. **On that account** – because of that
Suresh is very weak and, **on that account**, he does not play any games.
112. **Gypsies** – members of a race of people originally from northern India who typically used to travel from place to place, and now live mainly in Europe and North America

The **gypsies** were camped in the meadow near the river.

113. **Neighbourly** – friendly or helpful to your neighbours
It was very **neighbourly** of Anju to look after the old man living next door.
114. **Opinion** – a thought or belief about something or someone
In my **opinion**, it is safe to take the Covid-19 vaccine.
115. **Impudent** – rude and not showing respect, especially towards someone who is older or in a more important position
The young girl made an **impudent** remark that angered her teacher.
116. **Landgrabber** – someone who takes an area of land by force, for military or economic reasons
The headman of the village was a **landgrabber** who had taken away the lands of many poor peasants.
117. **Grabbed** – took hold of something or someone suddenly and roughly
The thief **grabbed** her handbag as she was walking to the bus stop.
118. **Accuse** – to say that someone has done something morally wrong, illegal, or unkind
We cannot **accuse** him of theft without any proof.
119. **Carafe** – a tall glass container with a wide, round bottom for serving wine or water



A Carafe

He poured out some water from the **carafe** and drank it quickly.

120. **Mowers** – machines or people who cut grass
The **mowers** cutting the grass on the lawn were making a lot of noise.

121. **Give it to them in the neck** – punish or severely criticize for something that has been done
If they are late for the meeting then I will **give it to them in the neck!**
122. **Clutches** – takes or tries to take hold of something tightly, usually in fear, worry, or pain
Whenever she has a headache she **clutches** her forehead tightly.
123. **Hoarse** – having a rough voice, often because of a sore throat or a cold
My voice was **hoarse** after all the shouting at the cricket match.
124. **Restrain** – to control the actions or behaviour of someone by force, especially in order to stop them from doing something
The police officers tried to **restrain** him, but he continued hitting the thief.
125. **Excruciating** – extremely painful
I have an **excruciating** pain in my lower back.
126. **Reasonable** – fair and practical
She is a **reasonable** woman and will understand when you explain your problem to her.
127. **Temporary** – not lasting or needed for very long
He has got a **temporary** job at the school.
128. **Accustomed** – familiar with or used to something
Diya was not **accustomed** to being treated so badly.
129. **Tone of voice** – a quality in the voice that expresses the speaker's feelings or thoughts, often towards the person being spoken to
We could make out from the father's **tone of voice** that he was very annoyed.
130. **Agitating** – feeling worried or angry
I found the situation very **agitating** and could not sleep at all that night.
131. **Pettifogger** – a person who gives too much attention to small unimportant details

Her aunt was a **pettifogger** and spent the whole morning discussing the details of the party.

132. **Honourable** – honest and fair, or deserving praise and respect
He is an **honourable** man and will keep his promise to return the money.
133. **Embezzlement** – the crime of secretly taking money that is in your care, or that belongs to an organization or business you work for
The bank manager was accused of **embezzlement** and jailed.
134. **Lunacy** – mental illness
There was **lunacy** on her mother's side of the family.
135. **Drunkard** – a person who often drinks large amounts of alcohol
The **drunkard** was swaying from side to side as he walked down the road.
136. **Architect** – a person whose job is to design new buildings and make sure that they are built correctly
Her uncle was the **architect** who designed the new school building.
137. **Hump-backed** – having a round raised part on the back
The camel is a **hump-backed** animal.
138. **Guzzling** – drinking quickly, eagerly, and usually in large amounts
He was standing outside the shop and **guzzling** down his soft drink when his father saw him.
139. **Gambler** – someone who often gambles or plays for money, for example in a game or on a horse race
Her uncle was **gambler** and lost all his money in card games.
140. **Backbiters** – persons who say unpleasant and unkind things about someone who is not there
They were a family of **backbiters**, who talked badly about everyone.

141. **Intriguer** – a person who makes a secret plan to do something, especially something that will harm another person
Anil was an **intriguer** and was always making secret plans to harm other people.
142. **Malicious** – intended to harm or upset other people
She started receiving **malicious** phone calls threatening to harm her family.
143. **Doublefaced** – someone who says one thing and does another; deceitful
The **doublefaced** man pretended to be helping them, while he was actually stealing from them.
144. **Numb** – If a part of your body is numb, you are unable to feel it, usually for a short time
My fingers were **numb** with cold.
145. **Staggers** – walks or moves with difficulty as if he or she is going to fall
He managed to **stagger** home after being stabbed in the stomach.
146. **Devil take him** – a curse on someone who you are angry with
This man is a mass murderer! May the **Devil take him!**
147. **Villain** – a bad person who harms other people or breaks the law
At the end of the film, the police came and caught the **villain** and put him in jail.

148. **Scarecrow** – a model of a person dressed in old clothes and put in a field of crops; used to frighten birds away



A Scarecrow

There was a funny **scarecrow**, wearing old and torn clothes, in the middle of the field.

149. **Monster** – any imaginary frightening creature, especially one that is large and strange
The film was about a green **monster** who lived in a lake.

150. **Abuse** – rude and hurtful words said to another person
His classmates continued to **abuse** him even outside the class.

151. **Turnip-ghost** – a make-believe ghost whose head is made up of a turnip lantern as given in the picture below; in this play it is used as an abuse
She believed that if she went out alone at night she would meet the **turnip-ghost** roaming the streets.



Turnip lanterns

152. **Confounded** – used to express anger
Filling up so many forms for admission to the hospital is a **confounded** nuisance.
153. **Cheek** – behaviour or talk that is rude and shows no respect; the soft part of your face that is below your eye and between your mouth and ear
He had the **cheek** to ask me to complete his homework for him.
The baby was very cute with chubby **cheeks**.
154. **Stuffed sausage** – a sausage is a highly seasoned minced meat (such as pork) usually stuffed in casings of prepared animal intestine; here stuffed sausage is used as an abuse
We had **sausage** for breakfast.
She called him a **stuffed sausage** because he was being so haughty.
155. **Wizen-faced** – having a small face with dry skin and lines in it, especially because of old age
The **wizen-faced** old lady sat on the verandah of her house, looking at the people going past.
156. **Frump** – a woman who wears old-fashioned clothes that do not look attractive
She looked like a **frump** in her shapeless old frock.
157. **Tfoo** – a word using as an exclamation
She said in a fed-up tone of voice, “**Tfoo!** I will fetch it at once.”
158. **Ouf** – a word using as an exclamation
He said, “**Ouf!** This is hurting too much!”
159. **Wails** – to make a long, high cries, usually because of pain or sadness
The **wails** of the baby could be heard on the street.
160. **Burden** – a heavy load that you carry
The labourer struggled to carry the heavy **burden** of bricks.

161. **Cursed** – used a word or an expression that is not polite and showed that you are very angry; word or words expressing a wish that something terrible will happen to somebody
He **cursed** his brother for losing the house keys.
162. **Exhausted** – extremely tired
We were all **exhausted** after the long journey.
163. **Twitching** – making a sudden small movement with a part of the body, usually without intending to
Her nose was **twitching** like a rabbit's.
164. **Evidence** – one or more reasons for believing that something is or is not true
There was no **evidence** to show that the attack was carried out by terrorists.
165. **Blackcock** – also known as the black grouse, is a large bird, usually hunted for game
The **blackcock** is found in moorlands and grasslands, near forests.



A Blackcock

166. **Harvest** – the time of year when crops are cut and collected from the fields, or the activity of cutting and collecting them, or the crops that are cut and collected
After the **harvest**, the farmers take their crops to the market to sell them.
167. **Misfortune** – bad luck, or an unlucky event
We should help our friend during his time of **misfortune**.

168. **Lame** – not able to walk correctly because of physical injury to or weakness in the legs or feet
The **lame** man was walking with the help of a stick.
169. **Twisted** – bent so that the original shape is changed or destroyed
She ran fast to catch the bus, tripped over a stone and **twisted** her ankle.
170. **Sighs** – breathe out a deep slow breath that can be heard, expressing tiredness, sadness, pleasure, etc.
She was so tired that she **sighed** deeply and sat down.
171. **First-rate** – extremely good
She studies at a **first-rate** school.
172. **Develop** – to grow or change into a more advanced, larger, or stronger form
I think that he will **develop** a very strong and fit body after exercising regularly.
173. **Pedigree** – genetic history of an animal or person; pure ancestry
He has just bought an expensive **pedigreed** dog.
174. **Overshot** – this is a condition in a dog where the upper jaw is longer than the lower jaw and the dog often has a problem closing his mouth; went too fast, passed the stopping point
The dog had a problem eating because of his **overshot** jaw.
The plane **overshot** the runway and landed in the river.
175. **Thoroughbred** – animals with parents that are of the same breed and have good qualities
He is riding a **thoroughbred** horse.
176. **Worn-out** – can no longer be used because it is so old or because it has been damaged by continued use; extremely tired
His jeans were **worn-out** because he had worn them for such a long time.
177. **Cab-horse** – a horse which is used to pull a cab, that is a carriage that is hired for use

178. **Handsome price** – a large price
He paid a **handsome** price for the house.
179. **Demon** – an evil spirit
It was as if there was a **demon** inside him that was forcing him to behave so badly.
180. **Contradiction** – the fact of something being the complete opposite of something else or very different from something else, so that one of them must be wrong
It is a **contradiction** that he calls Arun his best friend, but does not trust him.
181. **Pretend** – to behave as if something is true when you know that it is not, especially in order to deceive people, or as a game
The child was not actually hurt, but **pretended** to be.
182. **Acknowledge** – to accept, admit, or recognize something, or the truth or existence of something
He **acknowledged** that he was at fault.
183. **Purebred** – an animal with parents that are both of the same breed (same as pedigree)
He had a **purebred** Labrador dog.
184. **Well-sprung** – rounded rather than flattened — used for the rib cage or body shape of a domestic animal or bird; well-shaped
The horse had **well-sprung** ribs.
185. **Defects** – faults or problems in something or someone; these faults spoil that thing or person; or they can cause it not to work correctly
We must remove all the **defects** in our education system.
I had to return my TV because it had a **defect** in its wiring.
186. **Muzzle** – the mouth and nose of an animal, especially a dog; a fastening or covering for the mouth of an animal used to prevent it from biting
The dog was white with a black **muzzle** and ears.
My dog has bitten many people, so I have to **muzzle** him when I take him out.

187. **Verst** – a Russian unit of distance equal to 0.6629 mile (1.067 kilometers)

The house was about a **verst** from the bus stop.

188. **Whip** – a piece of leather or rope that is fastened to a stick, used for hitting animals or people

The cart driver hit the bullocks continuously with his **whip**.



A Whip

189. **Worrying** – troubling

The rise of Covid-19 infections in our country is very **worrying**.

190. **Liable** – very likely to do something

The baby is **liable** to cry if you wake him up suddenly.

191. **Jealous** – unhappy and angry because someone has something that you want

Rita was always **jealous** of her sister because she was prettier than Rita.

192. **Blameless** – not responsible for anything bad

Atul and Rohit wrote exactly the same answers in an exam; Atul was blameless because Rohit copied his work.

193. **Teasing** – laughing at someone or saying unkind things about them, either because you are joking or because you want to upset that person

He was constantly **teasing** his younger brother and making him cry.

194. **Black beetles** – a type of insect; cockroaches

There were hundreds of **black beetles** on the floor of the kitchen.

195. **Tracking** – following a person or animal by looking for proof that they have been somewhere, or by using electronic equipment
We continued **tracking** the tiger into the forest by following its pug marks.
196. **Interfere** – to involve yourself in a situation when your involvement is not wanted or is not helpful
I am not going to **interfere** in their family affairs.
197. **Pup** – a baby of certain animals, or a puppy; here used as an abuse
The **pup** was blind and was rescued from the middle of the road.
198. **Jesuit** – a person who is a member of the Society of Jesus, a religious group begun in 1540; here used as an abuse
This school was started by a **Jesuit** priest.
199. **Partridge** – a bird with a round body and a short tail that is sometimes hunted for food or for sport
The **partridge** suddenly ran across the road.



A Partridge

200. **Sparks** – very small pieces of fire that fly out from something that is burning
The **sparks** from the fire burnt holes in my dress.
201. **Temples** – flat areas on each side of the head behind the eyes
She had a bad headache and was pressing her **temples**.
202. **Milksop** – a weak or cowardly person
He was such a **milksop** that he hid behind his mother when he saw the policeman.

203. **Hysterics** – uncontrolled behaviour or crying, usually caused by extreme fear or sadness

When the bank robbers rushed into the bank, people went into **hysterics**.

204. **Tumbler** – a glass; a drinking container that does not have a handle or a stem

She poured some water into the **tumbler** and held it out to her mother.



A Tumbler

205. **Mist** – thin fog produced by very small drops of water collecting in the air just above the ground or water

The early morning **mist** cleared as the sun rose.



Mist

206. **Blessing** – approval to do something; good wishes from someone holy; protection given by God; something that is very good or lucky
They always asked for God's **blessings** before eating.

It is a **blessing** that they are all safe after this terrible accident.

207. **Damned** – used to express anger with someone or something

The **damned** computer has stopped working.

208. **Bliss** – perfect happiness

It was sheer **bliss** to spend a few days holidaying in the mountains.

209. **Champagne** – an expensive white or pink fizzy (with bubbles) wine made in the Champagne area of Eastern France, or, any similar wine. Champagne is often drunk to celebrate something. They celebrated their grandmother's birthday with a bottle of **Champagne**.



Popping the cork on a bottle of Champagne

4. Questions

I. Activity

1. *The word 'proposal' has several meanings. Can you guess what sort of proposal the play is about?*
 - (i) *a suggestion, plan or scheme for doing something*
 - (ii) *an offer for a possible plan or action*
 - (iii) *the act of asking someone's hand in marriage*

2. *Do you think Indian and Russian weddings have any customs in common? With the help of a partner, fill in the table below.*

Wedding Ceremonies in Russia and India

Customs similar to Indian ones	Customs different from Indian ones

II. Thinking about the Play

1. What does Chubukov at first suspect that Lomov has come for? Is he sincere when he later says “And I’ve always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son”? Find reasons for your answer from the play.

2. Chubukov says of Natalya: “... as if she won’t consent! She’s in love; egad, she’s like a lovesick cat...” Would you agree? Find reasons for your answer.

3. (i) Find all the words and expressions in the play that the characters use to speak about each other, and the accusations and insults they hurl at each other. (For example, Lomov in the end calls Chubukov an intriguer; but earlier, Chubukov has himself called Lomov a “malicious, doublefaced intriguer.” Again, Lomov begins by describing Natalya as “an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated.”)

- (ii) Then think of five adjectives or adjectival expressions of your own to describe each character in the play.

- (iii) Can you now imagine what these characters will quarrel about next?

5. Grammar

- I. 1. This play has been translated into English from the Russian original. Are there any expressions or ways of speaking that strike you as more Russian than English? For example, would an adult man be addressed by an older man as *my darling* or *my treasure* in an English play?

Read through the play carefully, and find expressions that you think are not used in contemporary English, and contrast these with idiomatic modern English expressions that also occur in the play.

2. Look up the following words in a dictionary and find out how to pronounce them. Pay attention to how many syllables there are in each word, and find out which syllable is stressed, or said more forcefully.

palpitations	interfere	implore	thoroughbred
pedigree	principle	evidence	misfortune
malicious	embezzlement	architect	neighbours
accustomed	temporary	behaviour	documents

3. Look up the following phrases in a dictionary to find out their meaning, and then use each in a sentence of your own.
- You may take it that
 - He seems to be coming round
 - My foot's gone to sleep

II. Reported Speech

A sentence in reported speech consists of two parts: a *reporting clause*, which contains the *reporting verb*, and the *reported clause*. Look at the following sentences.

- "I went to visit my grandma last week," said Mamta.
- Mamta said that she had gone to visit her grandma the previous week.

In sentence (a), we have Mamta's exact words. This is an example of direct *speech*. In sentence (b), someone is reporting what Mamta said. This is called indirect *speech* or reported *speech*. A sentence in reported speech is made up of two parts — a *reporting clause* and a *reported clause*.

In sentence (b), *Mamta said* is the *reporting clause* containing the *reporting verb said*. The other clause — *that she had gone to visit her grandma last week* — is the *reported clause*.

Notice that in sentence (b) we put the reporting clause first. This is done to show that we are not speaking directly, but reporting someone else's words. The tense of the verb also changes; past tense (*went*) becomes past perfect (*had gone*). Here are some pairs of sentences in direct and reported speech. Read them carefully, and do the task that follows:

1. (i) LOMOV : Honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, do you think I may count on her consent? (Direct Speech)
(ii) Lomov asked Stepan Stepanovitch respectfully if he thought he might count on her consent. (Reported Speech)
2. (i) LOMOV : I'm getting a noise in my ears from excitement. (Direct Speech)
(ii) Lomov said that he was getting a noise in his ears from excitement. (Reported Speech)
3. (i) NATALYA : Why haven't you been here for such a long time? (Direct Speech)
(ii) Natalya Stepanovna asked why he hadn't been there for such a long time. (Reported Speech)
4. (i) CHUBUKOV : What's the matter? (Direct Speech)
(ii) Chubukov asked him what the matter was. (Reported Speech)
5. (i) NATALYA : My mowers will be there this very day! (Direct Speech)
(ii) Natalya Stepanovna declared that her mowers would be there that very day. (Reported Speech)

You must have noticed that when we report someone's exact words, we have to make some changes in the sentence structure. In the following sentences fill in the blanks to list the changes that have occurred in the above pairs of sentences. One has been done for you.

1. To report a question, we use the reporting verb asked. (as in Sentence Set 1).
 2. To report a declaration, we use the reporting verb _____.
 3. The adverb of place *here* changes to _____.
 4. When the verb in direct speech is in the present tense, the verb in reported speech is in the _____ tense (as in Sentence Set 3).
 5. If the verb in direct speech is in the present continuous tense, the verb in reported speech changes to _____ tense. For example, _____ changes to *was getting*.
 6. When the sentence in direct speech contains a word denoting respect, we add the adverb _____ in the reporting clause (as in Sentence Set 1).
 7. The pronouns *I*, *me*, *our* and *mine*, which are used in the first person in direct speech, change to third person pronouns such as _____, _____, _____ or _____ in reported speech.
- III. Here is an excerpt from an article from the *Times of India* dated 27 August 2006. Rewrite it, changing the sentences in direct speech into reported speech. Leave the other sentences unchanged.
- “Why do you want to know my age? If people know I am so old, I won't get work!” laughs 90-year-old A. K. Hangal, one of Hindi cinema's most famous character actors. For his age, he is rather

energetic. “What’s the secret?” we ask. “My intake of everything is in small quantities. And I walk a lot,” he replies. “I joined the industry when people retire. I was in my 40s. So I don’t miss being called a star. I am still respected and given work, when actors of my age are living in poverty and without work. I don’t have any complaints,” he says, adding, “but yes, I have always been underpaid.” Recipient of the Padma Bhushan, Hangal never hankered after money or materialistic gains. “No doubt I am content today, but money is important. I was a fool not to understand the value of money earlier,” he regrets.

6. Speaking and Writing

1. **Anger Management:** As adults, one important thing to learn is how to manage our temper. Some of us tend to get angry quickly, while others remain calm.

Can you think of three ill effects that result from anger? Note them down. Suggest ways to avoid losing your temper in such situations. Are there any benefits from anger?

2. In pairs, prepare a script based on the given excerpt from *The Home and the World* by Rabindranath Tagore. You may write five exchanges between the characters with other directions such as movements on stage and way of speaking, etc.

One afternoon, when I happened to be specially busy, word came to my office room that Bimala had sent for me. I was startled.

“Who did you say had sent for me?” I asked the messenger.

“The Rani *Mother*”.

“The Bara *Rani*?”

“No, sir, the *Chota Rani Mother*.”

The *Chota Rani*! It seemed a century since I had been sent for by her. I kept them all waiting there, and went off into the inner apartments. When I stepped into our room I had another shock of surprise to find Bimala there with a distinct suggestion of being dressed up. The room, which from persistent neglect, had latterly acquired an air of having grown absent-minded, had regained something of its old

order this afternoon. I stood there silently, looking enquiringly at Bimala.

She flushed a little and the fingers of her right hand toyed for a time with the bangles on her left arm. Then she abruptly broke the silence. "Look here! Is it right that ours should be the only market in all Bengal which allows foreign goods?"

"What, then, would be the right thing to do?" I asked.

"Order them to be cleared out!"

"But the goods are not mine."

"Is not the market yours?"

"It is much more theirs who use it for trade."

"Let them trade in Indian goods, then."

"Nothing would please me better. But suppose they do not?"

"Nonsense! How dare they be so insolent? Are you not..."

"I am very busy this afternoon and cannot stop to argue it out. But I must refuse to tyrannise."

"It would not be tyranny for selfish gain, but for the sake of the country."

"To tyrannise for the country is to tyrannise over the country. But that I am afraid you will never understand." With this I came away.

3. In groups, discuss the qualities one should look for in a marriage partner.

You might consider the following points.

- *Personal qualities*
 - Appearance or looks
 - Attitudes and beliefs
 - Sense of humour
- *Value system*
 - Compassion and kindness
 - Tolerance, ambition
 - Attitude to money and wealth
- *Education and professional background*

- 2. Are there parts of the play that remind you of film scenes from romantic comedies? Discuss this in groups, and recount to the rest of the class episodes similar to those in the play.**

In this Lesson

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Given you a play by the famous Russian writer, Anton Chekhov.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Dictate the biographical information given below. Students should then guess the name of the playwright.

William Shakespeare (1564 –1616). He was born at Stratford-on-Avon in April 1564. His father was an important public figure in Stratford. People believe that he received a decent grammar-school education in literature, logic, and Latin (mathematics and natural science did not form part of the curriculum). When he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years his senior. He seems to have prospered in the London theatre world. He probably began his career as an actor in London, and he earned enough as author to acquire landed property.

When he was forty-seven, he retired to a large house in Stratford. He died in 1616, leaving behind a body of work that still stands as a pinnacle in world literature.

Homophones

Can you find the words below that are spelt similarly, and sometimes even pronounced similarly, but have very different meanings? Check their pronunciation and meaning in a dictionary.

- They were too close to the door to close it.
- Since there is no time like the present, she thought it was time to present the present.