4.1. IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING MATERIALS:

Of all the resources and techniques available to the teacher of English, the textbooks are of paramount importance. Teachers, examiners and educational officials have often been blamed for considering the text ‘holy’. True, the text should not be everything and the only source of learning a second language; it should be supplemented by films, pictures, tape-recorded materials and other teaching aids. But we all know that a country like India is too poor to afford these aids. In our circumstances when we do not have even competent teachers, the textbook does become holy for us. Regardless of what one might want to create with respect to curriculum materials, at present the textbook holds a place of unparalleled importance in influencing what shall be taught in schools. The vocabulary, the structures and everything that needs to be taught will have to be incorporated in the textbook. It is the textbook that determines the major part of the classroom activity. In it the decisions have already been made about what the students will learn, how they will learn it and what sections of the work will receive most emphasis. The single most important resource influencing what students study in school, aside from the teacher, is still the textbook.
English is no longer the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges of Rajasthan. Its study as a compulsory second language begins in the sixth class and ends with the first year of the Degree Course. Now, its study has been started from the very first class in government schools. Students are exposed to very little English outside the class. The only time when the student hears English spoken is during the forty or fifty minutes spent in the class. Even here, unfortunately, the explanations are mostly in Hindi. When the medium of instruction is Hindi; when all the communication (within and outside the school) takes place in the student’s native language, when English itself is being taught through LI, the students can hardly be expected to do any kind of secondary or tertiary reading in English. So the prescribed textbook becomes the only source of exposure to English.

If the textbook is the only and the most essential available teaching aid, its quality assume prime importance. It needs to be accompanied by a detailed handbook for teachers, because we all know that English is being taught by teachers whose own command of English in most cases is faulty and who do not have even the minimum qualifications to teach English. It is not possible to replace all these teachers with competent and qualified ones. What do we do then? A good textbook is the only answer -

What, then, does the teacher whose command of English is weak want? He wants a good textbook which will both keep him within the bounds of good English and teach his pupils what they want to know.¹

Realizing the importance of the textbook in English, the National Council of Educational Research and Training laid down basic principles for the preparations of textbooks in English. A conference was held in Delhi (April 15 to 20, 1963) to review the problems of teaching English in Indian
Both the Study Groups (The Study of English in India (New Delhi: ministry of Education, Government of India, 1967); Teaching of English (New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1971). appointed by the Ministry of Education stressed the need for reforms in the preparation of textbooks at the Secondary or Senior Secondary stage. Ever since the designed materials has received a good deal of attention at the Center as well as in the States.

In spite of all these efforts the textbooks that the teachers get do not seem to be serving the purpose they are intended to. What is the cause? To some extent the reasons given for bad textbooks by the first study group still hold good-

Reform in the preparation and prescription of course books at the Senior Secondary stage is still overdue. The current procedure in this regard is incredibly fantastic. If an expert or a small group of them, is or are appointed by a state Government to prepare a series of course books which Government intends to publish, a regular obstacle race is prescribed for them. For, governments expect them to finish the work in a few weeks, whereas even greater stalwarts would require a year or two to write them. Further, persons already in the employ of a government, board or university are appointed to prepare these course books on payment of a token remuneration so
that the work is done with the greatest reluctance and in the most perfunctory manner.  

The conditions prevailing in Rajasthan are not very different. It was possible for the researcher to contact many persons who had been writing textbooks for the Board of Secondary and Senior Secondary Education and get first-hand information. It was found that the instructions given to the textbook writers are not detailed and no guidance is given regarding the linguistic and thematic content of the book. Usually the job of writing a particular book is assigned to two or three persons, but these persons do not belong to the same place. They work in different places; if one is in Jaipur, the other is in Udaipur, and the third one in Bikaner. So it becomes very difficult for these people to meet often and hold consultations. It was possible to procure a copy of the textbook writers. Given below are some of the instructions from the Board’s letter:

1. The book should be of 180 printed pages. (Size 20X 30).
2. The exercises will be written by Mr.………., hence keep in touch with him.
3. The book should be written in a period of two months.
4. This book is the prose collection and supposed to be included in the curriculum of RBSE.
5. One copy of the existing courses is being sent.

The letter went on to give details regarding the enumeration and typing charges.

With the instructions being so inadequate and casual as above, and the time given being so little, one can hardly expect a good textbook in the hands of teachers and students. The very conditions under which the textbooks are produced are responsible for their defects. If the textbook is defective it can ruin the whole teaching. The very conditions under
which the textbooks are produced are responsible for their defects. The textbook provides both teachers and students with a kind of security; it lays out the road that they would take, it spells out the tasks that they have to undertake. If our whole teaching is centered round the textbook to such a great extent, evaluation of the textbook does become imperative.

4.1.1 Book Analyzed- In order to find out the value and worth of the teaching materials being used in classes 11th and 12th of Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education in Rajasthan, the syllabus has been analyzed in short:

- **English Compulsory: Class 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Learning</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual Questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Text Book-Hornbill</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Supp. Book-Snapshots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Reading**: 20

Two unseen passages (around 350 words for both).

(Beside comprehension question, lexical items should also be tested)
2. **Writing:**

   I. One out of two tasks-description of any event or incident, or a process based on hints 100 – 120 words.  
   
   II. One out of two composition -an article, a report, a speech (around 100-120 words)

   III. One out of two letters (Business or official letters for enquiries , complaints , asking for information placement of a person or an order etc. or letter to the school authorities regarding admissions, school issues, requirements ,suitability of courses etc.

3. **Grammar:** The questions type will include gap –filling , sentence- recording , dialogue– completion, and sentence– transformation

   I. Determiners  
   II. Tenses  
   III. Clauses  
   IV. Modals

4. **Text Books:**

   ➢ **Hornbill**

   - **Prose-**  
     I. One out of two extract from the prescribed text for comprehension  
     II. Four out of six short answer type questions (around 10-15 words)

   - **Poetry-**  
     I. One out of two extract from the prescribed poems for comprehension and literary interpretation
II. Three out of four short answer type questions (around 10-15 words)  06

➢ Snapshots (Supplementary Reader)  10

I. One out of two questions to test the evaluation of characters, events and episodes (in about 50 – 60 words)  06

II. Two out of three short answer type questions to be answered in about 30-40 words on content, events and episodes  04

5. Prescribed Books:

1. Hornbill- NCERT’s Book Published under Copyright.

2. Snapshots – NCERT’s Book Published under Copyright.

➢ English Compulsory: Class 12

The Examination Scheme for the subjects is as follows-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Time (hrs.)</th>
<th>Marks for the Paper</th>
<th>Sessional</th>
<th>Total Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Learning</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook: Flamingo</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp. Book: Vistas</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION A

1. Reading - Passages for comprehension and note making

Two unseen passages (about 700-900 words in all)

The passages will include two of the following –

(a) **Factual passages** e.g. instructions, descriptions, and reports.

(b) **Discursive passage** involving opinion e.g. argumentative, persuasive or interpretative text.

(c) **Literary passage e.g.** extract from, fiction, drama, poetry, essay or biography.

The details are as under -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unseen Passages</th>
<th>Testing Areas</th>
<th>No. of Words</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>1. Short answer type questions to test local, global and inferential comprehension, 2. Vocabulary-such as word formation and inferring meaning.</td>
<td>400-500</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Making</td>
<td>1. Note-making in an appropriate format</td>
<td>300-400</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION B

➢ Writing- 25

I. One out of two short compositions –(about 50 words ) 4

(It includes –advertisement and notices, drafting posters on social, current or national issues, description of arguments for or against topic accepting and decline invitations.)

II. A report on an event or a factual description- about 100 words) 7

(One out of two and based on some verbal input)

III. Letter- 7

(One out of two and based on some verbal input)

The letters will include the following –

(a) business or officials letters( for making enquiries, registering complains, asking for and giving information, placing orders and sending replies):

(b) letters to the editor on various social, national and international issues.

(c) Application for a job including CV (curriculum Vitae)/Resume.

IV. One out of two compositions- (about 100 words) 7

(Based on visual and or verbal input, the compositions may be descriptive or argumentative in nature such as an article, or a speech.)

SECTION C

Text Books: 40

➢ Flamingo 25
I. **One out of two extracts**- (based on poetry from the text to test comprehension and appreciation) 04

II. **Three out of four short questions from the poetry** section to test local and global comprehension of text. 06

III. **Four short answer questions** based on the lessons from prescribed text. 08

IV. One out of two long answer type questions based on the text to test global comprehension (about 125 words each) 07

   ➢ **Vistas** 15

V. One out of two long answer type question based on Supplementary Reader to test comprehension and extrapolation of theme, character and incidents (about 125 words) 07

VI. Four short answer questions from the Supplementary Reader 08

   ➢ **Prescribed Books**-

   1. **Flamingo**- NCERT’s Book Published under Copyright

   2. **Vistas**- NCERT’s Book Published under Copyright

4.2 **About the Books-A Short Description of the Content of the Books** :

4.2.1 **Hornbill**- The textbook for class XI is based on the English syllabus on the lines suggested by the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. It aims to help learners’ develop proficiency in English by using language as an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition.

In the reading Skills section, the texts have been chosen to mirror the kind of serious reading in real life that a school-leaver should be capable of. The prose pieces are drawn
from biographies, travelogues, science fiction, art and contemporary expository prose by writers from different parts of the world. Samples from journalistic writing have also been included. The play, placed centrally in the textbook, is on a lighter vein. The poems relate to universal sentiments and appeal to contemporary sensibilities.

Learners at this stage bring along with a rich resource of world-view, knowledge and cognitive strategies. Teachers should encourage them to make educated guesses at what they read and help them initially to make sense of the language of the text and subsequently become autonomous readers. The notes after every unit help the teacher and learners with strategies for dealing with the particular piece.

The activities suggested draw upon the learners’ multilingual experiences and capacities. Comprehension is addressed at two levels: one of the texts itself and the other of how the text relates to the learners’ experience. The vocabulary exercises will sensitize learners to make informed choices of words, while the points of grammar highlighted will help them notice the use of forms. The ‘Things to Do’ section at the end of every unit invites learners to look for other sources of information that will help them deal with learning tasks across the curriculum.

The section on writing skills prepares them for the kind of independent writing that a school-leaver will need to engage in for academic as well as real-life purposes. Help has been provided in a step-by-step manner to lead the learners on to make notes, summarize, draft letters and write short essays, paying attention to the form, content and the process of writing.
4.2.2 Flamingo - This textbook for class XII English course has been developed on the basis of the recommendations made in the National Curriculum Framework 2005. It follows the design of the class textbook, Hornbill, published in 2006.

The prose selections aim to provide exposure to a wide variety of genres and themes, and writing from different parts of the world. They take into account the interests of young adults while making them aware of the socio-political issues that they will confront as they step into the world outside school. The tasks that follow the units provide opportunities for the development of language skills.

Three short stories, representatives of fiction from different parts of the world – French, Swedish and British, have been included. Alphonse Daudet’s ‘The Last Lesson’ deals with the theme of language imposition and language loyalty, Selma Lagerlof’s ‘The Rattrap’, captures the basic goodness in a human being in the face of material temptations and A.C. Barton’s ‘Going Places’ explores the theme of adolescent hero – worship and fantasizing.

Two of the non-fiction pieces are biographical and two autobiographical. Of the two biographical pieces, ‘Indigo’, an excerpt from Louis Fischer’s ‘Life of Mahatma Gandhi’ portrays Gandhi in action, helping peasants secure legal justice and the excerpt from Anees Jung’s ‘Lost Spring’ is an account of the lives of street children, a contemporary reality that youngsters need to be made sensitive to.

‘The Autobiographical Piece’ by William Douglas, a lawyer who was a close associate of Franklin Roosevelt, deals with his personal experience of overcoming the fear of swimming. The second autobiographical account is by Asokamitran writing in a humorous vein about his years in the Gemini Studios.
The Introduction from ‘The Penguin Book of Interviews’ edited by Christopher Silvester has been included to introduce pupils to the subject of media writing. This is accompanied by a recent newspaper interviewed with Umberto Eco by Mukund Padmanabhan. Each Unit is interspersed with ‘Think as you read’ questions to check factual comprehension. This is followed by end-of-unit global questions and text-related issues to be taken up for discussion. Language work on vocabulary and sentence patterns is followed by writing tasks. Useful vocabulary is presented at the beginning of each unit for learners to notice them in the text and understand their meaning from the context. Annotations are added where necessary. ‘About the unit ‘highlights the points of focus in the tasks section following each text. The poetry section has six poems. A short excerpt from Keats’ ‘Endymion’ has been chosen to give pupils a taste of classical poetry, lines which have universal appeal and eternal value. Robert Frost’s ‘A Roadside Stand’ is on the rural–urban economic divide. The other four poems are by reputed contemporary poets including two women, Kamala Das and Adrienne Rich’s poem, Aunt Jennifer’s ‘Tigers’, gives expression to the voice of women stifled by the institution of marriage. Stephen Spender’s poem on ‘An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum’ sensitively brings out the disparity between the formal education system and the reality of the lives of the poor. The poems are followed by ‘noticing’ items which indicate the elements that deserve special attention in the classroom. The tasks in the poetry section which make to encourage pupils to enjoy aesthetic writing and evoke subjective responses to the language of poetry.

4.2.3 Vistas (A Supplementary Reader for Class XII) - A vista is a supplementary reader in English (Core course) for Class XII, based on the guidelines of the National
Curriculum Framework 2005. The main objective of this book is to make extensive reading an enjoyable experience, lead students to appreciate some of the best examples of writing and understand the social milieu they live in.

An attempt has been made to attain these objectives by presenting varied themes genres of writing. The themes range from scientific fantasy, political satire, and adventure, to ethical and moral issues and personal conflicts.

Jack Finney’s ‘The Third Level ‘is a scientific fantasy, while ‘The Tiger King ‘by Kalki is a political satire. ‘Antartica’ is a travel piece, with a suggestion that the young reader could take in the expedition by logging on to www. Studentsonice.Com.

The three stories that follow are by Pearl S. Buck; John Updike’s story is about a child participating in the construction of a story by her father and raises issues regarding parental prejudices foisted on children. Dexter’s story is fun-reading about how a criminal escapes jail through creating circumstances by insisting on taking an examination in the prison. The play by Susan Hill is on the themes of disabilities while excerpts from Bama’s Karukku’ and an excerpt from ‘The Land of the Red Apple', a story in Zitkala-Sa’s, book ‘The School Days of an Indian Girl.’

Each unit has questions. The questions on the texts in the supplementary reader take the learner beyond factual comprehension to contemplating on the issues that the texts raise.

Activities suggested off from the texts.

4.2.4 Snapshots (A Supplementary Reader for class XI) - Snapshots, is a supplementary reader, based on the English syllabus for Class XI. For young adults, awareness of personal development and growing independence begins at the higher secondary stage. It
is during this period that they seek to understand themselves and the society in which they live. Literature plays an important role in molding young minds. The choice of stories and biographical sketches in Snapshots by contemporary writers exposes learners to the various narratives of life that the literature of the world offers.

The stories deal with a range of human predicaments: moral choices in adolescents, as in William Saroyan’s ‘The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse’; the poignancy of personal loss and reconciliation that follows war in Marga Minco’s ‘The Address’; language and imperialism invading the rural setting in ‘Ranga’s Marriage’ by Masti Venkatesha Iyengar; and professional commitment in A. J. Cronin’s ‘Birth’, an excerpt from the novel ‘The Citadel’. We also have J. B. Priestley’s play, ‘Mother’s Day’, an early comment on the acceptance of (and rebellion against) the assumed roles of men and women at home. Amitav Gosh’s ‘The Ghat of the Only World’, is a touching tribute to Aga Shahidali, a Kashmiri poet who wrote in English, while Vikram Seth’s ‘The Tale of Melon City’ is a humorous satire set in verse.

The language of these stories allows learners to read on their own with only occasional support from the teacher or reference to the dictionary. Learners should be encouraged to read the stories at home and the themes, narrative patterns and stylistic features including use of punctuation can be discussed in the classroom. It is hoped that this gateway to extensive reading will help learners imbibe language unconsciously.

4.3 REAL CHALLENGES AND REMEDIES RELATED WITH TEACHING MATERIALS:

In the earlier paragraphs the syllabus of Compulsory English prescribed by NCERT has been discussed in short. The contents and subject matter of the chapters in 11th and 12th
classes have been discussed briefly. The marks distribution has also been discussed what are decided by BSER, Ajmer for Senior Secondary Classes. Nonetheless, the syllabus is a latest upgraded version but still it is above satisfaction. In order to make the teaching and learning of English at the tertiary level meaningful we should organize our syllabus and programmes on the basis of answers to the following questions:

I. Who are the users of English?

II. Do all of them need the same degree of competence in English?

III. Are all the learners who come to the tertiary level prepared to receive instructions in English?

IV. Can and should we say that we have two sets of unrelated courses – literature courses and language courses?

V. Should we have a variety of need–based courses?

The situation in our schools and colleges is very complex. There are students who have had their entire education through the medium of their first language and hence, they find it difficult to come up to the level of their classroom English. The second group of learners comes with five to six years of frozen English or fractured English based on ‘framed’ grammar. We have to organize courses designed to activate their English and help them use English in a variety of situations. The third group of learners comes out of English–teaching shops where bad English is badly taught. The fourth group of learners comes out of first–rate English - medium institutions or regional language medium institutions where English is taught well. The fifth group of learners comes from the weaker sections of the community who are both linguistically and socio-economically deprived. It has been felt for quite some time that the teaching of English at the tertiary
level in India has not been successful, primarily because the learner’s experience of English has been confined to only literary –text –based contexts, very few role-relationships and a limited number of speech functions. They have been exposed to ‘classroom English’ and ‘Textbook English’. No attempt has been made to help them exploit the possibilities of what they bring with them –their knowledge of formal grammar, their exposure to literature, their ability to memorize, and their ability to handle their first language.

Our learners need three kinds of communicative competence: International competence, the ability to interact appropriately with individual and institutions; discourse competence, the ability to form and interpret texts; linguistic competence, the ability to explore and exploit the phonological, syntactic and lexico-semantic resources of language to encode and decode messages and experiences and also the ability to make linguistically and socio-culturally motivated choices and put them together.

In order to achieve the objectives of teaching /learning English at the tertiary level we must reorganize our syllabuses keeping in view the roles and functions assigned to English and the need of learners, bring out new types of teaching and testing materials (in print and on audio and video cassettes) in order to help learners change their linguistic gear according to the roles they play, introduce methods of teaching that a learner- friendly, and organize a variety of teacher –development programmes designed to make the teachers in service familiar with the philosophy underlying this approach and show how these materials are to be presented. What we must keep in mind is that exposure to a rich variety of linguistic and socio-cultural material with its focus on ‘what to say, when and how’ is of paramount importance in second language learning. It may be useful to explore
the possibility of organizing a new programme in English with the concept of a ‘core course’ or ‘foundation course’ at different levels reinforced by bunches of inter-related, need based courses such as English for academic purposes, English for office purposes, and English for announcers, interpreters and reporters. The departments of English in schools and colleges have to get ready to respond to the demands of the general students: to organize courses in English for communication at different levels including courses in Spoken & Written English, and courses in English for late developers, i.e., for those who decide to learn functional English after the age of twenty. We should look at the recommendations of the Curriculum Development Center set up by the UGC and adopt them or modify them in the light of local/regional needs. What we have discussed here is a set of suggestions and guidelines and not a set of do’s and don’ts.

The real challenges facing the Department of English today is: thousands of students with very inadequate or with very little English, who need to be equipped quickly with different degrees of competence in the use of English. In terms of real national and individual requirements, not all students need English to the same level of competence. It is important that we should be able to identify the English requirements of various groups of students precisely, and try to provide for each the pattern of courses that will be relevant to the needs of learners and help them reach different levels of skill in language performance. The ultimate objective of teaching English at Senior Secondary level should be to help learners acquire not only context-governed and syllabus-bound competence in English but to attain that level of sociolinguistic competence which will enable them to use it with confidence. It is also important that special programmes are organized for students coming from tribal, rural and other neglected sections of our society who, though gifted
and intelligent, feel alienated and handicapped at institutions of higher learning because they have not had the opportunity of acquiring English as a second language and hence find themselves incapable of using English as a language of vertical, socio-economic mobility. So it will be useful to design a bridge course for them. The Central Institute of English & Foreign Languages has produced a package to help such learners. It is being published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

4.3.1 The Approach Required for Students: At Senior Secondary level, the most urgent need of students is a good grounding in framing simple and correct sentences, straight-forward expression, to create fluency and to get children to easily assimilate English. For this a different approach will have to be adopted. An approach to the teaching of usage have been taken and paragraphs or sections on verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs etc. have been put, almost in the order in which they appear in grammar books, in the packets, one for each year.

4.3.2 Mastery of the Most Frequent used Structures: The usage –section of the Language Course unit should aim at imparting advanced language skills to thousands of students in India. At the Senior Secondary Compulsory English level, usage –teaching should aim at a mastery of the most frequently used and the most useful sentence –patterns within reasonably clearly defined stylistic areas e.g. of modern informal prose, and scientific writing.

4.3.3 ‘Cyclic Approach’ in Teaching Structures: If the usage section is based on what may be called a ‘cyclic approach’ to the mastery of sentence-patterns, better results are bound to follow. Hence the teaching of usage must not only begin with sentence patterns but through –out the years of English Teaching, there should be provision for dealing with
these patterns at increasingly higher levels. Stannard Allen’s book “Living English Structure” provides excellent raw materials at three different levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced, for such an approach.

If we don’t take effective measures to deal with the situation now, the teaching of English will cease to have any social and economic relevance, and will be reduced to a ritual.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:


2. The Teaching of English in India (Delhi: NCERT, 1963).