

UNIT 11

The Pursuit of Wisdom

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- identify the main sources of knowledge.
- differentiate backward ideas and outlooks by understanding the benefits of knowledge.
- know the benefits of receiving information and reading.

11.1 The Main Sources of Knowledge



Picture 11.1. Written materials can be a source of knowledge



Picture 11.2. Education is a source of knowledge



Picture 11.3. People are a source of knowledge

- According to picture 11.1 where can people gain knowledge?
- According to pictures 11.2 and 11.3 talk about how the two source of knowledge are similar. What is the difference between the two sources of knowledge?

October (Tikimit)

October is known for two things in most parts of Ethiopia: flowers and ripe crops. The flower is a symbol of peace, happiness and good news.

Moreover, human beings use flowers as expression of love, honesty and to give thanks to others. Flowers are also used in time of sorrow, because, the short life span of a flower symbolizes the life of human beings.

The other unique feature of October is the time of harvest. Moreover, there is much milk and butter in October. Above all October is also the time for fresh honey.

To mention some proverbs:

“Cutting honey in October”

“Saving crops in October”

“Children should be breastfed in October”

There are many popular sayings in Ethiopia. The above proverbs indicate that in October we can have honey in great quality as well as in quantity. The proverbs also indicate that we have to use effectively what is harvested in October. In addition, the proverbs indicate that children should be breastfed.

Children have to be protected, fed, etc., otherwise they will not be good citizens. Similarly, if plants and their fruits are not protected in October there will not be enough to eat in December and January well as saving the harvest it also protects the farmers

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from starvation in June and July. Farmers have to be protected from the time of planting seeds up to harvesting time.

October is known for other things. Rivers are cleaner in October. The problem is that only very few people need to drink water in October. Really that is why we often hear people saying that there is no water as pure as in October and there is no noble idea like the advice of the poor if there is someone to listen them.

(Source: Improved writing of Kasay G/egiziaber 1998: 112-115)

Activity 1

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

1. Where do you think that the writer of the passage got this information?
2. How did the writer collect the information?
3. Based on the above story list the sources of knowledge.

Knowledge is the property of our minds, which can be gained by our age, experience and education. In other words, our knowledge can be measured with how much information we have. Therefore, in the process of developing our knowledge, information has a great role.

Knowledge can be gained from books, magazines, radio, TV as well as from our environment and other people. As a result, our environment is one source of knowledge. For instance, the writer of the above passage in order to write about the October month he critically observed his environment as well as listening to the proverbs of elders. This shows the relationship between the development of knowledge and looking, listening, and reading skills.

Knowledge can be acquired from our environment through direct observation, smelling, tasting, touching and listening. Through our physical senses we know about the increasing or decreasing of amounts of water in the river, about the peaceful existence of the local people, their development etc.

School provides us knowledge, which is based on scientific information. Different subject teachers in the school do this. The teachers organize real information and present it to their students. We can also get knowledge by reading books. Radio and Television are also good sources of knowledge. Moreover, some information can be gained from our observations. For instance, knowledge about some important and attractive places in our country such as the Tiya stelae, the Tis-Isat Fall of Abay, the Shirin of Diresheik Hussien of Bale, the Wall of Harar, the Archaeological places of Hadar, the Rifit valley, etc.

We have to be careful whenever we are collecting information. Because some sources of information such as magazines, radio and individual may give us false information. Therefore, before we take in the information we have to crosscheck its accuracy with other sources of information as well as asking teachers and knowledgeable people.

Activity 2

1. From the following topics choose one of them which is relevant to or let your teacher select a topic for you. Collect information about the topic. You should organize the information in various ways:
 - (a) The relationship between your school and your family.
 - (b) The causes and possible prevention of diseases transmitted by dogs.
 - (c) The problems of your local farmers, pastoralists and traders.
 - (d) The role of the family in the teaching-learning process.
2. Show your teacher your work after organizing the above information.

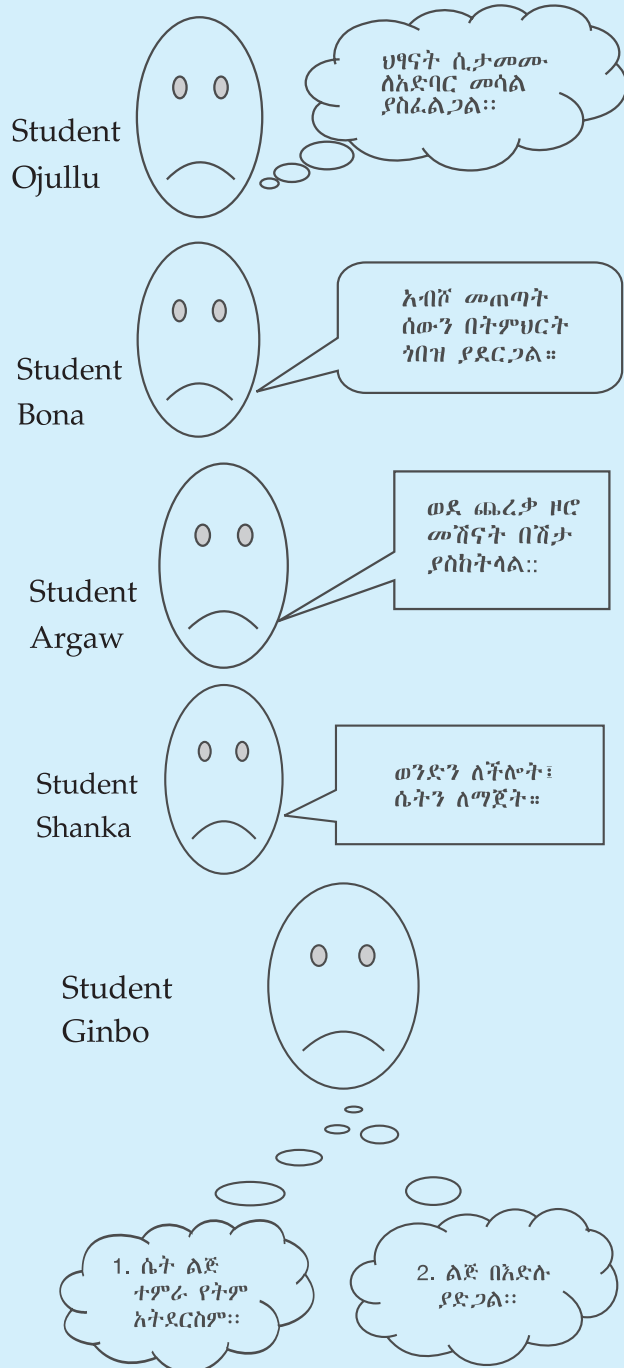
11.2 Backward Thinking and Attitudes

- What do we mean by backward traditions and views?
- What types of backward traditions are found in your localities?

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Teacher Wogayehu's Homework

Teacher Wogayehu gave homework for her students to collect and organize the backward views and thoughts in their locality. Students collected some backward ideas and views of the community. The following are the collected backward views of that locality.



Picture 11.4. Pictures collected by students

Activity 3

From the five students which of them collected information about traditional thinking?

1. Why did you classify them as traditional thinking?
2. Have you ever observed such kinds of backward views in your locality?
3. What are the reasons that these backward have developed?
4. Describe how backward views can harm the pursuit of knowledge?

Backward views are based on harmful traditional culture and are not based on science. Especially, when the harvest fails and damages their agriculture, people are usually influenced by backward views. Moreover, if we are not able to use modern technology for agricultural production, we could be starved. People may assume that starvation is the result of our sin. But, if we use modern technology our output will be in excess so we could become self-sufficient, traditional outlooks would be less influential.

Human beings may also face health problems. Some individuals assume that the causes of diseases are related to something unbelievable. For instance, HIV is caused by God's will. This is one of the intangible reasons related with disease. Backward views also lead us to believe in evil spirits. This means worshipping things that have spiritual power. For example, some individuals believe in animals, others in rivers. People with backward views assume that development is not a result of work but it is the result of their fate. So they always expect it as a gift given by nature. Whenever some hard workers are able to change their life they believe it is their good luck. As their problems are always associated with their fate that they complain. That is why they associate them with some negative proverbs, such as "If a person is destined to be poor he will never be a profitable trader".

Let us read the following poem about a backward view of fate (chance)

ወይ እኔን ግደለኝ ወይ እድሉን ባርከው፣
ሆይ ተቀደደ ሲርበኝ የማከው።

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This way of thinking results in a lack of hope to succeed in the future. Whenever a person suffers lack of hope, he/she does not trust himself/herself to alleviate his/her problems and feels unable to challenge dangerous situations. Generally, we can say that backward views and ideas have a negative impact on our thinking. So, we have to create awareness in society about the harm of these backward views in society. Similarly, we have to be hard workers in our own work.

Activity 4

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the effects of backward views on health?
2. What are the causes and effects of believing in evil spirits?
3. How can education help us to avoid backward views?

11.3 Information

- Do you have a habit of orderly organizing of information? If your answer is yes, list some of your information which have organized?
- What is the use of arranging information in an orderly way?

The Wise Zeberga

Zeberga is a grade six student in one of the rural schools near Tiya Tikil Dingay. He is naturally a clever and hard worker in school. In his early study of writing and reading, he was able to write the name of his mother, father, sisters and brother as well as his birthday and place by asking his family.

When he grew up, he was able to record the life story of his relatives. By doing this he tried to find out about his origins from which of the Gurage clans he was descended.

And then by asking the elders he recorded the name of five kebele in his locality. After that he asked and wrote the reason why these names were given. Recently, he started to record the story of

‘Tiya Tikil Dingay’ by asking local people and teachers. As he said after the completion of grade 6 civics and ethical education lessons he will collect additional information about his family, environment and good experiences.

Although he is doing the above things his friends assume that he is doing them because he does not have any work. They also said that “instead of studying his lessons and supporting his family, in his spare time, he is always occupied writing useless things.”

Activity 5

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

1. Are Zeberga’s action useful or not?
2. What do you suggest to improve Zeberga’s actions of collecting information?

Information gives important ideas about us, our families, our schools, our localities as well as our country. Zeberga has to be appreciated because he understands the importance of information. For that matter, he is able to record information as much as he can.

Information is important, so it should be collected continuously and carefully. Continuously, means when we get information we have to record it. For instance, the weather conditions today and a week ago have a slight difference. So we should not ignore today’s information even if we have already recorded last week’s weather conditions. Similarly, the price of goods, health status, individual behaviour, characteristics of animals and plants, etc., are always in the process of changing. So we have to follow them continuously and record them with great care.

On the other hand, careful handling of information means ensuring their security. For instance, whenever we are recording information about our families, our behaviour and our health, we have to keep the records in a safe place. Similarly, there is confidential information about ourselves, families, society, institutions and country that needs care and protection.

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Student! For you also in order to be a well-educated person you have to read more and more.

In addition to this, reading helps us to protect our heritage from being lost. It is not only recording information but also putting this information in a safe place to protect it from damage. If the information is not properly stored, we may not find easily when we need it and it may be stolen or we may lose it. If we lose it, our confidential information will be exposed and others may exploit it. To avoid such kind of problem, students like Zeberga are needed to safeguard our heritage.

Activity 6

Discuss the following questions:

1. Why is information important?
2. What is the negative effect of failing to protect information?

11.4 The Reading Habit



Picture 11.5. Students reading in the library



Picture 11.6. Reading outside the home



Picture 11.7. Reading under a tree

- Do you read constantly? If your answer is “yes” for how long do you read in a day? If your answer is “no” why don’t you read?
- What type of materials do you like to read? Why do you like to read them?
- Where do you read most of the time?
- Why did you choose this place?

Whose idea is correct?

Boku, Dendir and Sadya are grade 6 students who have different kinds of reading habits listed as follows:

Boku: I am very interested in reading different written materials, such as magazines, newspapers, books and my exercise books. I read in the place where there is sufficient light like under trees, in the library, and in and out of my home.

Sadya: Boku, you are not correct. We do not have to read for a long time because if we read a lot it may damage our eyes. My father said to me “too much reading causes headache.” We should read only our exercise books and textbooks. However, reading more books is possible when getting older like our teacher and we have to read only in the library, in our home and studying in class.

Dendir: Boku and Sadya, both of you are wrong. We have to read all types of written materials. In order to do our homework we have to refer to other books. Reading fiction is also important. If it is a newspaper we have to select and read only about sport. But reading other topics in the newspaper is useless.

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Activity 7

Based on the conversation, answer the following questions:

1. Among the three students arguments whose idea is the best? Why?
2. What experience did you get after reading the students debate?

Reading is a tool used to improve our knowledge. It is not sufficient to learn by listening only to what is said by our teachers. We have to read additional books in order to get more knowledge. It is worth developing the habit of reading beginning from a young age.

There are some important things that should be considered whenever we are reading. Primarily, we have to find a place with sufficient light, because, bright or dim light causes problems for our eyes. Some individuals read in sunny places or with bright electric light. Others read in dark places. Whenever you meet such children you have to tell them the effect of reading in such conditions on their eyes.

Another element that should be considered is what to read. We do not only read books related to our lessons but also we have to read books in order to get more general information. By selecting some topics we have to read magazines and newspapers. We have to select a suitable place for our reading. Moreover, we can also read in the library or in a place where there is sufficient light such as under a tree, in a taxi, at home and in other places.

Ato Mengistu Lema, Ato Yidnekachew Tesema, Professor Akililu Lema, Ato Yilma Deressa, Artist Tsegaye G/Medihin are famous Ethiopians because they consulted many books. So if you want to be famous like them you should read more books.

Activity 8

Discuss the following questions:

1. Why is it said that there is no specific place for reading?
2. What is the use of reading regularly?

11.5 Methods of Study

Discuss the following questions:

- What do you do before starting reading?
- What do you do when you are reading?
- What about when you have finished?

Kedir and Birmechit

There are two students who are in grade 6 in our school. They are Kedir and Birmechit. Kedir sometimes used to sleep in class and his results were poor.

Birmechit is a clever student. She asks her teachers if anything is not clear and participates in answering when others ask. Teacher Brikiti understands the difference between Kedir and Birmechit. One day the teacher asked the two students in the class about their ways of reading.

Kedir said "I do not want to study daily. But whenever there is an exam, the previous day I study in class. Whenever I face a difficult idea, I skip it and continue to study until I get tired."

Birmechit said "I do not like to study and it pains me to read so many things in one day. I study what I learned that day. If something is unclear I ask my friends and discuss it with them. I also ask my teacher. Most of the time before starting to study I bring my exercise book, dictionary and reference books. While I am reading I make notes. I understand more with this way of reading. Because of this I came first in last year and as I understand from my test result I will do so for this year too."

Activity 9

Based on the above dialogue discuss the following questions:

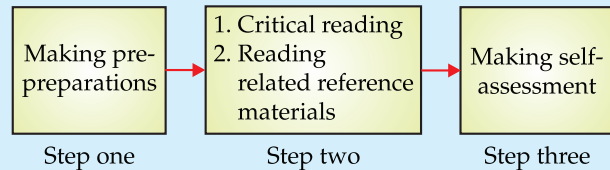
1. Between Kedir and Birmechit who do you think has the best reading habit? Why?
2. In order to get a high score how should you study?

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There is a slight difference between reading to study our lessons and other reading materials. Generally, knowledge and information can be obtained in different ways. One of them is reading. When we are reading for examinations we have to do it until we understand the main points. Moreover, we have to include the different materials used while studying.

While we are studying, we have to examine the book carefully. If the idea is unclear, we have to write it and present it during class discussion. We should not only study our exercise books, but also read related reference books to get more information like good students. Finally after studying our lessons we have to do exercises in order to evaluate our understanding. This is known as self-assessment.

Study the following steps



Activity 10

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the difference between studying and other types of reading?
2. What should do whenever ideas are not clear while we are studying?
3. What do you usually do in the following steps when you are studying?
(a) Before studying (b) While studying
(c) After studying.

Summary

In this unit, we have discussed sources of knowledge, backward views and ideas. The sources of knowledge are schools, books, magazines, TV, radio etc.

Knowledge helps us to change ourselves and our surroundings.

The topic about backward views and ideas also gives us important lessons.

Believing in intangible and unreal things may lead us to be under the yoke of backward views and ideas. Traditional beliefs have a negative impact on our development as well as on our health.

The topic about the studying habit can be summarized based on three steps. Primarily we have to make preparations before beginning reading. Next, we have to study critically by referring to related materials and finally we have to check what we have already studied by answering some questions related to our reading.

Furthermore, in this topic you learned about how you can investigate information. However, collecting information is not enough to be used in practice.

Key Words

- Information:** Organized data about our surroundings, individuals, things etc.
- Knowledge:** The ability to understand or perceive conditions, things etc.
- Backward traditions:** Ideas or views that are based on intangible and non-scientific bases
- Believing in evil spirits:** Worshipping something which does not have importance or power in our life

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Unit Review Exercises

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

I. Write "True" if the statement is correct and write "False" if the statement is incorrect

1. The main source of knowledge is school.
2. When more people are educated backward ideas and views also prevail.
3. If you have better knowledge it is possible for you to live a better life.
4. We can say that information is one of the most important things to improve our knowledge.

II. Match words or phrases under column 'A' with correct items of column 'B'

- | A | B |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. It is backward view | (A) Educating girls has less importance |
| 2. The main source of knowledge | (B) Selecting studying material |
| 3. Study | (C) Respecting the flag |
| 4. Pre-study | (D) It is different from other type of reading |
| 5. They are sources of information | (E) The process of reading a lesson critically |
| | (F) School |
| | (G) Radio, older people, mobile telephone |

III. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

1. When do you think that backward ideas can be changed?
(a) When people become mature with education (b) When science and technology is advanced
(c) When we develop our level of education (d) All of these.
2. Which one of the following is true about studying?
(a) Studying takes place only in school
(b) Studying is effective when students read only on the eve of the exam
(c) For effective results, we have to study daily (d) Studying with friends distracts attention.
3. Which of the following is a source of information?
(a) TV (b) Radio (c) Newspaper (d) All of these.
4. What is the importance of taking notes while studying takes place?
(a) To bring unclear points for debate (b) To improve handwriting
(c) Taking notes does not have much importance (d) All of these.
5. Which of the following is not a backward idea?
(a) A daily reading habit may lead to unnecessary philosophy
(b) Females are equal with males in any capacity
(c) Educating females is important for all (d) (b) and (c) are correct.

IV. Give short answers for the following questions

1. What is the importance of improving knowledge?
2. What is the difference between studying and other reading?
3. How do you think that believing in evil spirits leads to backwardness?
4. How to avoid backward views?