

Unit 11

The Pursuit of Wisdom

Introduction

This unit will help you to understand the relevance of knowledge in life. It will expose you to the role of data in knowledge and the need to read for more knowledge. You will also be able to understand what myth means and its relationship with traditions.

Lessons

1. The Significance of Knowledge
2. Knowledge and Data
3. Reading for more Knowledge
4. Truth versus Myth

What you will learn

You will:

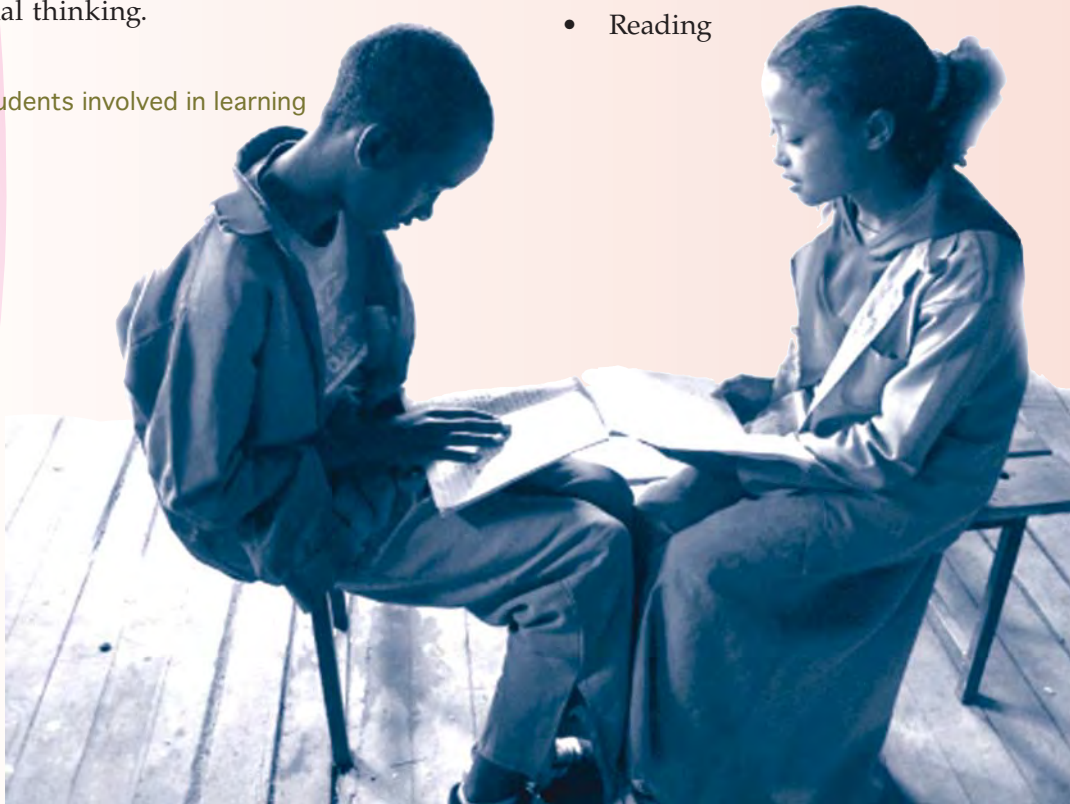
- recognize how knowledge is an instrument for rational thinking.

- realize the relationship between knowledge and data.
- appreciate reading as a means to the development of knowledge.

Key words and concepts

- Data
- Information
- Knowledge
- Myth
- Reading
- Significance of knowledge
- Truth
- Wisdom

Young students involved in learning



LESSON 1

The Significance of Knowledge

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain what reasoning and objectivity mean.

State one thing you believe to be true? How do you know it is true?

Humans have a natural tendency to want to know more about the world. They have an instinctive thirst for knowledge. Humans require knowledge to harness and reshape the environment they live in. It has given them power on earth. Humans improve actions of past generations to make life better. The skills we have developed over the years have helped us to become masters of nature. Today, humans are conquering outer space and have explored the moon.

Knowledge has helped man develop the power of reasoning. Reasoning is a process of thought that helps to make objective judgment. Knowledge, reason and objectivity are related. When knowledge, and reason are put together, they can give rise to objective judgment. So the basis of objective judgment is knowledge. With knowledge you make your life good. With knowledge you are powerful, but with ignorance you are weak. A democratic system benefits from citizens' knowledge, whereas ignorance weakens it.

Democracy is based on citizens being knowledgeable and informed. In order for people to make good decisions, they need to gather as much objective information on the issue as possible. Once you have the knowledge, then you can use reasoning to make a sound judgement. Knowledge gives you power in any given situation. When you are ignorant you become weak. The development of Ethiopia is supported by the knowledge of its citizens.

? Form two groups to discuss the relationship of knowledge, reason and objectivity. Group leaders should report their ideas to the class for further discussion.



Solar eclipse

The Significance of Knowledge

CASE STUDY

Solar Eclipses

A solar eclipse occurs when the moon moves between earth and the sun. If the moon covers the disk of the sun completely the eclipse is a total solar eclipse. If the moon covers only part of the sun, the eclipse is a partial solar eclipse. During a solar eclipse, people in one place on earth may see a total eclipse, while people only a few hundred kilometers away see a partial eclipse.

Source: Michael A. Seeds. Foundations of Astronomy. Eighth Ed. 2005

? Is this knowledge objectively obtained?
Can you deduce anything from this information using reasoning?

REMEMBER

- Humans have a natural tendency to want to know more about nature.
- Knowledge has given humans power on earth.
- When you make effort to get more knowledge, you will then become more reasonable and objective in judgment.
- Humans' desire for knowledge is expressed through an interest to know more about their surroundings.

LESSON 2

Knowledge and Data

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain the purpose of analyzing data.

What is the difference between information and data?

Knowledge involves the gathering of information and data. It is the sum total of what has been perceived, discovered, or inferred. It is about facts, ideas and skills that are shared through generations. Specific knowledge can be obtained through analyzing and interpreting data. Data is figures obtained from observations or surveys. They serve as a basis for making calculations and drawing conclusions.

The conclusions drawn from data about a specific area may become useful information. After sorting the raw data and analyzing it you can draw conclusions. The information obtained can help you make an informed decision.

As a citizen you need to make choices from different viewpoints on public issues based on knowledge. This knowledge accelerates the development of the country.

? Form groups to discuss in what ways scientific knowledge accelerates the development of Ethiopia. Group leaders should present their ideas to the class for more discussion.

CASE STUDY

Female students' good performance in school

A sub-city administration organized a program to motivate students who achieved good grades. The program was organized for those students who were above a certain grade level. 800 students who stood between first and third in their sections, were called in by the sub-city administration. The objective of the program was to give prizes for their achievements and motivate them to work hard in the years ahead. On this occasion, it was reported that, out of the total of 800 students, over 70 % were female students. This was news on the television and the national radio programs.

? If you wanted more knowledge on these high achieving students, what raw data might you want to collect? How could you analyze this data? What purpose could it serve for the future?



Females are competitive in all walks of life

Knowledge and Data

REMEMBER

- ❑ Knowledge is the outcome of analysis of relevant data and information.
- ❑ Knowledge is the sum total of what has been perceived, discovered or inferred.
- ❑ Relevant data gives rise to relevant conclusions.
- ❑ Data are facts or figures obtained from experience or surveys.
- ❑ Information is knowledge acquired about a specific subject as a result of collected facts.

LESSON 3

Reading for more Knowledge

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain the purpose of reading.

When was the last time you read something?
What was it and why did you read it?

One way of obtaining knowledge is through reading. You can read for many different reasons; it could be for enjoyment, learning or understanding. You may read a Civics and Ethical Education textbook to learn about your rights, obligations and how democracy works in Ethiopia. One of the objectives of reading is to get more knowledge. For instance, reading books about Mars will enable you to know more about Earth's neighbour.

In your Grade 7 chemistry textbook you would have learnt about atoms. You have defined an atom as the smallest piece of a simple substance or element that, when combined with other substances, forms molecules. You have also learned that it is made up of electrons, protons and neutrons. You can study it because scientists discovered the knowledge about atom. The many changes you see in the world and the development of technology are the results of efforts made by scientists. Scientists discover new knowledge because they are studying, observing and reading. Apart from what you read for knowledge, you should also read for pleasure.

? Form groups to discuss how reading expands your knowledge. Group leaders should present their views to the class for further discussion.

When you read fiction you get pleasure and become more interested to read further. When we find a subject matter that interests us we want to find out more about it, often through reading on the topic. When we find fiction authors whose books we enjoy, we try to read all of their books. Reading for pleasure develops our reading skills in other areas.

Developing a reading habit means to march on the great highway of knowledge. The habit of reading starts when you are committed to read and make it a culture. If you give more time to reading, then it indicates that you are on the right course to developing the habit. The more you read, the easier it gets.

Reading is one of the cornerstones of formal and informal learning. When you are able to cultivate the habit of reading you will become an informed person. A great reader is a person who does not waste his/her time for no use, but one who reads continuously to get new knowledge. Aim to be a great reader and aim to contribute to the development of Ethiopia.

Reading for more Knowledge

CASE STUDY

Galileo

Although Galileo is often associated with the telescope, he also made systematic studies of the motion of falling bodies and that led to the law of inertia. According to tradition, Galileo demonstrated that the acceleration of a falling body is independent of its weight by dropping balls of iron and wood from the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

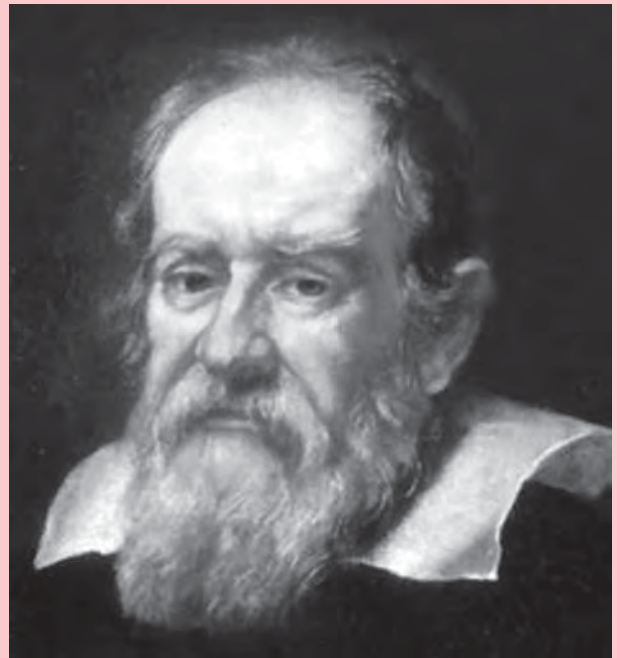
Source: Michael A. Seeds Foundations of Astronomy. Eighth Ed. 2005.



Leaning Tower of Pisa



Discuss in class with your teacher the significance of Galileo's contribution to knowledge.



Galileo

REMEMBER

- ❑ One way of obtaining knowledge is through reading.
- ❑ A great reader is a person who does not waste his/her time, but one who reads continuously to get new knowledge.
- ❑ When you read fiction you get pleasure and become more interested in reading.
- ❑ The habit of reading starts when you are committed to read and make it a culture.

LESSON 4

Truth versus Myth

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain the difference between myth and truth.
- be truthful in your dealings with others.

What examples of myths can you think of? Tell your neighbour.

Human knowledge is built based on scientific facts. Facts reveal the true nature of reality. Thus, knowledge is truth about things in nature. Truth is the proven facts about something rather than what people generally accept. Beliefs that are not true may be called myths. They are not proven to be true through scientific methods of investigation. The basis of a myth is often tradition.

You should be able to differentiate myth from the truth. Cultures hold myths as important though they may recognize that they are not true. They may be used for social unity and to help give an

understanding of how society works.

This is part of culture but it cannot be proved. Until the making of the globe and maps etc. there was a myth that the earth was flat. But, after the Great Discovery of the 16th Century, it was proved wrong. Until then this myth had obstructed the expansion of navigation and trade. Although myths are important, they should not be a barrier to develop our culture.

With knowledge, the world has transformed a great deal. Knowledge is key to improving the life of people. Knowledge, wisdom and truth are tools to a good life. Today, governments are making use of knowledge to improve the living conditions of people. Myths are unscientific stories that people would like to tell and believe. Knowledge is truth. Knowledge creates the force that changes society.



Are there any other myths that you know of that have been disproved by science? Share these with the rest of the class.

CASE STUDY

Alexander the Great

Although Alexander was only 20 years old, he was already an experienced soldier. As a boy, he heard tales of Achilles, the mythical hero of the Iliad. Alexander saw himself as a second Achilles. This shows how myths can inspire great people. This

confident young man earned the title, Alexander the Great.

His most lasting achievement was the spread of Greek culture. Gradually, a blending of eastern and western cultures occurred. Alexander supported and encouraged learning throughout his empire.

Truth versus Myth

? Are there any myths that have inspired you or any people that you know of? What were they and how did they inspire.

REMEMBER

- Human knowledge is built on scientific facts.
- Truth is the actual fact or information about something, rather than what people think, or accept.
- Myth can be defined as traditional cultural beliefs that are not based on empirical evidence.
- Knowledge is truth about things in nature and society.

UNIT SUMMARY

In this unit, you have obtained knowledge on the pursuit of wisdom. The unit emphasized the significance of knowledge and the relationship between information and data. You have seen the importance of reading to acquire more knowledge. You have also seen that in society people use myths as a tool but do not necessarily believe them to be real.

GLOSSARY

Data:	Facts or figures obtained from experience or surveys to make calculations and draw conclusions.
Information:	Knowledge acquired about a specific subject as a result of collected facts.
Myth:	A belief related to tradition that is not based on empirical evidence and which some people wrongly believe to be true.

UNIT REVIEW EXERCISES

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

Part I – Multiple choice

- What do you understand by the pursuit of wisdom?
 - it means to be serious in life
 - it means to be able to guide life on the basis of knowledge
 - it means not to be rational on all things
 - it means to do good to others
- What are the components of knowledge?
 - information
 - data
 - truth
 - all

Part II – True or false

- Reason is related to knowledge.

- Data helps to obtain knowledge.
- There are myths that are important to know.
- The habit of reading is essential for your life.
- Humans changed the world through knowledge.

Part III – Short answers

- What do you understand about knowledge?
- What are data?
- State three points you can get through reading?
- What is truth?
- Do you believe in myths? Why?