

Analysing Textual Integrity in Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office*: a student work ebook



Lessons and exercises based on the study
of textual integrity in classic Indian play-
wright Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office*

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The Post Office:
a student ebook

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1. Introducing *The Post Office*

Written in Bengali in 1911, *The Post Office* is one of the world's most enduring and enchanting works, reflecting the profound wisdom and humanity of its author, Rabindranath Tagore. Using the grave illness of a young boy as his inspiration, Tagore embarks on a spiritual journey that strips away life's many encumbrances to take us to those places of timeless and universal truth. Poetic and deeply moving, far-reaching and universal in scope, this story is ideally suited for serious adults and curious children. Tagore (1861 – 1941) is still considered the Poet Laureate of India and in 1913, he was the first non-European to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. This play offers a glimpse into Tagore's enormous understanding of the human spirit.

In a nutshell, *The Post Office* is about the following:

- a ten year old child, Amal, is very ill
- his traditional and rigid doctor has forbidden him from going outside
- he sits at the window all day, dreaming of one day experiencing the world for himself
- he is visited daily by a range of local characters who are touched by the boy's keen interest in experiencing life
- the boy lives across the street from the King's Post Office and dreams of receiving a letter from the King
- the shiny new post office has a bright yellow flag waving from the roof.

Complete the exercise below.

Exercise 1: Pre-reading thinking

1. Below is the flag of India. Look at the flag, read the notes and complete the questions below.



<http://www.pickywallpapers.com/2560x1600/miscellaneous/flags/india-flag-wallpaper/download/>

The National colours of India are deep saffron yellow and green. The saffron stands for courage, sacrifice and the spirit of renunciation; the white, for purity and truth; the green for faith and fertility.

The Indian flag bears a Chakra. The Chakra symbolizes the impermanent things of life (represented by the spokes) surrounding the spiritually permanent thing (the Truth) in the centre. The 24 lines coming out of the centre of the circle represent the 24 hours in a day and at the end of each spoke is a half moon.

- a) What is/are the national flag(s) of your heritage?
- b) Illustrate it/them.
- c) Research what the colours and images represent.

2. *Don't Be Afraid To See The World Through The Eyes Of A Child.*

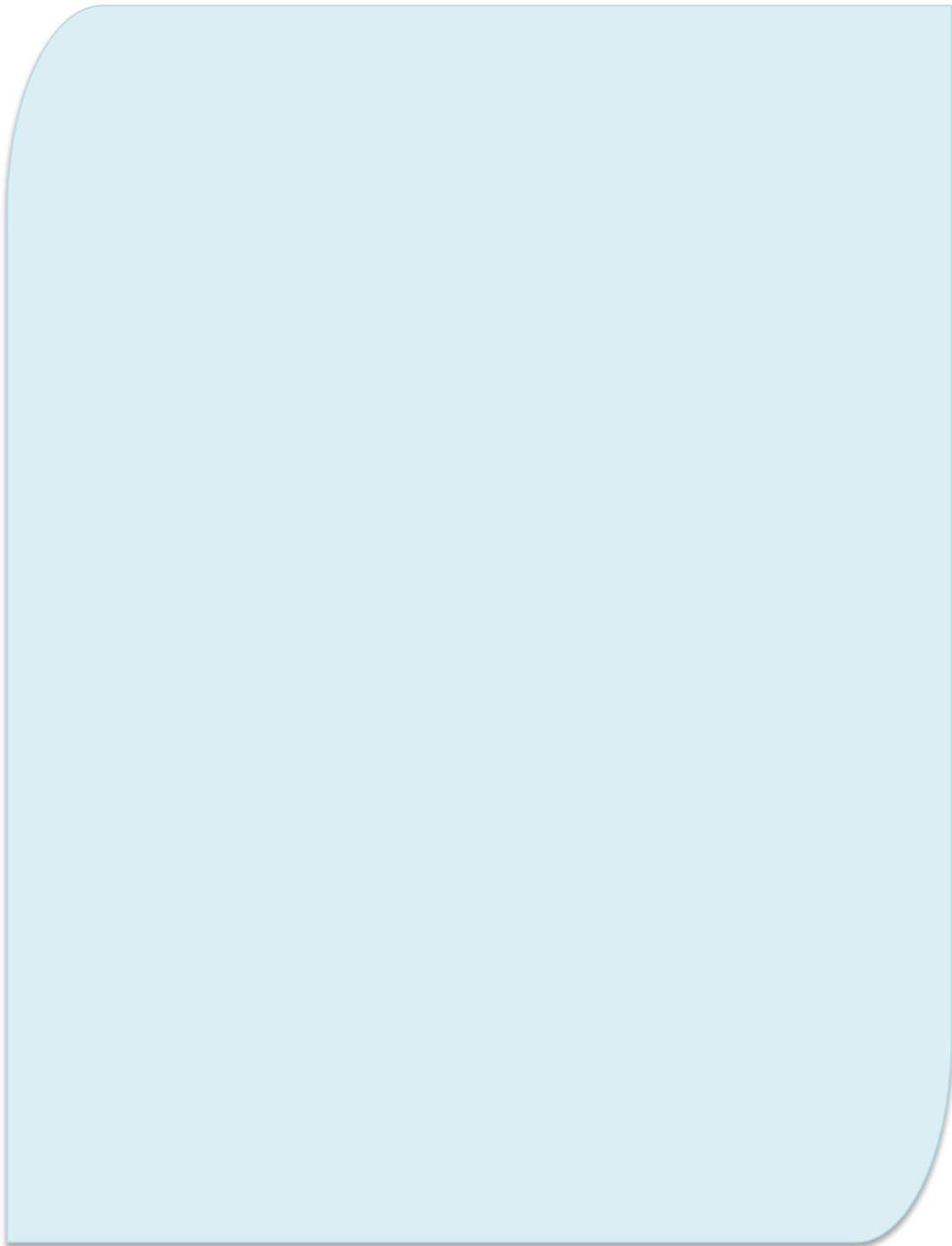
Imagine you are one of the children in the photo below. What is the world like for you? Write a reflection on how you see the world. Try to include why you see the world the way you do. Consider your background, social and economic circumstances. Compare your reflection with a friend.



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Navy_050105-N-5376G-020_Indonesian_children_smile_and_cheer_as_U.S._Navy_helicopters_from USS Abraham Lincoln \(CVN 72\) fly-in purified water and relief supplies to a small village on the Island of Sumatra, Indonesia.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Navy_050105-N-5376G-020_Indonesian_children_smile_and_cheer_as_U.S._Navy_helicopters_from_USS_Abraham_Lincoln_(CVN_72)_fly-in_purified_water_and_relief_supplies_to_a_small_village_on_the_Island_of_Sumatra,_Indonesia.jpg)

Extend yourself

1. Imagine you are looking out of your favourite window. What do you wish you could see? Be specific.
2. Once you can imagine this, draw a picture of everything you've imagined. Draw what you see below.
3. Now, write a letter to a close friend describing what your perfect place looks like, how it makes you feel, and why you wish you could go to this place.

Drawing space

Writing space

[illegible]