

3.2 The Kite Festival

WARMING UP

1. Cut out the wrong kites.

Nouns				
Verbs				
Adjectives				

2. Name the festival that you enjoy the most of all. Fill in the facts about that festival.

- (a) Name of the festival :
- (b) When it is celebrated :
- (c) Why it is celebrated :
- (d) How it is celebrated :
- (e) Special cuisine :
- (f) Other special features :

The Kite Festival

● **harassed** : troubled, stressed out

● **come a long way** : progressed, developed

◆ *How did the kites of the past differ from the modern ones?*

◆ *When is kite-flying at its peak in India?*

◆ *How do they celebrate the kite-flying festival in Gujarat?*

● **coincides** : occurs at the same time

Years ago, the **harassed** mother would often say to her restless son, who needed to be kept busy during his holidays, “Why don’t you go fly a kite?” And the little boy would happily pick up his kite and run out into the field.

That, of course, was in the past when the only kites available were made of kite paper and thin wooden frames. Kite-flying has **come a long way** since then with the invention of motorised and even fibreglass kites to compete with the old-fashioned kites. Today, kite-flyers can be found in different parts of the world, carrying different types of kites – waiting for the right winds!

Kite-flying has a long history. There are many Greek, Indian and other mythological stories which tell us about human beings wanting to or trying to fly.

Over a period of time, this desire of humans and their imagination probably led to the invention of kites. And it is likely that the box-kites, designed more than a hundred years ago, later inspired others to create power-driven aeroplanes.

In India, however, the tradition of kite-flying has not changed. Be it during the coming of Spring which is celebrated as Basant or during the festival of Makar Sankranti, people of all ages go out into the open to try their luck with their kites. In towns and cities, where open spaces are difficult to find, terraces and rooftops are often used for this traditional sport.

In Gujarat, Makar Sankranti is kite-flying day. Traditionally celebrated on January 13 or 14, it is a holiday when people meet outdoors, ‘to cut’ each other’s kites.

This day also **coincides** with the festival of Uttarayan, when the sun is said to begin its journey to the northern hemisphere. The people of Gujarat celebrate Uttarayan with a lot of enthusiasm and all business comes to a grinding halt for a couple of days. It is also a celebration to mark the end of winter.

The kite-flying begins at dawn and continues without a pause throughout the day. People of all ages



gather on terraces or rooftops. Friends, neighbours, even total strangers compete with one another and cries of triumph **rend** the air when someone cuts the line of a rival!

A wonderful variety of kites is seen and the **fussy** buyer can choose what he wants. The more serious players prepare special lines for their kites. There is music in the air and traditional **delicacies** are specially prepared for the day.

Held on the same day, the bigger event, however, is the International Kite Festival, at Ahmedabad. Organised by the Gujarat State Tourism Corporation, it is held either at the Sardar Patel Stadium or the Police Stadium.

This popular festival attracts international kite-flyers, who demonstrate their skills in flying **exotic** kites and local champions as well. Little Indian paper-kites compete with those from Japan, the USA, the UK and other countries. Excited spectators watch in **awe** as marvellous shapes such as eagles and snakes soar into the skies.

One of the highlights of this festival is the Patang or Kite Bazar, in the heart of Ahmedabad, which is open twenty-four hours a day, for a whole week. A visit to this bazar in the middle of the night is enough to prove that the entire city is **obsessed** with kites. People crowd the streets and buy their stocks, **haggling** through the night.

Skilled craftsmen demonstrate age-old kite-making skills and how to prepare the special thread used for kite-flying. Mixtures of glue and ground glass cover the lines, which are dried and rolled onto reels known as 'firkees'. These lines are so sharp that, carelessly used, they can cut a finger!

The excitement does not end with nightfall. Now, it is time for **illuminated** box-kites, often strung on one line, to be launched into the sky. Called *tukals*, they add a grand beauty to the dark sky and compete with the brilliance of the stars.

● **rend** : tear

● **fussy** : very choosy

● **delicacies** : fine, special food items

◆ *Why is the kite-festival at Ahmedabad so special?*

● **exotic** : belonging to far-away lands

● **awe** : wonder, amazement

◆ *What does a visit to the Patang Bazar prove?*

● **obsessed** : totally occupied with one aspect

● **haggling** : bargaining

◆ *How is the special thread for kite-flying prepared?*

● **illuminated** : lighted up

◆ *What are 'tukals'?*

1. Give the Antonyms and Synonyms of the words below, choosing from those given.

Synonyms
lustre, rise, victory, competitor, old - fashioned, joyfully, foreign, pause

Antonyms
partner, dullness, start, sorrowfully, drop, modern, native, defeat

Words	Synonyms	Antonyms
happily
traditional
halt
triumph
exotic
rival
soar
brilliance

2. Say whether the following statements are true or false.

- Fibreglass kites led to creating power - driven aeroplanes.
- In Gujarat, the kite - festival is celebrated to welcome the Spring.
- ‘Uttarayana’ starts from Makar Sankranti onwards.
- Kite - flying in Gujarat, is a competitive sport - cum - festival.
- The kite - bazar in Ahmedabad, is open day and night for a week.
- The special thread for kite - flying is sharpened by adding sugar and glass pieces.

3. Using points from the lesson, give the details of the following in a short paragraph for each topic.

- Different types of kites.
- International Kite Festival at Ahmedabad.
- The kite bazar of Ahmedabad.

4. You have just returned after your first experience of the kite - festival in Gujarat / Ahmedabad. You were thrilled with the festivities.

- Write a short report about the kite - festival for your local newspaper. Give an attractive headline, a dateline and an account of the kite - festive. Write the report in the third person with more use of Passive voice.
- You have a friend who lives abroad. Write a letter to your friend describing how you enjoyed the kite-festival.

5. (A) Verb forms show both, **Tense** (Present, Past, Future) and **Aspect** (Progressive, Perfect, Perfect Progressive)

Progressive (Continuous) : be + verb - ing

Present Progressive : He is playing.

Past Progressive : He was playing.

Future Progressive : He will be playing.

Perfect : have / has / had verb - en / ed

Present Perfect : They have played.

Past Perfect : They had played.

Future Perfect : They will have played.

Perfect Progressive : have/has/had + been + verb - ing

Present Perfect Progressive : We have been playing.

Past Perfect Progressive : We had been playing.

Future Perfect Progressive : We shall have been playing.

(B) Underline the verb forms in the following sentences and state their Tense and Aspect.

- (i) They are waiting for the right winds.
- (ii) People were haggling over the price of kites.
- (iii) Vendors had been selling kites all through the week.
- (iv) Skilled craftsmen had demonstrated age - old skills.
- (v) State Tourism Corporation will be organising the International Kite Festival.
- (vi) Kite - flyers have demonstrated their skills with exotic kites.

