GEG S1

# GENERAL ENGLISH

## SEMESTER I

## GENERAL ENGLISH

## BLOCK 1

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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***June, 2018, (Reprint ) May 2018***

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*Printed and published by Registrar on behalf of the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University.*

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The University acknowledges with thanks the financial support provided by the **Distance Education Bureau, UGC** for the preparation of this study material.

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**GENERAL ENGLISH**

**BLOCK-1**

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

The General English Course has been designed so as to help the learners in their all round development. It aims to enhance the linguistic, analytical and communication skills of the learners and help them articulate their views or opinions in the society. With the growing significance of English in today's society, there is a need to study English more vigorously. This Course has a total of two blocks and shall deal with some of the famous and significant poems of English literature. It also introduces the learners to one of the greatest dramatists of English literature, known as William Shakespeare and to his popular play *Macbeth.* Also an emphasis has been given to a few concepts of English Grammar that is very important in our understanding of the English language. The Course also lays importance on writing skills of the learners. This Course is compulsory in the B.A. programme.

## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

The first block of General English Course introduces the learner to a range of poetical works of some major poets in the history of English literature such as William Blake, William Cowper, William Wordsworth, Alfred Tennyson, William Butler Yeats, D.H. Lawrence, Keki N. Daruwalla and Chinua Achebe.

**UNIT 1:** This unit introduces you to William Blake's poem "Holy Thursday" taken from the Songs of Innocence which unravels the untold stories of little orphaned children who spend their childhood days in orphanages and charity homes in England. In contrast to the artifice of the world outside, Blake mirrors the ideal world of innocence that finds expression in the hymnal songs of these little children on the occasion of Holy Thursday.

**UNIT 2:** This unit takes up William Cowper's "The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk" which captures the true story of a Scottish sailor who had been stranded on an island in the South Pacific Ocean during one of his sea journeys. The theme of the lonely soul that happens to be far away from fellow beings and the comforts of home is reflected in the verses of the poem.

**UNIT 3:** This unit takes up the poem "Simon Lee" by the poet William Wordsworth. The poem reads like a story that captures the changing fortunes of an old man who had once been a proud huntsman.With the turn of events in his life and the changing times, he now lived a struggling life with his wife at Cardiganshire. The poet captures the present condition of this old gentleman that stands in contrast to the good old days that he had spent.

**UNIT 4:** This unit presents Alfred Tennyson's poem titled "Tears Idle Tears" in which the poet tries to explain the necessity of overcoming the sorrows of life by inclining towards the sweetness of nature. It captures the moods and memories of days gone by and the tears that arise from a "divine despair". The idleness of tears is in the fact that there is nothing much that one can do about it.

**UNIT 5:** This unit contains W.B. Yeats' poem titled "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" which captures the tale of an Irishman in the midst of war time. The young man in his last flight reflects on the political developments of the nation that leave no options for soldiers of war.In these final moments, the young mantries to analyse these turbulent thoughts in the light of his own approach towards life.

**UNIT 6:** This unit introduces the learner to D.H. Lawrence's "The Snake" that reflects our sense of fascination and fear towards these shy creatures of Mother Nature. In fact, in direct contrast to the attention-seeking narrator in the poem, the snake is presented in its sense of poise and control, intending no harm, even as the poet hurls a stone to agitate the fascinating being.

**UNIT 7:** This unit takes up Keki N. Daruwalla's poem titled "Wolf" which is a remnant of the poet's memories of his childhood years. The haunting silhouette of the imagined wolf or the 'wolf of his imagination', ultimately transforms into a priceless memory in the mind of the thinking poet. The narrator voices his fascination and his deep concerns regarding the vulnerability of these amazing animals in the words of the poem.

**UNIT 8:** This unit takes up Chinua Achebe's poem titled "Mother in a Refugee Camp" which is also considered as one of his major poems. A mother's soul is beautifully captured through the short lines of the poem which was written in the context of the civil war. The poem captures the tragedies and the helpless lives of women and their little children who have nowhere else to go except the haunting refugee camps.

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in "LET US KNOW" along with the text. We have kept "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" questions in each unit which have been designed to self-check your progress of study.The hints for the answers to these questions are given at the end of the unit. We strongly advise that you answer the questions immediately after you finish reading the section in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the "FURTHER READING" which will be helpful for your further consultation. The books referred during the preparation of the units have been added at the end of each Block. However, this SLM is not an end in itself and the learners are strongly advised to consult the books and other resources recommended for reading.