Fiction 5 UNIT

F. 5 Patol Babu, Film Star

Satyajit Ray

1. With your partner answer the following questions:

What are your strengths?

Strengths	Why do you feel so?

What is your dream career?

I want to become a……

- Is there any correlation between your strengths and aspirations?
- Do you think you can achieve your dreams? Give reasons

2. Read this story which tells of a chance opportunity that a man called Patol Babu gets to fulfill a lifelong dream.

1 Patol Babu had just hung his shopping-bag on his shoulder when Nishikanto Babu called from outside the main door, 'Patol, are you in?'

2 'Oh, yes.' Said Patol Babu. 'Just a minute.'

3 Nishikanto Ghosh lived three houses away from Patol Babu in Nepal Bhattacharji Lane. He was a genial person.

4 Patol Babu came out with the bag. 'What brings you here so early in the morning?'

5 'Listen, what time will you be back?'

6 'In an hour or so. Why?'

7 'I hope you'll stay in after that - today being Tagore's birthday. I met my youngest brother-in-law in Netaji Pharmacy yesterday. He is in the film business, in the production department. He said he was looking for an actor for a scene in a film they're now shooting. The way he described the character - fiftyish, short, bald-headed - it reminded me of you. So I gave him your address and asked him to get in touch with you directly. I hope you won't turn him away. They'll pay you, of course.'

8 Patol Babu hadn't expected such news at the start of the day. That an offer to act in a film could come to a 52-year-old nonentity like him was **beyond his wildest dreams**[1].

9 'Well, yes or no?' asked Nishikanto Babu. 'I believe you did some acting on the stage at one time?'

10 'That's true,' said Patol Babu. 'I really don't see why I should say no. But let's talk to your brother-in-law first and find out some details. What's his name?'

11 'Naresh. Naresh Dutt. He's about thirty. A strapping young fellow. He said he would be here around ten-thirty.'



12 Buying provisions in the market, Patol Babu mixed up his wife's orders and bought red chillies instead of onion seeds. And he quite forgot about the aubergines. This was not surprising. At one time Patol Babu had a real passion for the stage; in fact, it **verged on obsession**[2]. In *Jatras*, in amateur theatricals, in plays put up by the club in his neighbourhood, Patol Babu was always in demand. His name had appeared in handbills on countless occasions. Once it appeared in bold type near the top: 'Sitalakanto Ray (Patol Babu) in the role of Parasar'. Indeed, there was a time when people bought tickets especially to see him.

13 That was when he used to live in Kanchrapara. He had a job in the railway factory there. In 1934, he was offered higher pay in a clerical post with Hudson and Kimberley, in Calcutta, and was also lucky to find a flat in Nepal Bhattacharji Lane. He gave up his factory job and came to Calcutta with his wife. It was quite **smooth sailing**[3] for some years, and Patol Babu was in his boss's good books. In 1943, when he was just **toying**

1 **beyond his wildest dream-** in a way he had not imagined
2 **verged on obsession-** could not think of anything else
3 **smooth sailing-** having no problems

with the idea[4] of starting a club in his neighbourhood, sudden retrenchment in his office due to the war cost him his nine-year-old job.

14 Ever since then Patol Babu had struggled to make a living. At first he opened a variety store which he had to wind up after five years. Then he had a job in a Bengali firm which he gave up in disgust when his boss began to treat him in too high-handed a fashion. Then, for ten long years, starting as an insurance salesman, Patol Babu tried every means of earning a livelihood without ever succeeding in improving his lot. Of late he has been paying regular visits to a small establishment dealing in scrap iron where a cousin of his has promised him a job.

15 And acting? That has become a thing of the remote past; something which he **recalls at times with a sigh**[5]. Having a good memory, Patol Babu still remembers lines from some of his better parts, 'Listen, O listen to the thunderous twang of the mighty bow Gandiva engaged in gory conflict, and to the angry roar of the mountainous club whizzing through the air in the hands of the great Brikodara!' It sent a shiver down his spine just to think of such lines.

16 Naresh Dutt turned up at half past twelve. Patol Babu had given up hope and was about to go for his bath when there was a knock on the front door.

17 'Come in, come in, sir!' Patol Babu almost dragged the young man in and pushed the broken-armed chair towards him. 'Do sit down.'

18 'No, thanks. I ----

19 'Oh yes. I must say I was quite taken aback. After so many years.'

20 'I hope you have no objection?'

21 'You think I'll be all right for the part?' Patol Babu asked with great diffidence.

22 Naresh Dutt **cast an appraising look**[6] at Patol Babu and gave a nod. 'Oh yes,' he said. 'There is no doubt about that. By the way, the shooting takes place tomorrow morning.'

23 'Tomorrow? Sunday?'

24 'Yes, and not in the studio. I'll tell you where you have to go. You know Faraday House near the crossing of Bentinck Street and Mission Row? It's a seven-storey office building. The shooting takes place outside the office in front of the entrance. We'll expect you there at eight-thirty sharp. You'll be through by midday.'

25 Naresh Dutt prepared to leave. 'But you haven't told me about the part,' said Patol Babu anxiously.

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4 **toying with the idea-** considering an idea
5 **recalls at times with a sigh-** sometimes remembers past events and experiences fondly
6 **cast an appraising look-** to consider or examine somebody or something and form an opinion about that person or thing.

26 'Oh yes, sorry. The part is that of a --- a pedestrian. An absent -minded, short-tempered pedestrian. By the way, do you have a jacket which buttons up to the neck?'

27 'I think I do. You mean the old-fashioned kind?'

28 'Yes. That's what you'll wear. What colour is it?'

29 'Sort of nut-brown. But woollen.'

30 'That's okay. The story is supposed to take place in winter, so that would be just right.

31 Tomorrow at eight-thirty sharp. Faraday House.'

32 Patol Babu suddenly thought of a crucial question.

33 'I hope the part calls for some dialogue?'

34 'Certainly. It's a speaking part. You have acted before, haven't you?'

35 'Well, as a matter of fact, yes.'

36 'Fine. I wouldn't have come to you for just a walk-on part. For that we pick people from the street. Of course there's dialogue and you'll be given your lines as soon as you show up tomorrow.'

37 After Naresh Dutt left Patol Babu broke the news to his wife.

38 'As far as I can see, the part isn't a big one. I'll be paid, of course, but that's not the main thing. The thing is - remember how I started on the stage? Remember my first part? I played a dead soldier! All I had to do was lie still on the stage with my arms and legs spread. And remember how I rose from that position? Remember Mr. Watts shaking me by the hand? And the silver medal which the chairman of our municipality gave me? Remember? This is only the first step on the ladder, my dear better-half! Yes --the first step that would--God willing-mark the **rise to fame and fortune**[7] of your beloved husband!'

39 'Counting your chickens again before they're hatched, are you? No wonder you could never **make a go of it**[8]**.'**

40 'But it's the real thing this time! Go and make me a cup of tea, will you? And remind me to take some ginger juice tonight. It's very good for the throat.'

41 The clock in the Metropolitan building showed seven minutes past eight when Patol Babu reached Esplanade. It took him another then minutes to walk to Faraday House.

42 There was a big crowd outside the building. Three or four cars stood on the road. There was also a bus which carried equipment on its roof. On the edge of the pavement there was an instrument on three legs around which there was a group of busy people. Near the entrance--also on three legs--a pole which had a long arm extending from its top at

7 **rise to fame and fortune-** becoming famous and wealthy
8 **make a go of it-** become successful

the end of which was suspended what looked like a small oblong beehive. Surrounding these instruments was a crowd of people among whom Patol Babu noticed some non-Begalis. What they were supposed to do he couldn't tell.

43 But where was Naresh Dutt? He was the only one who knew him.

44 With a slight tremor in his heart, Patol Babu advanced towards the entrance. It was the middle of summer, and the warm jacket buttoned up to his neck felt heavy. Patol Babu could feel beads of perspiration forming around the high collar.

45 'This way, Atul Babu!'

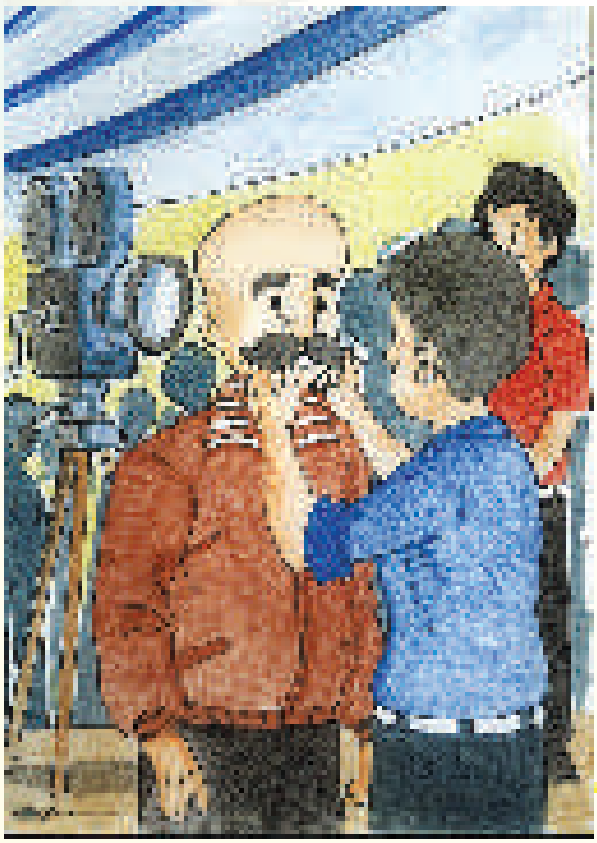
46 Atul Babu? Patol Babu spotted Naresh Dutt standing at the entrance and gesturing towards him. He had got his name wrong. No wonder, since they had only had a brief meeting. Patol Babu walked up, put his palms together in a namaskar and said, 'I supposed you haven't yet noted down my name. Sitalakanto Ray --- although people know me better by my nickname Patol. I used it on the stage too.'

47 'Good, good. I must say you're quite punctual.'

48 Patol Babu rose to his full height.

49 'I was with Hudson and Kimberley for nine years and wasn't late for a single day.'

50 'Is that so? Well, I suggest you go and wait in the shade there. We have a few things to attend to before we get going.'



51 'Naresh!'

52 Somebody standing by the three-legged instrument called out.

53 'Sir?'

54 'Yes, sir. He is"--er" that shot where they bump into each other.'

55 'Okay. Now, clear the entrance, will you? We're about to start.'

56 Patol Babu withdrew and stood in the shade of a paan shop. He had never watched a film shooting before. How hard these people worked! A youngster of twenty or so was carrying that three-legged instrument on his shoulder. Must weigh at least sixty pounds.

57 But what about his dialogue? There wasn't much time left, and he still didn't know what he was supposed to do or say.

58 Patol Babu suddenly felt a little nervous. Should he ask somebody? There was Naresh Dutt there; should he go and remind him? It didn't matter if the part was small, but, if he had to make the most of it, he had to learn his lines beforehand. How small he would feel if he muffed in the presence of so many people! The last time he acted on stage was twenty years ago.

59 Patol Babu was about to step forward when he was pulled up short by a voice shouting 'Silence!'

60 This was followed by Naresh Dutt loudly announcing with hands cupped over his mouth: 'We're about to start shooting. Everybody please stop talking. Don't move from your positions and don't crowd round the camera, please!'

61 Once again the voice was heard shouting 'Silence! Taking!' Now Patu Babu could see the owner of the voice. He was a stout man of medium height, and he stood by the camera. Around his neck hung something which looked like a small telescope. Was he the director? How strange!--he hadn't even bothered to find out the name of the director!

62 Now a series of shouts followed in quick succession"--'Start sound!' 'Running!' 'Camera!' 'Rolling!' 'Action!'

63 Patol Babu noticed that as soon as the word 'Action' was said, a car came up from the crossing and pulled up in front of the office entrance. Then a young man in a grey suit and pink make-up shot out of the back of the car, took a few hurried steps towards the entrance and stopped abruptly. The next moment Patol Babu heard the shout 'Cut!' and immediately the hubbub from the crowd resumed.

64 A man standing next to Patol Babu now turned to him. 'I hope you recognised the young fellow?' he asked.

65 'Why, no,' said Patol Babu.

66 'Chanchal Kumar,' said the man. 'He's coming up fast. Playing the lead in four films at the moment.'

67 Patol Babu saw very few films, but he seemed to have heard the name Chanchal Kumar. It was probably the same boy Koti Babu was praising the other day. Nice make-up the fellow had on. If he had been wearing a Bengali dhoti and panjabi instead of a suit, and given a peacock to ride on, he would make a perfect God Kartik. Monotosh of Kanchrapara--who was better known by his nickname Chinu--had the same kind of looks. He was very good at playing female parts, recalled Patol Babu.

68 Patol Babu now turned to his neighbour and asked in a whisper, 'Who is the director?'

69 The main raised his eyebrows and said, 'Why, don't you know? He's Baren Mullick. He's had three smash hits in a row.'

70 Well, at least he had gathered some useful information. It wouldn't have done for him to say he didn't know if his wife had asked in whose film he had acted and with which actor.

71 Naresh Dutt now came up to him with tea in a small clay cup.

72 'Here you are, sir"--the hot tea will help your throat. Your turn will come shortly.'

73 Patol Babu now had to come out with it.

74 'If you let me have my lines now.'

75 'Your lines? Come with me.'

76 Naresh Dutt went towards the three-legged instrument with Patol Babu at his heels.

77 'I say, Sosanko.'

78 A young fellow in a short-sleeved shirt turned towards Naresh Dutt. 'This gentleman wants his lines. Why don't you write them down on a piece of paper and give it to him? He's the one who--'

79 'I know, I know.'

80 Sosanko now turned to Patol Babu.

81 'Come along, Grandpa. I say, Jyoti, can I borrow your pen for a sec? Grandpa wants his lines written down.'

82 The youngster Jyoti produced a red-dot pen from his pocket and gave it to Sosanko. Sosanko tore off a page from the notebook he was carrying, scribbled something on it and handed it to Patol Babu.

83 Patol Babu glanced at the paper and found that a single word had been scrawled on it--'Oh!'

84 Patol Babu felt a sudden throbbing in his head. He wished he could take off his jacket. The heat was unbearable.

85 Sosanko said, 'What's the matter, Grandpa? You don't seem too pleased.'

86 Were these people pulling his leg? Was the whole thing a gigantic hoax? A meek, harmless man like him, and they had to drag him into the middle of the city to make a laughing stock out of him. How could anyone be so cruel?

87 Patol Babu said in a hardly audible voice, 'I find it rather strange.'

88 'Why, Grandpa?'

89 'Just "Oh"? Is that all I have to say?'

90 Sosanko's eyebrows shot up.

91 'What are you saying, Grandpa? You think that's nothing? Why, this is a regular speaking part! A speaking part in a Baren Mullick film--do you realise what that means? Why, you're the luckiest of actors. Do you know that till now more than a hundred persons have appeared in this film who have had nothing to say? They just walked past the camera. Some didn't even walk; they just stood in one spot. There were others whose faces didn't register at all. Even today--look at all those people standing by the lamp-post; they all appear in today's scene but have nothing to say. Even our hero Chanchal Kumar has no lines to speak today. You are the only one who has--see?'

92 Now the young man called Jyoti came up, put his hand on Patol Babu's shoulder and said, 'Listen, Grandpa. I'll tell you what you have to do. Chanchal Kumar is a rising young executive. He is informed that an embezzlement has taken place in his office, and he comes to find out what has happened. He gets out of his car and charges across the pavement towards the entrance. Just then he collides with an absent-minded pedestrian. That's you. You're hurt in the head and say "Oh!", but Chanchal Kumar pays no attention to you and goes into the office. The fact that he ignores you reflects his extreme preoccupation--see? Just think how crucial the shot is.'

93 'I hope everything is clear now,' said Sosanko. 'Now, if you just move over to where you were standing. The fewer people crowd around here the better. There's one more shot left before your turn comes.'

94 Patol Babu went slowly back to the paan shop. Standing in the shade, he glanced down at the paper in his hand, cast a quick look around to see if anyone was watching, crumpled the paper into a ball and threw it into the roadside drain.

95 Oh.

96 A sigh came out of the depths of his heart.

97 Just one word--no, not even a word; a sound--oh!'

98 The heat was stifling. The jacket seemed to weigh a ton. Patol Babu couldn't keep standing in one spot any more; his legs felt heavy.

99 He moved up to the office beyond the paan shop and sat down on the steps. It was nearly half past nine. On Sunday mornings, songs in praise of the Goddess Kali were sung in Karali Babu's house. Patol Babu went there every week and enjoyed it. What if he were to go there now? What harm would there be? Why waste a Sunday morning in the company of these useless people, and be made to look foolish on top of that?

100 'Silence!'

101 Stuff and nonsense! To hell with your 'silence'! They had to put up this pompous show for something so trivial! Things were much better on the stage.

102 The stage…...the stage……

103 A faint memory was stirred up in Patol Babu's mind. Some priceless words of advice given in a deep, mellow voice: 'Remember one thing, Patol; however small a part you're offered, never consider it beneath your dignity to accept it. As an artist your aim should be to make the most of your opportunity, and squeeze the last drop of meaning out of your lines. A play involves the work of many and it is the combined effort of many that makes a success of the play.'

104 It was Mr Pakrashi who gave the advice. Gogon Pakrashi, Patol Babu's mentor. A wonderful actor, without a tract of vanity in him; a saintly person, and an actor in a million.

105 There was something else which Mr Pakrashi used to say. 'Each word spoken in a play is like a fruit in a tree. Not everyone in the audience has access to it. But you, the actor, must know how to pluck it, get at its essence, and serve it up to the audience for their edification.'

106 The memory of his guru made Patol Babu bow his head in obeisance.

107 Was it really true that there was nothing in the part he had been given today? He had only one word to say--'Oh!', but was that word so devoid of meaning as to be dismissed summarily?

108 "Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh"--Patol Babu began giving the exclamation a different inflection each time he uttered it. After doing if for a number of times he made an astonishing discovery. The same exclamation, when spoken in different ways, carried different shades of meaning. A man when hurt said 'Oh' in quite a different way. Despair brought forth another kind of 'Oh'; sorrow provoked yet another kind. In fact, there were so many kinds of "Oh's"--the short "Oh", the long-drawn "Oh", "Oh" shouted and "Oh" whispered, the high-pitched "Oh" and the low-pitched "Oh", and the "Oh" starting low and ending high, and the "Oh" starting high and ending low. Strange! Patol Babu suddenly felt that he could write a whole thesis on that one monosyllabic exclamation. Why had he felt so disheartened when this single word contained a gold-mine of meaning? The true actor could make a mark with this one single syllable.

109 'Silence!'

110 The director had raised his voice again. Patol Babu could see young Jyoti clearing the crowd. There was something he had to ask him. He went quickly over to him.

111 'How long will it be before my turn comes, brother?'

112 'Why are you so impatient, Grandpa? You have to learn to be patient in this line of business. It'll be another half an hour before you're called.'

113 'That's all right. I'll certainly wait. I'll be in that side street across the road.'

114 'Okay--so long as you don't sneak off.'

115 'Start sound!'

116 Patol Babu crossed the road on tiptoe and went into the quiet little side street. It was good that he had a little time on his hands. While these people didn't seem to believe in rehearsals, he himself would rehearse his own bit. There was no one about. There were office buildings, so very few people lived here. Those who did--such as shopkeepers--had all gone to watch the shooting.

117 Patol Babu cleared his throat and started enunciating the syllable in various ways. Along with that he worked out how he would react physically when the collision took place--how his features would be twisted in pain, how he would fling out his arms, how his body would crouch to express pain and surprise--all these he performed in various ways in front of a large glass window.

118 Patol Babu was called in exactly half an hour. Now he had completely got over his apathy. All he felt now was a keen anticipation and suppressed excitement. It was the feeling he used to feel twenty years ago just before he stepped on to the stage.

119 The director Baren Mullick called Patol Babu to him. 'I hope you know what you're supposed to do?' he asked.

120 'Yes, sir.'

121 'Very good. I'll first say, "Start sound". The recordists will reply by saying "Running". That will be your cue to start walking from that pillar, and for the hero to come out of the car and make a dash for the office. You work out your steps so that the collision takes place at this spot, here. The hero ignores you and strides into the office, while you register pain by saying "Oh!", stop for a couple of seconds, then resume walking--okay?'

122 Patol Babu suggested a rehearsal, but Baren Mullick shook his head impatiently. 'There's a large patch of cloud approaching the sun,' he said. 'This scene must be shot in sunlight.'

123 'One question please.'

124 'Yes?'

125 An idea had occurred to Patol Babu while rehearsing; he now came out with it.

126 'Er--I was thinking--if I had a newspaper open in my hand, and if the collision took place while I had my eyes on the paper, then perhaps--'

127 Baren Mullick cut him short by addressing a bystander who was carrying a Bengali newspaper. 'D'you mind handing your paper to this gentleman, just for this one shot? Thanks.Now you take your position beside the pillar. Chanchal, are you ready?'

128 'Yes, sir.'

129 'Good. Silence!'

130 Baren Mullick raised his hand, then brought it down again, saying, 'Just a minute. Kesto, I think if we gave the pedestrian a moustache, it would be more interesting.'

131 'What kind, sir? Walrus, Ronald Colman or Butterfly? I have them all ready.'

132 'Butterfly, butterfly"--and make it snappy!'

133 The elderly make-up man went up to Patol Babu, took out a small grey moustache from a box, and stuck it on with spirit-gum below Patol Babu's nose.



134 Patol Babu said, 'I hope it won't come off at the time of the collision?'

135 The make-up man smiled. 'Collision?' he said. 'Even if you were to wrestle with Dara Singh, the moustache would stay in place.'

136 Patol Babu had a quick glance in a mirror which the man was holding. True enough, the moustache suited him very well. Patol Babu inwardly commended the director's **perspicacity**[9].

137 'Silence! Silence!'

138 The business with the moustache had provoked a wave of comments from the spectators. which Baren Mullick's shout now silenced.

139 Patol Babu noticed that most of the bystanders' eyes were turned towards him.

140 'Start sound!'

141 Patol Babu cleared this throat. One, two, three, four, five--five steps would take him to the spot where the collision was to take place. And Chanchal Kumar would have to walk four steps. So if both were to start together, Patol Babu would have to walk a little faster than the hero, or else--

142 'Running!'

143 Patol Babu held the newspaper open in his hand. What he had to do when saying 'Oh!' was mix sixty parts of irritation with forty parts of surprise.

9 **perspicacity -** ability to understand somebody or something quickly and accurately.

144 'Action!'

145 Clop, clop, clop, clop, clop--Wham!

146 Patol Babu saw stars before his eyes. The hero's head had banged against his forehead, and an excruciating pain had robbed him of his senses for a few seconds.

147 But the next moment, by a supreme effort of will, Patol Babu pulled himself together, and mixing fifty parts of anguish with twenty-five of surprise and twenty-five of irritation, cried 'Oh!' and, after a brief pause, resumed his walk.

148 'Cut!'

149 'Was that right?' asked Patol Babu anxiously, stepping towards Baren Mullick.

150 'Jolly good! Why, you're quite an actor. Sosanko, just take a look at the sky through the dark glass, will you.'

151 Jyoti now came up to Patol Babu and said, I hope Grandpa wasn't hurt too badly?'

152 'My God!' said Chanchal Kumar, massaging his head, 'You timed it so well that I nearly passed out!'

153 Naresh Dutt elbowed his way through the crowd, came up to Patol Babu and said, 'Please go back where you were standing. I'll come to you in a short while and do the necessary.'

154 Patol Babu took his place once again by the paan shop. The cloud had just covered the sun and brought down the temperature. Nevertheless, Patol Babu took off his woollen jacket, and then heaved a sigh of relief. A feeling of total satisfaction swept over him.

155 He had done his job really well. All these years of struggle hadn't **blunted his sensibility**[10]**.** Gogon Pakrashi would have been pleased with his performance. But all the labour and imagination he had put into this one shot--were these people able to appreciate that? He doubted it. They just got hold of some people, got them to go through certain motions, paid them for their labours and forgot all about it. Paid them, yes, but how much? Ten, fifteen, twenty rupees? It is true that he needed money very badly, but what was twenty rupees when measured against the intense satisfaction of a small job done with perfection and dedication?

156 Ten minutes or so later Naresh Dutt went looking for Patol Babu near the paan shop and found that he was not there. 'That's odd--the man hadn't been paid yet. What a strange fellow!'

157 'The sun has come out,' Baren Mullick was heard shouting. 'Silence! Silence! --- Naresh, hurry up and get these people out of the way!'

10 **blunted his sensibility -** reduced his acting talent

About the Author

Satyajit Ray (1921-1992), an Indian filmmaker and among the dozen or so great masters of world cinema, is known for his humanistic approach to cinema. He made his films in Bengali. Satyajit Ray received the honorary Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Ray wrote numerous short stories, articles, and novels in Bengali.He made a significant contribution to children's literature in Bengali. Most of his fiction was written for teen age children. His detective stories and novels were particularly popular with them.His stories are unpretentious and entertaining. The subjects include: adventure, detective stories, fantasy, science fiction and even horror

3. Answer the following questions briefly

(a) What was the news that Nishikanto Ghosh gave Patol Babu?

(b) How did Patol Babu react? Why?

(c) Why had Patol Babu lost his first job in Calcutta?

(d) How does Patol Babu reconcile to the dialogue given to him?

(e) Who was Mr. Pakrashi? How do his words help Patol Babu in enacting his role?

(f) How do we know that Patol Babu was a meticulous man?

(g) Why did Mr. Mullick turn down Patol Babu's request for a rehearsal?

(h) What were the special touches that Patol Babu gave to his role to make it more authentic?

4. Discuss the following questions in detail and write the answers in your notebooks:

(a) 'I hope the part calls for some dialogue?' Who says this? Why does he /she ask this question?

(b) 'Were these people pulling his legs? Was the whole thing a gigantic hoax? A meek, harmless man like him, and they had to drag him into the middle of the city to make a laughing stock out of him. How could anyone be so cruel?' Why does Patol Babu have these thoughts?

(c) Patol Babu is an amateur actor for whom walk-on part in a movie turns into an ultimate challenge. Discuss.

(d) Do you agree with the statement that Patol Babu is a practical man who comes to terms with whatever life has to offer? Give reasons for your answer.

(e) Why does Patol Babu walk away before he can be paid for his role? What does this reveal about his character?

(f) Do you think making a movie is an easy job? Discuss with reference to the story

5. Here are some lines from the lesson. What do they tell us about Patol Babu's character? You may take help from the words given in the table below or find some of your own from the dictionary. The first one has been done for you

passionate actor	diligent	unassuming	talented
genial	mercenary	short-tempered	introvert
meticulous	modest	humble	arrogant

(a) That an offer to act in a film could come to a 52-year-old nonentity like him was beyond his wildest dreams unassuming; modest

(b) Indeed, there was a time when people bought tickets especially to see him…….

(c) 'I was with Hudson and Kimberley for nine years and wasn't late for a single day.' ……

(d) It didn't matter if the part was small, but, if he had to make the most of it, he had to learn his lines beforehand. How small he would feel if he muffed in the presence of so many people……

(e) Patol Babu cleared his throat and started enunciating the syllable in various ways. Along with that he worked out how he would react physically when the collision took place--how his features would be twisted in pain, how he would fling out his arms, how his body would crouch to express pain and surprise--all these he performed in various ways in front of a large glass window. …….

(f) It is true that he needed money very badly, but what was twenty rupees when measured against the intense satisfaction of a small job done with perfection and dedication?.....

6. Here are some lines from the lesson. Match the meanings of the underlined words with their meanings listed below

(a) Then he had a job in a Bengali firm which he **<u>gave up</u>** in disgust when his boss began to treat him in too high-handed a fashion stimulate the imagination

(b)	A faint memory was **stirred up** in Patol Babu's mind.	to surrender or relinquish
(c)	At first he opened a variety store which he had to **wind up** after five years.	staged
(d)	In *Jatras,* in amateur theatricals, in plays **put up** by the club in his neighbourhood, Patol Babu was always in demand	to gain control over one's actions
(e)	Patol Babu was about to step forward when he was **pulled up** short by a voice shouting 'Silence!'	shut down
(f)	Patol Babu **pulled himself together**	stopped

7. After Patol Babu returns home he recounts his experience in front of the camera to his wife. In pairs write out the exchange in the form of a dialogue and enact it before the class. You may start like this….

Patol Babu's wife: So what happened at the shooting today? Did you get to do your role?

Patol Babu: Oh, Yes, I had the time of my life……..

8. Patol Babu impresses everyone at the shoot with his acting talent in spite of having a one word dialogue. In groups of four enact the word 'Oh' in different ways to show the following emotions:

- happiness
- excitement
- sarcasm
- disappointment
- sorrow
- fear
- pain
- surprise

Each group will then enact one of these emotions to the rest of the class using the word 'Oh'. The other groups will try to guess which emotion is being expressed.

WRITING TASK

9. Patol Babu writes a letter to Nishikanto Ghosh to thank him for being instrumental in his getting a role in a film. He also shares his experience at the film shoot including the excitement and deep satisfaction that he derived from the same. Write the letter in about 200 words.

LISTENING TASK

10. Listen to the passage on character actors and complete the exercise as directed.

1. Supporting roles are those roles that do not affect the plot or the subject of the film (True/ False)

2. People become character actors chiefly because (Tick the right choices)

   (a) they like doing supporting roles

   (b) there are limited leading roles

   (c) it is easier to act in a supporting role

   (d) they can't find any other work

3. 'star quality' refers to things like……..(Tick the right choice)

   (a) good looks and acting talent

   (b) good looks and the right weight

   (c) good looks and the right height

   (d) good looks, height and right weight

4. After the age of forty the actors most likely to get less work are (Tick the right choice)

   (a) character actors

   (b) the male lead

   (c) the female actors

   (d) the female lead

5. The chief advantages of being a character actor is that ……..(Tick the right choice)

   (a) they are never blamed if a film fails

   (b) they can act for as long as they like

   (c) they do not have to take care of their looks

   (d) they do not need to be skilled at horsemanship or swimming