CLASS 9 ENGLISH KAVERI

Chapter 4 – Vitamin-M

Detailed Notes

Prose: Vitamin-M

Linked Reading: The Lost Child

Poem: I Cannot Remember My Mother

Based on the Class 9 English Kaveri textbook • 2026–27

Online Teaching With Nikita

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Note: Listening activities in the textbook refer to teacher transcripts on page 266. These notes do not invent answers to those listening activities.

1. Chapter Overview

Vitamin-M is a humorous and thoughtful story by **Asha Nehemiah**. It centres on Ravi, his elderly grandfather, and Ravi's mother Vidya. The story explores ageing, family care, independence, memory, affection and the tendency to treat elderly people like children.

The title **Vitamin-M** is introduced humorously by Ravi's mother as an imaginary medicine that could improve old people's memory. By the end, the story turns the idea around: the person who may need this 'vitamin' is not necessarily Grandpa, but the younger generation, who may need to remember the value, abilities and individuality of older people.

Linked reading: The Lost Child by Mulk Raj Anand is included later in the unit. It shows how a child's priorities change completely when he becomes separated from his parents.

Poem: I Cannot Remember My Mother by Rabindranath Tagore presents the memory of a mother through sounds, fragrance and visual imagery rather than through a clear physical memory.

The chapter combines prose, linked reading, poetry, vocabulary, grammar, speaking and writing skills around the broader ideas of family, memory, care and human relationships.

Source basis: the uploaded Kaveri Chapter 4 textbook. The opening section asks students to reflect on caring for the elderly and the problems, reasons and ways of caring for them. ■filecite■turn72file0■L2-L18■

2. Vitamin-M – Detailed Story Notes

Opening situation

Ravi's mother is preparing medicines for Grandpa and jokingly wishes that someone would invent a memory medicine called 'Vitamin-M'. Ravi warns her to speak quietly because Grandpa is nearby. She believes that Grandpa cannot hear, see or remember well anymore.

Why Grandpa has come to live with Ravi's family

Grandpa, a seventy-five-year-old retired lawyer, has recently moved into his daughter's home because he has become less safe living alone. He had accidentally taken a double dose of his medicines and had once become lost while out for a walk.

Grandpa's feelings about the city

Grandpa dislikes the noise and bustle of the crowded city. He misses his small brick house, its garden and the quiet surroundings. At home he had enjoyed greater independence and had continued cooking, shopping and keeping house after his wife's death.

The incident that changed everything

Grandpa had slipped and fallen in the garden of his old house while pottering around. He remained outside all night because nobody was at home to help him. This frightened the family and led Ravi's mother to lock the house and bring Grandpa to the city.

Ravi is asked to care for Grandpa

Ravi's school holidays begin, so his mother asks him to stay with Grandpa and make sure he does not go outside alone. Ravi understands his mother's anxiety, but he does not like the way she speaks to Grandpa in an exaggeratedly loud voice, as though he were a child.

Grandpa's abilities

Grandpa is shown to have an excellent memory for chess. He remembers famous games and players and gives Ravi useful advice. Ravi is therefore puzzled that Grandpa can remember thousands of chess games but sometimes forget the names of people he meets.

The newspaper excuse

Grandpa decides to walk to the corner shop to get the Tamil newspaper. Ravi knows that his mother has forbidden Grandpa from going out alone. When Grandpa cleverly asks whether Ravi will also treat him like a baby, Ravi denies that his mother has given such an instruction. Grandpa uses this response to justify going out.

Ravi follows Grandpa

Grandpa leaves with his distinctive mahogany walking stick, yellow cap and confident manner. Ravi is caught between two responsibilities: following his mother's instructions and respecting Grandpa's independence. He secretly follows Grandpa from a safe distance.

Grandpa's day out

Grandpa first visits a children's park, where he buys peanuts and watches the children. Ravi hides behind a bush. He then follows Grandpa to a tea stall and watches from behind a banyan tree. Grandpa enjoys sugary tea, bananas and ice cream even though these are restricted at home.

The comic detective episode

Ravi's attempt to remain hidden leads to several embarrassing situations. He is questioned by people in the park and by vendors near the tea stall. He hides behind trees and a car and becomes increasingly anxious while trying to keep track of Grandpa.

The barber shop and bus

Grandpa crosses a busy road and enters a barber shop. Ravi follows but then accidentally enters a ladies' hairdressing salon next door and is thrown out. Grandpa later walks briskly to a bus stop and boards a bus.

Ravi's mistake

Ravi gets onto the bus and sees a man wearing clothes and a yellow cap similar to Grandpa's. The man is actually a stranger. He explains that a kind old gentleman from the barber shop gave him the cap. Ravi realises that he has been following the wrong person.

The reunion

Ravi returns home worried and finds Grandpa safely asleep in his bedroom. Ravi is overwhelmed with relief and affection. He hugs his grandfather but chooses not to question him because doing so would reveal that he had secretly followed him.

The final twist

When Ravi's mother returns, Grandpa calmly says that he had a quiet morning but does not know what Ravi did. He then gives gifts to Ravi, Ravi's mother and Ravi's father. He remembers that he gives every child in the house a gift on his birthday. He even gives Ravi a detective-story book, suggesting that he may understand more about Ravi's actions than he lets on.

The meaning of Vitamin-M

Grandpa jokingly tells Ravi's father that his daughter needs some 'Vitamin-M' for her memory. The joke exposes the irony of the story: Vidya had forgotten that it was her father's birthday even though she had marked it on the calendar, while Grandpa had remembered. The story therefore questions assumptions about age, memory and ability.

3. Characters and Character Sketches

Character	Key traits and evidence
Grandpa	Independent, intelligent, humorous, observant, generous and affectionate. He dislikes being treated like a helpless child ar
Ravi	Caring, loyal, curious and observant. He wants to obey his mother but also respects Grandpa. His secret following creates
Vidya (Ravi's mother)	Caring and protective but anxious about her father's safety. She sometimes treats Grandpa too much like a child and overl
Ravi's father	A supporting family member who is present at the final family scene and reacts with confusion to the Vitamin-M joke.

4. Themes and Key Ideas

✓ **Ageing and independence:** Older people may need support without losing their dignity or individuality.

✓ **Family care:** Caring for an elderly family member involves balancing safety, affection and respect.

✓ **Age-related assumptions:** The story questions the assumption that an elderly person is incapable simply because of age.

✓ **Memory:** Grandpa's selective memory contrasts with his strong recall of chess and family traditions.

✓ **Humour:** Ravi's secret detective mission and Grandpa's final surprise create comedy while developing the central message.

✓ **Intergenerational relationships:** Ravi and Grandpa share affection and understanding even when the adults disagree about how Grandpa should be treated.

✓ **Reversal and irony:** The 'Vitamin-M' joke ultimately turns toward Ravi's mother, who has forgotten Grandpa's birthday.

5. Important Events – Quick Story Flow

Grandpa moves to the city → Ravi is asked to look after him → Grandpa goes out for the newspaper → Ravi secretly follows → park → tea stall → barber shop → bus → Ravi follows the wrong man → Ravi returns home → Grandpa is already there → Grandpa gives birthday gifts → Vitamin-M joke.

6. Vocabulary and Expressions

Word / expression	Meaning
frail	physically weak or delicate
shuddered	trembled or reacted with a sudden feeling of fear or distress
poky	small, cramped or uncomfortably confined
forbid	to order someone not to do something
pottering	moving or working about casually, especially on small tasks
winced	showed an expression of pain, embarrassment or discomfort
bustle	busy and noisy activity
jauntily	in a cheerful, confident or lively manner
crouch	bend the body low
duck	move the head or body down quickly
a volley of	a large number of things happening or being uttered quickly
deter	prevent someone from doing something
confront	face or approach someone directly
frantic	extremely frightened or worried
trail	follow someone
solemnly	seriously, without humour
dilemma	a difficult situation requiring a choice between alternatives
craftily	in a clever or cunning manner
humiliation	a deeply embarrassing or degrading experience
attire	clothing or dress
stricken	deeply affected by an unpleasant emotion
gleam	a brief expression or appearance of something, such as light or emotion
counter	reply to or oppose an argument
flushed	became red in the face

Useful expressions from the story

• “you can even hear a leaf fall” — used to describe extreme quietness.

• “close to fainting” — almost losing consciousness.

• “thudded anxiously” — describes a heart beating heavily because of fear or anxiety.

• “a total stranger” — a person completely unknown to someone.

7. Movement and Sound Words

The textbook asks students to classify vocabulary into movement words and sound words. These words make the narrative vivid and help readers imagine Ravi's pursuit.

Movement words	Sound words
pottering	boomed
twirling	thudded
crouch	shrieks
crawl	whirr
creeping	grunted
ducked	snoring
zigzagging	sprinting
jumping	—
darted	—
trailing	—
briskly	—

8. Prepositions

Prepositions show relationships between a noun or pronoun and other words, often indicating direction, location, time or manner. The chapter uses examples such as **across**, **over**, **under** and **behind**. ■filecite■turn72file0■L658-L668■

Examples: walk **across** to the shop; a shadow falls **over** him; vendors sit **under** the tree; Ravi hides **behind** a banyan tree.

Useful selection patterns from the textbook exercise: through the village, over a brook, near a cottage, on a bench, along a riverbank, towards the unknown.

9. Interrogative Sentences and Reported Speech

The chapter revises interrogative sentences and introduces the transformation of direct questions into reported speech.

Interrogative sentences are questions. The textbook distinguishes two major types used in the examples: **Wh-type** questions and **Yes/No-type** questions.

Type	Example pattern	Reported speech guideline
Yes/No question	Do you help…? / Have you forgotten?	Use if or whether after the reporting verb and change t
Wh-question	What did you…? / Who are you?	Retain the appropriate Wh-word and use statement word order

Direct and indirect speech changes shown in the textbook

Direct	Indirect
Present	Past
Past	Past Perfect
Present Progressive	Past Progressive
Past Progressive	Past Perfect Progressive
here	there
today	that day
tomorrow	the following day
now	then
I	he/she
we	they
you	he/she/they
our	their

Remember: the exact transformation can depend on context. The textbook presents these as guidelines rather than a complete list of every possible reporting situation. ■filecite■turn74file5■

Example: **Arvind asked Priya, “Do you help in taking care of your grandparents?”** → Arvind asked Priya **if she helped in taking care of her grandparents**.

10. Speaking Skills and Intonation

The textbook defines **intonation** as the pitch of the voice while speaking. In questions, intonation can indicate the expected response or the speaker's sentiment. ■filecite■turn74file7■

Question type	Intonation described in the textbook
Wh-/How question	Falling intonation towards the end.
Yes/No question	Rising intonation towards the end.
Affirmative statement + negative tag	Rising intonation when the speaker is fairly sure of the answer.
Negative statement + affirmative tag	Falling intonation when the speaker is unsure of the answer.
Choice question	Rise-fall intonation.

Speaking activity: personal experience of caring for an older person

• Introduce the person you cared for and explain the situation.

• Describe what you learned about yourself.

• Explain what you learned about the older person's needs, preferences and challenges.

• Reflect on how your understanding of ageing changed.

11. Writing Task – Our Inspiring Elderly

The textbook asks students to write an article for the school magazine on **“Our Inspiring Elderly.”** It recommends a four-paragraph structure. ■filecite■turn74file4■

Paragraph	What to include
1. Introduction	Introduce the topic and main idea without giving detailed examples.
2. Support	Explain how elderly people inspire; include examples, facts and quotations.
3. Impact	Describe how they overcame challenges and how their experiences influence you.
4. Conclusion	End with a final comment and leave the reader with the most important idea.

12. Linked Reading – The Lost Child

The linked reading is a story by **Mulk Raj Anand**. It follows a young child visiting a spring festival with his parents. At first, the child is fascinated by the many sights, sounds and attractions around him.

Beginning of the story

The child walks between his parents as they make their way towards the fair. He is attracted by toys and repeatedly falls behind. His parents call him back. The setting is colourful and lively, with people travelling on foot, horses and carts.

Sensory and visual richness

The child notices the flowering mustard field, dragonflies, bees, butterflies, flowers, doves and the movement of crowds. These details create a vivid picture of the spring landscape and the fair.

At the fair

The child encounters sweetmeat sellers, toy sellers and other attractions. Before becoming separated, he wants several things, but his parents' presence remains part of his secure world.

The turning point

The child becomes separated from his parents in the crowd. Once he realises that they are missing, the attractions that had seemed desirable no longer matter.

Change in priorities

A man tries to comfort the lost child by offering the things he had previously wanted, including sweets. The child refuses them and repeatedly cries for his mother and father. The ending shows that emotional security and parental love are more important to him than material attractions. The final section confirms his repeated cry for his parents. ■filecite■turn74file2■

Central idea

The story contrasts a child's temporary attraction to objects and experiences with the deep emotional importance of family. When the child is separated from his parents, his earlier desires lose their value.

Key themes

✓ Parental love and security

✓ Childhood curiosity

✓ Material desires versus emotional needs

✓ Fear and separation

✓ The changing perspective of a child

13. Poem – I Cannot Remember My Mother

The poem is by **Rabindranath Tagore**. It presents a speaker who cannot form a direct visual memory of his mother, yet memories of her presence return through sensory experiences.

The poem has three stanzas, and the line **“I cannot remember my mother”** is repeated as a refrain. The poem connects the mother with a humming tune, shiuli flowers and the stillness of the sky. ■filecite■turn73file3■

Stanza 1 – Sound and childhood

While playing, the speaker sometimes senses a tune hovering over his playthings. The tune reminds him of a song his mother used to hum while rocking his cradle. The memory is therefore connected with **sound** rather than a clear image of his mother.

Stanza 2 – Smell and ritual

The fragrance of shiuli flowers on an early autumn morning reminds the speaker of the morning service in a temple, and this scent becomes associated with his mother. The mother's memory is connected to **fragrance** and a familiar cultural setting.

Stanza 3 – Sight and the sky

When the speaker looks from his bedroom window into the distant blue sky, he feels that the stillness of his mother's gaze has spread across the sky. The mother's presence is transformed into a vast natural image.

Central idea

The poem shows how a person can be remembered through sensations even when direct memories are incomplete. Sound, fragrance and visual stillness become emotional links to the mother.

Emotional tone

The poem has a tender, reflective and nostalgic emotional quality. The repeated statement that the speaker cannot remember his mother creates a sense of absence, while the sensory memories suggest that her presence remains deeply connected with his world.

14. Poem Appreciation and Literary Devices

Device / feature	How it works in the poem
Refrain	“I cannot remember my mother” is repeated at the beginning of each stanza, reinforcing absence and remembrance.
Sensory imagery	The poem uses sound (tune), smell (shiuli flowers) and sight (blue sky) to evoke the mother.
Symbolism	The tune, shiuli fragrance and sky can be understood as tangible signs through which the speaker experiences his mothe
Metaphorical association	The mother's gaze is imagined as spreading across the sky, turning an emotional memory into a vast visual image.
Nature imagery	Flowers, autumn morning and sky connect personal memory with the natural world.
Free verse / no fixed rhyme scheme	The textbook explicitly asks students to notice that the poem does not have a rhyme scheme.

Critical reflection points from the textbook

• The refrain creates an emotional contrast between inability to remember directly and the persistence of sensory memory.

• The shiuli flowers connect the mother's memory with fragrance and the morning temple service.

• The humming tune links the mother with childhood, the cradle and the intimate sound of her voice.

• Nature provides a way for the speaker to experience the mother's presence beyond physical memory.

• The mother's gaze becoming associated with the sky suggests a memory that feels expansive and enduring.

15. Sensory Vocabulary

The textbook asks students to classify words according to the sense they appeal to: visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile. It includes words such as glowing, hiss, aroma, sticky, rough, chilled, scent, vibrant, fragrant, smooth and ear-splitting. ■filecite■turn74file6■

Sense	Examples	Meaning / use
Visual	glowing, crimson, vibrant, gigantic, minuscule	Create a picture through colour, size or appearance.
Auditory	hiss, rustle, sizzle, squeaky, deafening, ear-splitting	Describe sounds and their intensity.
Olfactory	aroma, scent, pungent, fragrant, stinky	Describe smell or fragrance.
Tactile	sticky, rough, chilled, smooth, slimy, fluffy, hairy	Describe how something feels to touch.

Sensory language in the poem

• Sound: the tune that the mother used to hum.

• Smell: the fragrance of shiuli flowers and the association with morning service.

• Sight: the distant blue sky and the stillness of the mother's imagined gaze.

Writing tip: sensory details are especially useful in descriptive and diary writing because they allow the reader to experience a place or memory through the writer's senses.

16. Diary Writing

The textbook asks students to imagine a school trip to a scenic place and write a diary entry describing the place and why it was memorable. ■filecite■turn74file1■

Recommended structure

✓ Begin with the day, date and time.

✓ Use first person: I, my, me.

✓ Include sensory details.

✓ Express emotions and personal reactions.

✓ Focus on significant moments and experiences.

✓ Conclude with reflection.

The textbook also notes that diary writers have different approaches: some address the diary as a friend, while others use it mainly to document facts, thoughts and feelings. Therefore, 'Dear Diary' is a possible convention, not a compulsory opening.

17. Learning Beyond the Text

The unit encourages students to explore memories through family photographs and to learn more about flowers associated with memory and culture.

Shiuli flowers: The textbook notes that shiuli is also known as Parijat, Parijata and Harsingar; it is associated with ceremonial use and Indian legends, has a sweet fragrance and blooms during the night. ■filecite■turn74file1■

The unit also suggests researching other unique Indian flowers, such as **Kurinji / Neelakurinji**, including where they grow, how they look, their fragrance and historical significance.

The unit includes a family-memory activity in which students collect photographs, identify when and where they were taken, name the people in them and explain why the photographs are memorable. ■filecite■turn74file1■

18. Quick Revision Checklist

Vitamin-M

✓ Ravi's grandfather is seventy-five and has moved to the city for safety.

✓ Grandpa dislikes being treated like a helpless child.

✓ He has a strong memory for chess and remains independent-minded.

✓ Ravi secretly follows Grandpa during his outing.

✓ Ravi eventually follows a stranger wearing a similar cap and clothes.

✓ Grandpa is safely at home when Ravi returns.

✓ Grandpa remembers his birthday tradition and gives gifts to the family.

✓ The Vitamin-M joke creates the story's final irony.

The Lost Child

✓ A child visits a spring festival with his parents.

✓ He is fascinated by toys, flowers, insects, sweets and other attractions.

✓ He becomes separated from his parents.

✓ After separation, he no longer wants the things he had desired earlier.

✓ He wants only his mother and father.

I Cannot Remember My Mother

✓ Written by Rabindranath Tagore.

✓ Three stanzas with the repeated refrain about not remembering the mother.

✓ Mother is remembered through a humming tune, shiuli fragrance and the blue sky.

✓ Major techniques: refrain, sensory imagery, symbolism and nature imagery.

Language Skills

✓ Movement and sound words

✓ Prepositions

✓ Wh- and Yes/No interrogatives

✓ Direct and reported speech

✓ Question intonation

✓ Personal presentation and article writing

✓ Diary writing and sensory description

Exam Focus

For revision, be ready to explain: why Grandpa dislikes the city; why Vidya restricts him; how Ravi follows him; why Ravi's detective plan fails; what the final Vitamin-M joke means; the child's change of priorities in The Lost Child; and how sensory memories connect the speaker with his mother in the poem.

Source note: These notes are based on the uploaded Class 9 English Kaveri Chapter 4 textbook. Listening activities refer to teacher transcripts on page 266; answers to those activities have not been invented.