Class 9 English Kaveri – Chapter 8

Follow That Dream & Believe in Yourself

DETAILED NOTES • 2026–27

Based directly on the uploaded Kaveri Chapter 8 textbook. These notes cover the prose, poetry, themes, characters/voices, vocabulary, literary devices, grammar structures, speaking and writing skills, and quick revision points.

1. Chapter Overview

Chapter 8 – Follow That Dream begins with questions about dreams, inspiration, qualities needed to fulfil dreams, and the role of parents and community. The main reading is a letter by Irene Chua to her daughter Ming, taken from the collection My Daughter, My Friend. The letter gives thoughtful advice about pursuing a dream while realistically considering effort, time, financial investment, sacrifice, obstacles and changing circumstances.

The chapter then develops the idea of self-belief and facing challenges through the poem “Step up to the challenge” by Robert Langley. The later section also includes “Always Believe in Yourself” by Dorothy Hewitt, reinforcing the ideas of perseverance, courage, encouragement and openness to life’s possibilities.

2. Reflect and Respond – Key Ideas

- A dream is presented as something meaningful that can motivate a person to act, work and persevere.
- The opening activity asks students to think about their own dreams, the people who inspire them and the qualities needed to fulfil those dreams.
- Parents and the community can provide encouragement, guidance and practical support.
- The chapter encourages students to think about dreams realistically rather than treating them as mere wishes.

3. “Follow That Dream” – Source and Context

The prose is presented as a letter dated 19 June 1995. Irene Chua writes to her daughter Ming and begins with a clear encouragement: follow the dream. The mother explains that achievement requires more than wanting something; it requires sustained effort, sacrifice, commitment and realistic consideration of circumstances. filecite turn26file0

The letter celebrates the relationship between a mother and her teenage daughter while giving life advice. The mother combines encouragement with caution: she supports Ming’s dream but asks her to understand the cost and challenges involved.

4. Detailed Summary of “Follow That Dream”

Opening encouragement: The mother immediately supports Ming’s dream. She explains that people who achieve greatness generally have a dream and pursue it until it becomes reality.

Effort and sacrifice: According to the letter, what separates exceptional achievement from ordinary effort is the amount of time, effort and sacrifice invested. The mother states that reaching a world-class standard in a field can require at least ten years of focused and intensive pursuit.

Passion and commitment: A dream begins with interest and develops into conviction. A person should consider the years of effort, financial investment and sacrifice involved. If the desire remains strong and the person is ready to commit, they should take the plunge.

Obstacles and motivation: The path may be difficult and tiring. Love for the chosen activity and the feeling of doing the right thing can provide internal motivation. The prospect of success can also keep a person moving when stamina is running low.

Support network: The mother refers to award winners who thank many people who supported them. This shows that achievement may involve the contribution of a network of people rather than only individual effort.

Why dreams remain dreams: Some people only wish for a different life and never move beyond wishful thinking. Others may choose security, or circumstances may force them to change their plans.

Historical and personal circumstances: The letter gives examples of people whose educational or career dreams changed because of war, family responsibilities or the need to support siblings.

Dreams can change: The mother explains that life itself can change a person's dreams. New hopes and aspirations can become meaningful goals even if they differ from childhood dreams. The new path may involve more hurdles, take longer and include more people.

Personal example and conclusion: Irene Chua gives the example of publishing the book itself as a dream she had pursued for ten years. It was not her original youthful dream, but her dream had changed over time. She ends by wishing that at least one of Ming's dreams comes true.

5. Central Ideas of the Prose

- Dreams require action: A dream becomes meaningful when it is supported by sustained effort and commitment.
- Realistic planning: A person should count the cost in time, effort, money and sacrifice before committing.
- Perseverance: Difficulties and declining stamina are part of the journey; conviction and the prospect of success can help a person continue.
- Support matters: Families, friends, mentors and other members of a support network can contribute to achievement.
- Dreams can evolve: Life circumstances may change a person's original dream without making the new aspiration less valuable.
- Security versus aspiration: The letter recognises that some people choose security or are forced by circumstances to change their plans.

6. Important Expressions from the Prose

Expression	Meaning
burning in your blood	a passionate and powerful desire
uphill	difficult and requiring sustained effort
buoyed up	encouraged or kept motivated
wishful thinking	hoping for something without sufficient action or realistic basis
wet blanket	a person or thing that spoils enthusiasm or enjoyment
coursing through your veins	moving strongly through one's feelings or body; used figuratively for intense conviction or excitement
maze of hurdles	a complicated series of difficulties or obstacles
dreamscape	a world or scene of dreams

7. Vocabulary: Important Words

- insight — clear and deep understanding
- singularly — exclusively; with a single focus
- imperative — necessary or extremely important
- plunge — throw oneself fully into an activity
- buoyed up — kept afloat; encouraged
- wistfully — longingly or with a feeling of regret
- dreamscape — a world of dreams

8. Critical Reflection – What to Remember

- Passion gives a dream its initial energy, but commitment is needed to turn it into sustained action.
- A realistic assessment of effort, investment and sacrifice can help a person understand what pursuing the dream will involve.
- Intrinsic motivation can come from doing what one loves and believing that one is doing the right thing.
- The phrase "maze of hurdles" presents the journey towards a changed or delayed dream as complex and challenging.
- The tone of the later extract is optimistic and encouraging.

9. Vocabulary and Structures – Compound Words

The chapter explains that dreamscape is a compound word in which -scape means "a view or scene of". Students are asked to explore related words such as mindscape, seascape, landscape and cityscape.

This activity shows how a word part can combine with another word to create a new meaning connected with a particular kind of scene or mental picture.

10. “Believe in Yourself” – Reflect and Respond

The second major section begins by asking students to think about standing before a difficult task, taking the first step and believing in themselves. The phrase status quo is introduced as the existing state of affairs, especially when things remain unchanged.

The central question is whether a person will remain comfortable with the status quo or take the difficult first step towards change and growth.

11. “Step up to the challenge” – Poem Notes

The poem “Step up to the challenge” by Robert Langley presents personal growth as a challenge that requires individual responsibility, courage and self-belief. The speaker addresses the reader directly and encourages them to face the future rather than allowing fear to push them backwards. filecite turn26file2

The poem begins with the idea that there may be no audience watching when a person faces an important personal decision. The focus is on the individual, the future and the desired destination.

The poem then contrasts the fear and uncertainty surrounding difficult choices with the comfort of maintaining the status quo. It argues that growth requires moving beyond comfortable stagnation.

The final stanza stresses that the first step is the hardest and that self-belief can help a person remain on track.

12. Central Ideas of “Step up to the challenge”

- Personal responsibility: A person has to face their own choices and future.
- Fear and uncertainty: Difficult choices can become harder as the future approaches.
- Growth through change: Remaining comfortable does not automatically lead to growth.
- The first step: Beginning a new journey is often the most difficult part.
- Self-belief: Confidence and belief in oneself can help a person continue.

13. Literary Features of the Poem

- Direct address: The repeated use of “you” creates a close relationship between speaker and reader.
- Metaphor: “The first step is the hardest” treats the beginning of personal change as a difficult physical step.
- Antithesis: The poem contrasts ideas such as moving forward and being pushed back by fear, and comfort/status quo versus growth.
- Imagery: Phrases such as “no crowd to see” and “push you back in fear” create images of an individual journey and an internal barrier.
- Symbolism: The future represents the unknown and the possibility of change; the first step represents courage to begin; the status quo represents stagnation.
- Tone: motivational and encouraging, moving towards determination.

14. “Always Believe in Yourself” – Notes

The chapter closes with “Always Believe in Yourself” by Dorothy Hewitt. The poem encourages readers not to limit themselves, to be kind to themselves, to believe in their abilities and to remain courageous when tested. It also encourages persistence, laughter, encouragement and an open attitude towards life's possibilities. filecite turn26file4

- Believe in yourself and do not unnecessarily limit your abilities.
- Be kind to yourself while working towards goals.
- Persevere when challenges test your endurance.
- Hold on to courage and allow encouragement and positive influences to surround you.
- Think big while remaining open to the gifts and opportunities life offers.

15. Important Literary Concepts from the Poetry Section

- Rhetorical question: a question asked to make the reader think or reflect rather than to obtain a direct answer. The poem uses “Will it pull you forward / Or push you back in fear?”
- Metaphor: “The first step is the hardest” presents the beginning of change as a difficult step.
- Antithesis: contrasting or opposite ideas are placed together to create emphasis.
- Imagery: words and phrases create mental pictures connected with solitude, fear, movement and growth.

- Symbolism: status quo represents stagnation; the future represents the unknown and possibility; the first step represents courage and the beginning of personal development.

16. Status Quo and Latin Expressions

The textbook explains status quo as a Latin expression meaning the existing state of affairs. It is used when a situation remains unchanged.

Expression	Meaning
et cetera (etc.)	and other things; and so on
exempli gratia (e.g.)	for example
ad hoc	for a specific purpose or situation, often temporary
in media res	into the middle of things; beginning at a crucial point
per se	by itself; fundamentally
quid pro quo	a favour or advantage given in return for something

17. Grammar Focus

First Conditional with an Imperative: The chapter explains that the first conditional can describe real or possible future situations. Instead of using “will + verb” in the main clause, an imperative can be used to give advice or a command.

Pattern: If + present simple, + imperative.

Example: If the idea excites you, go ahead and do something about it.

Modal “could”: The chapter examines different functions of could, including possibility, past possibility/speculation, unreal or hypothetical situations, past ability/purpose and polite requests. Students are asked to identify the function from context.

Grammatical forms: The chapter also includes a contextual exercise requiring suitable grammatical forms of verbs in a passage about experiential learning. This reinforces choosing verb forms according to time, subject and meaning.

18. Speaking Skills

The speaking activity uses a role-play about pursuing a dream. Four roles are suggested:

- The Dreamer: explains the dream, acknowledges challenges and expresses belief and readiness.
- A Parent: raises concerns about financial stability and practical consequences.
- A Mentor/Teacher: offers balanced advice, planning and a long-term perspective.
- A Friend/Sibling: provides encouragement while also asking about a backup plan.

The activity helps students practise expressing opinions, acknowledging concerns, giving advice and discussing dreams realistically.

19. Writing Skill – Formal Email

The chapter asks students to write an email to the Director of a reputed design institute enquiring about a summer workshop and expressing interest in joining it. The textbook specifies formal language and asks students to avoid abbreviations.

- Header: From, To, Date and Subject; the textbook format also shows Cc and Bcc.
- Message: introduction, enquiry/request or seeking permission, and conclusion.
- Close: “Yours sincerely”.
- Sender details: name, designation and contact details.
- Language: formal, clear and appropriately polite.

20. Vision Board – Learning Beyond the Text

A vision board is described as a visual representation of goals, dreams and inspirations. It can help a person focus on what they want to achieve and remain motivated. The textbook suggests sections such as My Dreams, I Want to Try, Goals, Places I Will Go and Inspiration.

The chapter also highlights examples of historical personalities who were inspired by their parents, including Chhatrapati Shivaji and Queen Madālasa. □filecite□turn26file9□

21. Learning Beyond – Turning Challenges into Opportunities

The textbook presents brief success stories of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam to encourage students to explore how people faced significant challenges and continued towards meaningful goals. The activity asks students to find similar stories of people from their own village, town, city or state and present them in class.

22. Quick Revision – Prose

- Author: Irene Chua
- Form: letter from a mother to her daughter Ming
- Date of letter: 19 June 1995
- Main advice: follow a meaningful dream, but understand its costs and challenges
- World-class achievement: requires focused and intensive pursuit over a long period
- Important factors: passion, conviction, effort, time, financial investment, sacrifice and commitment
- Support network: other people may contribute to achievement
- Obstacles: security needs, family responsibilities, historical events and changing circumstances can affect dreams
- Main message: dreams may change over time, and new hopes can be equally meaningful

23. Quick Revision – Poetry

- “Step up to the challenge” — Robert Langley
- Main focus: facing challenges, future choices, growth and self-belief
- Status quo: existing state of affairs
- Central contrast: comfort/stagnation versus change/growth
- Key device: metaphor in “The first step is the hardest”
- Other features: antithesis, imagery, symbolism, rhetorical question and direct address
- “Always Believe in Yourself” — Dorothy Hewitt
- Main focus: self-belief, courage, persistence, encouragement and openness to life

24. Exam-Focused Points

- Explain how the mother balances encouragement with caution.
- Describe what differentiates mere dreamers from achievers.
- Explain why dreams may change over time.
- Explain the meaning and significance of “maze of hurdles”.
- Explain the metaphor “The first step is the hardest”.
- Discuss the contrast between maintaining the status quo and personal growth.
- Explain the role of self-belief in the poetry section.
- Know the meanings and uses of status quo, et cetera, ad hoc, in media res, per se and quid pro quo.
- Revise first conditional with an imperative and the different functions of “could”.
- Revise the formal email format and the role-play prompts.

25. One-Page Chapter Recap

Follow That Dream: Ming’s mother supports her daughter’s dream but stresses that meaningful achievement requires passion, conviction, long-term effort, sacrifice and realistic planning. Dreams may be affected by financial needs, family responsibilities, historical events and changing circumstances. A strong support network can help, and a changed dream can still be valuable.

Believe in Yourself: The poetry section moves from the challenge of taking the first step to the importance of self-belief, courage and perseverance. It contrasts comfort and the status quo with change and growth, and encourages the reader to face the future with confidence and persistence.

Source note: These notes are based on the uploaded Kaveri Chapter 8 textbook (28 pages). Where the textbook refers to listening transcripts on page 275, the transcript itself was not present in the available chapter pages, so no listening answers have been invented.