

## 1.2 Odd One In

“How was the first day of school?” asked Mother as Rima sat down for dinner.

“Okay,” Rima shrugged. “No lessons. Just settling in.”

“Any new girls in your class?” enquired her father, Mr Sen.

“Only one - Malti - and she is funny,” grimaced Rima as she helped herself to the salad.

“Why do you say that?” asked Mr Sen.

“She can’t speak much English. She has come from another State,” sniffed Rima, naming one at the other end of the country.

“Oh ! Children from that State are supposed to be clever. They are specially good at maths,” said Mr Sen quietly.

“Well, this one does not seem smart at all. Oily hair, bindi and all. ‘Gud marning, Teeechurr,’” mimicked Rima.

Her parents exchanged glances. Rima was their only child. They doted on her. But she could be insufferable at times.

“I do hope you and your friends will not make things too difficult for Malti,” sighed Mr Sen as he rose from the table.

Rima and her gang had decided to do just that.

Next morning, the minute Malti entered the class, they all chorused, “Gud marning!”

Poor Malti. She did not realise that they were making fun of her. She beamed back at them and replied, “Gud marning!”



**Discuss the meaning in the context of the story.**

- settling in
- sniffed
- insufferable

**Discuss :**

- ⌘ How did Rima decide whether or not Malti was smart? What is your opinion?
- ⌘ Do Rima and her parents share the same attitude? How do we know that?



✿ Guess what Malti was about to say when Teacher entered.

**Discuss the difference in the meaning of the following words :**

- smart
- confident
- snob

- recounted : told
- atrocious : Here, it means of very poor quality
- snidely : in a nasty manner
- jeer : make rude remarks in a loud voice.

Shahnaz giggled. “Why do you put so much oil on your hair?” she asked rudely.

Malti looked offended but did not reply.

“And the skirt-soo l-o-o-n-g,” said Clare cattily.

Malti flushed. She was about to say something when Teacher entered. As the class progressed, everyone was surprised to see Malti raise her hand whenever Teacher asked a question.

“Yes, Malti, you answer,” said Teacher.

Malti answered correctly and Teacher nodded in appreciation.

When Rima recounted this at home, her mother said, “Sounds like a clever girl.”

“What is the use?” said Rima uncharitably. “Her English is so atrocious.”

“The same may be said of your Hindi,” countered Mr Sen sharply. He was getting quite sick of Rima’s attitude.

Even Mrs Sen did not like it. That night Rima’s parents discussed the matter.

“We put Rima into a good school to make her smart and confident. I am afraid she is turning into quite a little snob!” said Mr Sen sadly.

The following Saturday was the Inter-House singing competition. Rima, who was participating in the English song category, was surprised to see Malti’s name in the list of participants for the Hindi song category. “Oily plaits sings also,” she said snidely to Clare.

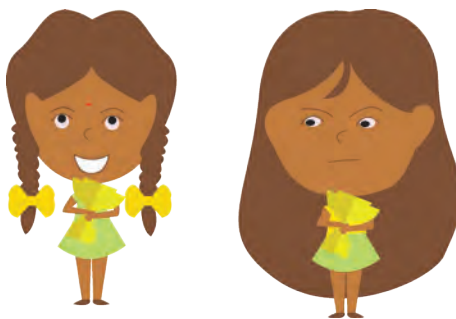
“Croaks, you mean,” giggled Clare.

They were to be proved wrong.

Malti sang beautifully. She had a melodious and well-trained voice. Rima and her gang had decided to jeer when Malti sang, but there was such absolute silence, they did not dare to. They

were sure to get caught. When Malti finished, the Principal was the first one to start clapping, followed by the teachers and students.

No one was surprised when Malti won the first prize. Rima did come first in her category; somehow, she felt no joy.



As the term progressed, it was abundantly clear to all that Malti was a bright child. She was quiet, studious and intelligent. She fared well in sports as well as in studies. Her forte was mathematics. Her simple appearance belied a sharp and nimble brain. Slowly, many of the girls began seeking her help in mathematics. Help which she readily and cheerfully gave. The teachers had liked the respectful, intelligent girl from the beginning. Now girls from the class also befriended her.

Not Rima and her clique though. They stubbornly disliked Malti. They were a stylish lot and nothing that Malti did could alter the fact that she was not their type. They never lost a chance to poke fun at her, particularly her English.

Malti felt bad about their behaviour. One day, she was on the verge of tears when Rima mocked at her mercilessly because she said “aks” instead of “ask”.



Her voice trembling, Malti said, “I know my English is weak. Yours is good. Please, will you help me to improve it?”

“I won’t be able to help you, my dear,”

replied Rima with an exaggerated accent. “Speaking proper English isn’t easy for you countrified types!”

### Guess the meaning of :

- forte
- belied
- befriended

### Think and answer :

- ✂ Why did Rima feel no joy even though she came first in her category?

- clique : a small group of friends who do not allow others to join them.

✿ Name the friends in Rima's clique.

- roundly : Here, it means 'in an emphatic manner.'

This is an extract from the story 'Odd One In'.

Can you imagine what happened next in this story of Rima and Malti?

Try to complete the story on your own or by discussing it with your friends.

Allow each student to decide whether they want to complete the story individually or as a group activity. Give enough time in the classroom for the activity. Display the students' stories in the classroom.

Malti's face turned red. She wanted to retort but could not find the right words. She burst into tears and ran off.

"That was horrid, Rima," said Shahnaz.

"Yes," agreed Neha and Clare roundly.



Rima was shocked. Her own friends had turned against her! She walked off in a huff.

Mrs Sen found her subdued over lunch but decided not to ask anything. Rima knew that she had behaved very badly. She was too proud to admit it - even to herself.

– From 'Odd One In' by Tithi Tavora

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## ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. Read aloud the conversations in the story turn by turn.
2. Write about Malti and Rima using the following points :



Malti

- Appearance...
- Studies...
- Singing...
- Attitude to others...
- Weak points...



Rima

- Appearance...
- Studies...
- Singing...
- Attitude to others...
- Weak points...

Use details from the story and your own imagination when you write the above descriptions.

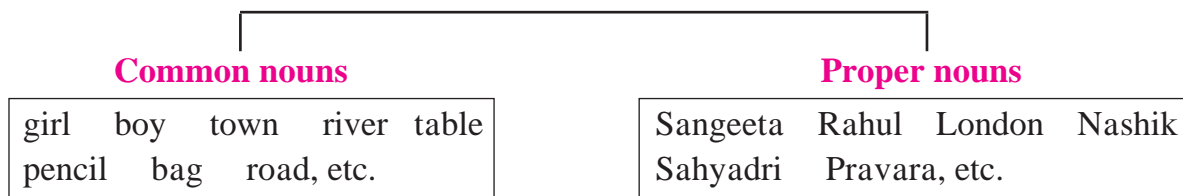
3. Imagine you are Malti. Write about any one event in the story from Malti's point of view.

4. How do you behave with your classmates? Write about your attitude and behaviour in the appropriate column.  
 (Some actions : • Ask others for help • Refuse help • Judge others by their appearance • Judge others by their accent.)

Always	Sometimes	Never
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

5. **Talk about** : (a) your strengths (b) your weaknesses (c) the changes that you would like to see in yourself (3 each).
6. **Discuss** : Is it necessary to develop a good accent? Why? What efforts can you take to improve your pronunciation? With your teacher’s help, find out how to use online dictionaries for the purpose.
7. List all the adverbs that end with ‘-ly’ from the passage.
8. Language Study: **Types of nouns**: You know that a noun is a word used as the name of a person, place or thing. The names given to particular persons, places, animals etc. are **proper nouns** and the rest are **common nouns**. For example, ‘Ria’ is a proper noun, because it is the name of a particular person. But, ‘girl’ is a common noun, as it is not the name of a particular person. ‘Ahmednagar’ is a proper noun, because it is the name of a particular place. ‘Town’ is a common noun, because it is not the name of a particular place.

### Nouns



- Write at least 5 common nouns and 5 proper nouns each. Proper nouns are always written with a capital letter at the beginning. Can you think of proper nouns that include two or more words? How are they written? Find at least ten such nouns. Examples : Seva Hospital, The Times of India.