

UNIT 16

It couldn't be Done

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)

Students Learning Outcomes:

On the completion of this unit, the students will be able to:

- summarize the poem.
- skim text to infer theme/main idea.
- distinguish between what is clearly stated and what is implied.
- write a persuasive essay.
- create and deliver group presentations.
- use semicolon.

Pre-reading:

- Have you ever done any difficult task? Narrate it.

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't", but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

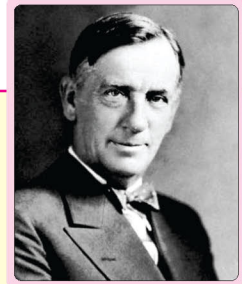
Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done", and you'll do it.

About the Poet

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)

He was a prolific English-born American poet who was popular in the first half of the 20th century and became known as the People's Poet. His poems often had an inspirational and optimistic view of everyday life. *It Couldn't Be Done*, *Life*, and *Don't Quit* are three of Edgar Albert Guest's most inspiring and motivating poems.



Reading and Thinking Skills

1. Answer the following questions.

- i) Explain how the character in the poem is optimistic.
- ii) Why does the character in the poem say that he wouldn't say it couldn't be done?
- iii) Why do the people discourage us about doing a difficult task in life?
- iv) After accomplishing the difficult task, what was the attitude of the character?
- v) If you are in a difficult situation, what will you do?

2. Mark the sentences as true or false.

- i) Somebody said that it could be done. ☐
- ii) The character in the poem replied that he would try it out. ☐

- iii) He began to sing when he did a difficult job. ☐
- iv) The people always encourage us to do difficult and impossible tasks. ☐
- v) Thousands of people are there to discourage us. ☐
- vi) The poet says, "Do not say, it couldn't be done without trying it". ☐

Making inferences

Making inferences means to make a guess. You use what you know when you make the guess.

For example:

If your brother comes home sweating and wearing his running shoes and shorts, you can infer that he went running. Similarly, when you read, you use information from the reading selection and your own life to make inferences.

Activities

- i) Read the poem "It couldn't be Done" and infer the theme or main idea.
- ii) Write down the main idea or theme of the poem.
- iii) Write down the summary of the poem "It couldn't be Done".

Writing Skills

Persuasive Essay

Write a persuasive essay on "Education is the key to success".

Oral Communication

Activity

Work in groups of five to ten. Make a group presentation on "Measures to control pollution in your area", and present it in the class.

Semicolon

1. Use a semicolon between independent clauses *if you do not use a comma and a coordinating conjunction*.

(The coordinating conjunctions are *and, but, or, either ... or, neither ... nor, for, yet*)

Punishment brings wisdom; it is the healing art of wickedness (Plato).

2. A semicolon may be used between independent clauses even with a coordinating conjunction (1) if there are commas within the clauses or (2) if the clauses are long. This semicolon is often necessary to make clear the major break between independent clauses.

Ignorance of all things is an evil neither terrible nor excessive, nor yet the greatest of all; but great cleverness and much learning, if they be accompanied by a bad training, are a much greater misfortune (Plato).

3. Use a *semicolon* between independent clauses joined by transitional words, such as *accordingly, consequently, for example, for instance, however, namely, nevertheless, that is, then, therefore, thus*. (These words are not equivalent to coordinating conjunctions)

For example: Islam teaches that cleanliness is half of faith; thus, we should keep ourselves clean.

4. Use a *semicolon* between items in a series if the items themselves contain commas.

The names of three universities in Balochistan: University of Balochistan, Quetta; University of Turbat, Makran; and University of Loralai, Zhob.

Activity

Write down at least two sentences of each usage of semi colon.