UNIT ELEVEN: THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM .

Knowledge is a mental grasp of the facts of reality. It's the awareness of the identity of particular aspects of reality. It's not just an awareness of reality, but understanding of it. It mainly gained through a successful evaluation of one's perceptions. It's the use of reason that man draws a conclusion about the world. Through objectivity that man identifies the validity of those conclusion. It's the clear, lucid information gained through the process of reason applied to reality.

Knowledge is the most powerful tool in the hands of man. It influences the way man lives and interacts with nature. Knowledge is a familiarity, awareness or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills, which is acquired through experience or education by perceiving, discovering, or learning. The developments in science and the transformations in technology have impacted greatly on social life. This transformation has brought a change in our conception of distance and time. Within seconds you can reach people in any corner of the world. Mobile telephone technology, for example, has reduced barriers of communication. This has facilitated effectiveness and productivity on a global scale. Places separated by great distances can be easily reached in hours as air travel has become more common. Due to the technological developments, which are manifestations of knowledge, the world no longer seems such a huge place as had been thought in the past.

Humans have a natural tendency to want to know more about the world. They have an instinctive thirst for knowledge. Humans require knowledge to harness and reshape the environment they live in. It has given them power on earth. Humans improve actions of past generations to make life better. The skills we have developed over the years have helped us to become masters of nature. Today, humans are conquering outer space and have explored the moon. Knowledge has helped man develop the power of reasoning. Reasoning is a process of thought that helps to make objective judgment. Knowledge, reason and objectivity are related. When knowledge and reason are put together, they can give rise to objective judgment. So the basis of objective judgment is knowledge. With knowledge you make your life good. With knowledge you are powerful, but with ignorance you are weak.

A democratic system benefits from citizens' knowledge, whereas ignorance weakens it. Democracy is based on citizens being knowledgeable and informed. In order for people to make good decisions, they need to gather as much objective information on the issue as possible. Once you have the knowledge, then you can use reasoning to make a sound judgment. Knowledge gives you power in any given situation. When you are ignorant you become weak. The development of Ethiopia is supported by the knowledge of its citizens.

Through knowledge, society continues to change. You even see a transformation in yourself as it has the power to effectively alter your social status. Many great names in the world are linked to remarkable achievements. In Ethiopia there were great personalities whose achievements will long be remembered. We need to respect people with knowledge and follow in their footsteps to help change and transform our country. In the study about knowledge, there are two conflicting views on sources of knowledge. i.e.

Rationalism:

In epistemology, rationalism is the view that "regards reason as the chief source and test of knowledge "or "any view appealing to reason as a source of knowledge or justification" Rationalists' beliefs reason rather than experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge. The rationalists argued that certain truths exist and that the intellect can directly grasp these truths.

The philosophers who are the supporters of rationalism are Plato, Socrates, Descartes and Noam Chomsky.

Empiricism:

Empiricism is a theory that states that knowledge comes only or primarily from sensory experience. Empiricism contends that knowledge of external world can only be attained through sense experience. Therefore according to empiricism a pursuit of knowledge purely is through experience, especially by means of observation and sometimes by experiment.

The philosophers who are the supporters of Empiricism are Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and john Locke.

Why do we seek knowledge?

Abraham Maslow, a modern psychologist, argues that human have needs other than maintenance needs.

Maintenance needs: includes food, shelter, cloth, security and social interaction.

Actualization needs: according to Maslow, represents growth of an individual toward fulfillment of the highest needs; those for meaning in life. Such needs includes self-fulfillment, creativity, self-expression, realization of one's potential and be everything one can be.

- Knowledge may be divided into three parts:
    A. Theoretical Knowledge: such as Darwin's theory of evolution.
    B. The social utility of Knowledge: such as sharing knowledge to survive.
    C. Productive Knowledge: like skill of architecture.

Information as a source of Knowledge

Knowledge involves the gathering of information and data. It is the sum total of what has been perceived, discovered, or inferred. It is about facts, ideas and skills that are shared through generations. Specific knowledge can be obtained through analyzing and interpreting data.

Data is figures obtained from observations or surveys. They serve as a basis for making calculations and drawing conclusions. The conclusions drawn from data about a specific area may become useful information. After sorting the raw data and analyzing it you can draw conclusions. The information obtained can help you make an informed decision. As a citizen you need to make choices from different viewpoints on public issues based on knowledge. This knowledge accelerates the development of the country.

Information: refers to an organized, meaningful and relevant data that has undergone analysis and interpretation. Information source can be: observation, print media and electronic media. Information helps us to develop our knowledge. Knowledge is understanding or learning about that which is known information is also defined as knowledge in the form of facts. It is said that you acquire knowledge but you obtain information. This expression indicates that knowledge refers to something very wide in scope, but information refers to more specific facts obtained for a particular purpose. Wisdom is gained through the accumulation and practical use of knowledge.

One of the methods through which we can gather information is through research. In carrying out research you identify different sources of information and data in various formats. Data: is a set of figures /facts obtained from observation, interview, analyzing text/document, recording etc. or it's a set of values of qualitative or quantitative variables. The two basic types of data are:

1. **Quantitative data** is any kind of data that can be measured numerically. For example, quantitative data is used to measure things precisely, such as the temperature, the amount of people in a crowd or the height of a structure. Although quantitative data usually involves numbers and equations. Quantitative research gathers data in numerical form which can be put into categories, or in rank order, or measured in units of measurement. This type of data can be used to construct graphs and tables of raw data.

2. **Qualitative data** is all sorts of facts that cannot be expressed numerically. Its information that is not in numerical form. For example, diary accounts, open-ended questionnaires, unstructured interviews and unstructured observations. The order of sequence regarding scientific methods of research is:

Hypothesis →Data collection → Analysis →Evaluation of result → conclusion.

One way of obtaining knowledge is through reading. You can read for many different reasons; it could be for enjoyment, learning or understanding. You may read a Civics and Ethical Education textbook to learn about your rights, obligations and how democracy works in Ethiopia.

One of the objectives of reading is to get more knowledge. For instance, reading books about Mars will enable you to know more about Earth's neighbor. In your Grade 7 chemistry textbook you would have learnt about atoms. You have defined an atom as the smallest piece of a simple substance or element that, when combined with other substances, forms molecules.

You have also learned that it is made up of electrons, protons and neutrons. You can study it because scientists discovered the knowledge about atom. The many changes you see in the world and the development of technology are the results of efforts made by scientists. Scientists discover new knowledge because they are studying, observing and reading. Apart from what you read for knowledge, you should also read for pleasure.

When you read fiction you get pleasure and become more interested to read further. When we find a subject matter that interests us we want to find out more about it, often through reading on the topic. When we find fiction authors whose books we enjoy, we try to read all of their books.

Reading for pleasure develops our reading skills in other areas. Developing a reading habit means to march on the great highway of knowledge. The habit of reading starts when you are committed to read and make it a culture. If you give more time to reading, then it indicates that you are on the right course to developing the habit. The more you read, the easier it gets. Reading is one of the cornerstones of formal and informal learning. When you are able to cultivate the habit of reading you will become an informed person. A great reader is a person who does not waste his/her time for no use, but one who reads continuously to get new knowledge. Aim to be a great reader and aim to contribute to the development of Ethiopia.

Truth versus Myth

Human knowledge is built based on scientific facts. Facts reveal the true nature of reality. Thus, knowledge is truth about things in nature. Truth is the proven facts about something rather than what people generally accept. It's the quality of being true or correct according to some ground or test for establishing the reality of a statement (proposition, ideas, thought, and belief opinion). There are a number of such grounds or tests for justifying truth.

- The approximation, conformity or correspondence to facts
- The coherence among ideas
- The pragmatic usefulness of ideas
- Experience and faith
- Authority and intuition
- Self-evidence revelation, and tradition

❖ Various theories had been suggested in connection to the essence of truth. These are:

1. Correspondence theory of truth: a statement (proposition, ideas, thought, belief, opinion) is true if what it refers to (corresponds to) exists. That to which it truly corresponds is called facts.
2. Relative theory of truth: What seems to be true is declared to be true by someone will remain as true for him. Accordingly there is no absolute truth or fixed truth.

   What is believed to be true for a given society may not be true for another. Equally, what is true for a given society today is not remain true tomorrow.

3. Pragmatic theory of truth: a statement, (proposition, ideas, thought, belief, opinion) is true if it works or has practical results or if it resolves problems in science and everyday life and makes us happy. Accordingly, truth is measured by its usefulness or utility to the society. Supporters of this theory believed that their theory of truth was dynamic, practical and measurable. Truth is measured in terms of outcomes. If the outcomes are desirable, then the means employed to achieve it are justified.
4. Scientific theory of truth: According to this theory, truth is different from the above theories because scientific facts are not relative or measured by utility to individuals or groups. This theory purely depends on objective facts, which remain the same for everyone, all the time.

Beliefs that are not true may be called **myths**.

They are not proven to be true through scientific methods of investigation. The basis of a myth is often tradition. You should be able to differentiate myth from the truth. Cultures hold myths as important though they may recognize that they are not true. They may be used for social unity and to help give an understanding of how society works. This is part of culture but it cannot be proved. Until the making of the globe and maps etc. there was a myth that the earth was flat. But, after the Great Discovery of the 16th Century, it was proved wrong. Until then this myth had obstructed the expansion of navigation and trade. Although myths are important, they should not be a barrier to develop our culture. With knowledge, the world has transformed a great deal. Knowledge is key to improving the life of people. Knowledge, wisdom and truth are tools to a good life. Today, governments are making use of knowledge to improve the living conditions of people. Myths are unscientific stories that people would like to tell and believe. Knowledge is truth.

UNIT ELEVEN REVIEW EXERCISES

I. Match items listed under column "B" with column "A" with their appropriate answers.

"A"	"B"
1. Epistemology	A. Truth is subjective to time, place and culture
3. Truth pragmatic theory	B. Truth has objective and absolute nature
4. Empiricism	C. Philosophical study of knowledge
5. Rationalism	D. measurable and quantifiable information
6. Quantitative data	E. Experience is a source of knowledge
7. Qualitative data	F. Reason is a source of knowledge
8. Scientific theory of truth	G. The information which is based the interpretation
9. Relative theory of truth	H. Truth is measured in terms of its outcomes

II. Choose the best answer for the following questions from a given alternatives.

10. A theory of truth that assume our ideas must be tested through practice is

    A. Coherence theory of truth C. Correspondence theory of truth
    B. Pragmatic theory of truth D. Deflationary theory of truth

11. Which of the following is **not true** about objective judgment?
    A. Objective judgment is the base for reasoning
    B. Objective judgment is the outcome of knowledge and reason
    C. Objective judgment does not require reasoning ability
    D. Objective judgment is about fair decision making

12. What is Mythology? It is philosophical study of:
    A. Myth B. The super natural C. Knowledge D. Truth

13. A process by which a sender transmits messages to a receiver which entails mutual understanding is:
    A. Communication B. Production C. Information D. Decoding

14. The basis of qualitative research lies on:
    A. Study things in number C. Interpreting social reality
    B. Measuring of phenomenon D. Deals with quantifiable things

15. Which of the following action is true mark of a rational person?
    A. Speaking English as fluently as native speakers
    B. Giving quick and equal response to any type of provocation
    C. Trying to see things from all possible angles before taking action
    D. Arriving at conclusions about anything instantly and hastily

16. Which of the following is the essential characteristic of qualitative data? It

A. Involves the measurement of an amount/quantity

B. Often analyzed using statistics or computer programs

C. Describes facts that cannot be expressed numerically

D. Can be assessed and determined exactly

17. Which of the following is true about myths?

A. Myths are unscientific stories that people would like to tell and believed

B. Myths are scientific stories based on empirical evidence

C. Myths are found in the tradition and cultures of African people only

D. Myths can help us to transform our knowledge

18. An assumption that serves as the basis of research is known as a:

A. Philosophy B. Analysis C. Hypothesis D. Paradigm

19. Which of the following is correct about the relativity of truth?

A. Truth depends on objective facts C. Truth depends in time and space

B. Truth is a universally accepted truth D. Truth is measured based on its utility

20. Which of the following matches the pragmatic theory of truth?

A. Truth is measurable based on its use fullness for a person or a group of people

B. What is true at one time may not remain the same at other times

C. What is true is a given society may not be true in other societies

D. Truth depends up on objective facts that remain the same in space and time

21. Which one of the following is put in a correct order of sequence regarding scientific methods of research?

A. Data collection-----Hypothesis----Analysis-----Evaluation of Results------Conclusion

B. Analysis------Evaluation of Results----Data collection ------Hypothesis---- Conclusion

C. Hypothesis------Data collection-----Analysis-----Evaluation of Results----- Conclusion

D. Analysis-----Hypothesis----Data collection-----Conclusion-----Evaluation of Results

22. What do you mean understand by the pursuit of wisdom?

A. It means to be serious in life

B. It means not to be rational on all the bases of knowledge

C. It means to be able to guide life on the basis of knowledge

D. It means to do good to others