

UNIT 1**A Concrete Example****Summary**

A Concrete Example by Reginald Arkell is a humorous poem about Mrs. Jones, the poet's next-door neighbour, and her unusual garden.

Mrs. Jones has a garden filled with stones, a winding path, a lily pond, a rockery, and a sundial with a strange device. Instead of having large, colourful plants, she places tiny and delicate plants between the stones. The poet finds these plants so small that he feels they hardly have any importance. He jokingly wonders how Mrs. Jones manages to plant them and imagines that she might use a pin to put them into the ground.

One day, Mrs. Jones invites the poet to look at her garden. They spend nearly fifteen minutes discussing a beautiful flower. The poet becomes curious and asks where the flower is. Mrs. Jones amusingly tells him, "You're standing on it." This shows just how tiny the plants in her garden are.

The poem uses humour, exaggeration, and irony to describe Mrs. Jones's unusual taste in gardening. The title A Concrete Example is also playful because the garden is dominated by concrete-like stones, while the actual flowers are almost impossible to notice.

- **Message:** The poem teaches us that beauty can be found in unexpected and unusual things. It also reminds us to appreciate and respect other people's choices, even when they seem strange to us.

New Terms

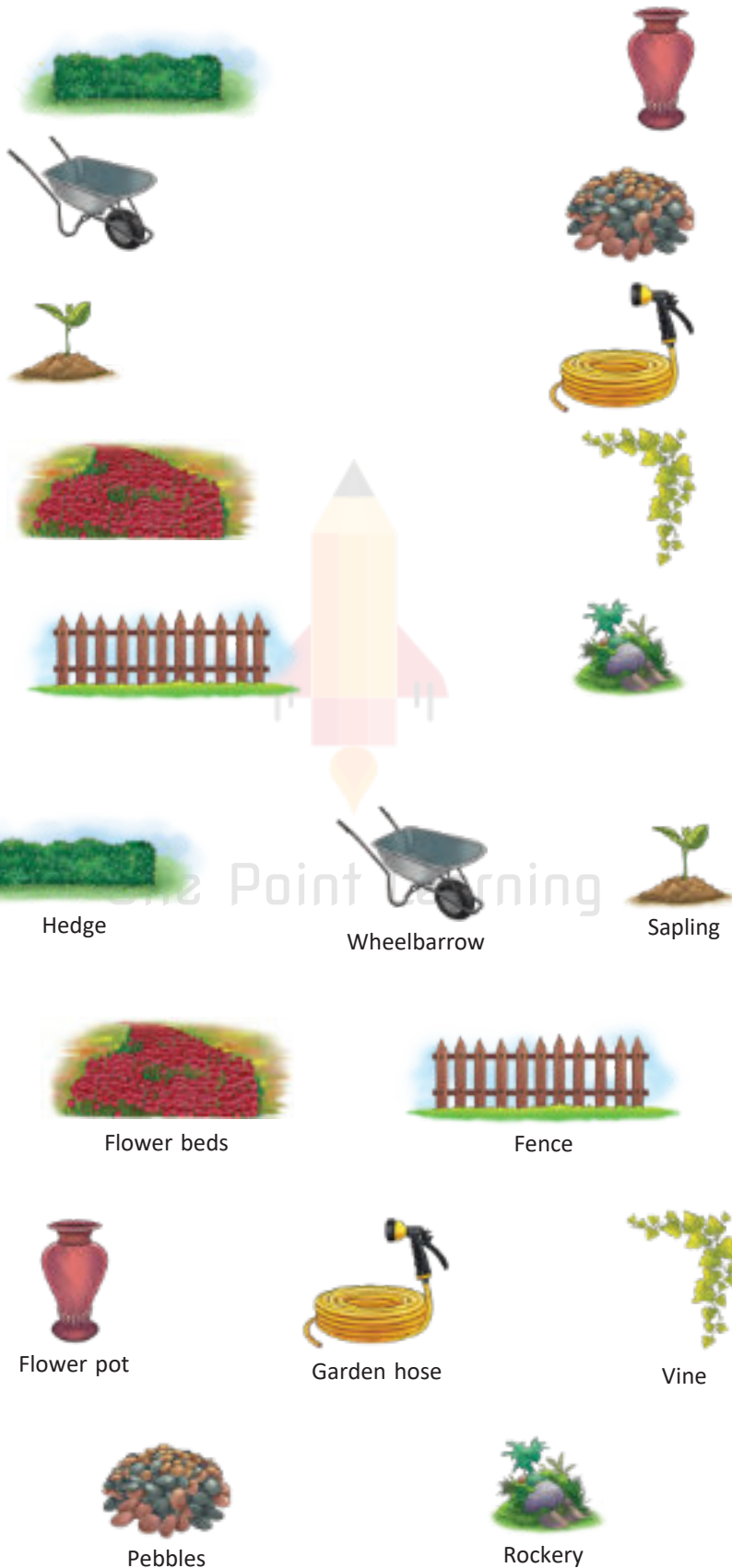
- **Crazy path** – A walkway made with uneven or mixed stones, not straight.
- **Rockery** – A part of a garden made with rocks and small plants.
- **Sundial** – A device that shows time using the rays of the sun.
- **Delicate** – Very soft or fragile, can break easily.
- **Quite a quarter of an hour** – Around 15 minutes.

Question Answer

Let us do these activities before we read.

- I. Read the names of items you usually find in a garden and write their names against each picture given below.

garden hose, sapling, hedge, flower beds, flower pot, pebbles, rockery, fence, vine, wheelbarrow



Ans.

Hedge

Wheelbarrow

Sapling

Flower beds

Fence

Flower pot

Garden hose

Vine

Pebbles

Rockery

II. Work in groups of four. What kind of garden would you like to have?

- Mention the features that you can include and the reasons for your choice. Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

Ans. I would like to have a beautiful and colourful garden with many flowers, small trees, and green plants. I would include flower beds, a rockery, a hedge, a small pond, and a garden path. I would also have a few benches where people could sit and relax. I would choose these features because they would make the garden peaceful, attractive, and pleasant.

III. Read the title of the poem. What comes to your mind when you read the word 'concrete'? Does it have more than one meaning? Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

Ans. When I hear the word "concrete," I think of cement, stones, buildings, roads, pavements, and hard surfaces. The word can also mean something real, definite, or specific. In the title A Concrete Example, the word "concrete" may have more than one meaning, which makes the title interesting.

Let us discuss

I. Complete the following summary with exact words from the poem. One example has been done for you. Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

- The poem describes Mrs. Jones, the speaker's next-door neighbour, who has a unique garden filled with 1. _____. Her garden includes a peculiar 2. _____, a pond, and a rockery, along with an unusual 3. _____ that she finds charming. Mrs. Jones plants tiny, 4. _____ plants between the stones, which the speaker thinks must be so small that they are planted with a 5. _____. One day, Mrs. Jones invites the speaker to see her garden, and they discuss a 6. _____ that Mrs. Jones treasures. When the speaker asks where the 7. _____ flower is, Mrs. Jones says that the speaker has been 8. _____ on it all along.

Ans. Complete the summary with exact words from the poem.

1. stones 2. path 3. sundial 4. delicate 5. pin 6. flower 7. lovely
8. standing

- **Completed summary:** The poem describes Mrs. Jones, the speaker's next-door neighbour, who has a unique garden filled with 1. stones. Her garden includes a peculiar 2. path, a pond, and a rockery, along with an unusual 3. sundial that she finds charming. Mrs. Jones plants tiny, 4. delicate plants between the stones, which the speaker thinks must be so small that they are planted with a 5. pin. One day, Mrs. Jones invites the speaker to see her garden, and they discuss a 6. flower that Mrs. Jones treasures. When the speaker asks where the 7. lovely flower is, Mrs. Jones says that the speaker has been 8. standing on it all along.

II. Select the correct option to fill in the blanks for the following sentences.

1. The tone of the poem is _____.

- (i)mocking
- (ii)humorous
- (iii)mournful
- (iv)amusing
- (v)light-hearted

- A.(i), (ii), and (iii)
- B.(i), (ii), and (v)
- C.(ii), (iii), and (iv)
- D.(ii), (iv), and (v)

Ans. Answer: D. (ii), (iv), and (v)

2. The speaker in the poem is _____.

- (i) Mrs. Jones
- (ii) the poet
- (iii) a gardener
- (iv) a child

Ans. (ii) the poet

3. The rhyme scheme of the poem is _____.

- (i) AABBCC
- (ii) ABABCC
- (iii) AABCAC
- (iv) ABBACC

Ans. (i) AABBCC

III. Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct answer given in the brackets.

1. The poet uses the word 'stones' in all stanzas in order to emphasise her _____. (obsession with a stony garden/pride in gardening skills)

Ans. obsession with a stony garden

2. The poet uses imagery to describe the features of the garden that help readers _____. (understand Mrs. Jones' love for plants/visualise the garden's peculiar nature)

Ans. visualise the garden's peculiar nature

IV. Pick examples of alliteration from the poem.

Ans. Examples of alliteration from the poem are:

- "lily pond" – repetition of the l sound.
- "strange device" – repetition of the s sound.
- "little plants" – repetition of the l sound.
- "delicate and small" – repetition of the d sound.

V. A refrain is a repeated line or phrase that appears in each stanza. Identify the refrain from the poem.

Ans. The refrain is: "My next-door neighbour, Mrs. Jones,"

VI. Irony is a literary device that emphasises the difference between what is expected and what actually happens. It often involves a situation where the outcome is the opposite of what is expected, creating a surprising or a humorous effect. For example, Mrs. Jones' excitement about her garden contrasts with the speaker's disappointment on how ordinary it is.

Identify the line(s) from the poem that display(s) situational irony.

Ans. The lines that show situational irony are:

- "Where is this lovely thing?" I cried.
- "You're standing on it," she replied.

The speaker expects to see a noticeable, beautiful flower, but discovers that he is actually standing on it.

VII. Complete the following sentences appropriately.

1. The word 'concrete' can refer to _____ in Mrs. Jones' garden.

Ans. the stones and other solid features

2. The title also has a symbolic meaning, as the poem provides a clear or 'concrete' example of Mrs. Jones' _____ gardening habits.

Ans. unusual

VIII. The title 'A Concrete Example' carries both literal and symbolic (metaphorical) meaning. Such word play is called a pun. A pun is a figure of speech that uses words with multiple meanings or words that sound alike but have different meanings, creating a humorous effect.

- I tried arguing with my pencil but it kept making sharp points. (suggests the idea of an actual sharp pencil point and strong argument points)
- My pencil and I had a disagreement but we finally got to the point. (refers to solving an argument and the pencil's tip)

Ans. The title "A Concrete Example" is a pun because "concrete" has two meanings:

- Literal: It suggests the solid stones and rock-filled features of Mrs. Jones' garden.
- Symbolic: It means a clear and specific example of Mrs. Jones' unusual gardening style.

Thus, the title humorously connects the concrete stones in the garden with a concrete (clear) example of her gardening habits.

Let us think and reflect

I. Read the given extract and answer the questions that follow.

- 1. My next-door neighbour, Mrs. Jones,
has got a garden full of stones:
A crazy path, a lily pond,
a rockery and, just beyond
A sundial with a strange device,
which Mrs. Jones thinks rather nice.**

i. What can be inferred about Mrs. Jones's taste in gardening from the description of her garden being 'full of stones'?

Ans. Mrs. Jones has an unusual and unconventional taste in gardening. She prefers a garden with stones, rockeries, and other distinctive features rather than a traditional garden filled mainly with flowers.

ii. Identify whether the following statement is true or false.

- The garden serves as a means to reveal more about Mrs. Jones herself.

Ans. True.

iii. What does the poet mean by 'crazy path'?

Ans. The poet means that the "crazy path" is an unusual, irregular, or winding path in Mrs. Jones's garden. It adds to the garden's strange and unconventional appearance.

iv. What does the sundial with a 'strange device' suggest about Mrs. Jones' personality?

- A. She has a fascination with unusual items.
- B. She prefers traditional garden decorations.
- C. She is uninterested in her garden's appearance.
- D. She likes modern and expensive items.

Ans. A. She has a fascination with unusual items.

II. Answer the following questions.

- 1. How does Mrs. Jones feel about her garden? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.**

Ans. Mrs. Jones loves and takes great interest in her garden. She is especially pleased with its unusual features. The poet says that she thinks the sundial with its strange device is "rather nice". She also invites the speaker to see her stones and spends time discussing a flower with him. This shows her enthusiasm and affection for her garden.

2. Why do you think the speaker describes the plants as being so small that they could be planted with a pin?

Ans. The speaker describes the plants as being so small that they could be planted with a pin to humorously emphasise their tiny and delicate size. It also shows how unusual Mrs. Jones's garden is and how difficult it is to notice the little plants among the stones.

3. What do we get to know about Mrs. Jones—based on her gardening style and her interaction with the speaker?

Ans. Mrs. Jones is creative, unconventional, and passionate about gardening. She enjoys unusual garden features and appreciates even tiny, delicate plants. Her friendly interaction with the speaker shows that she is warm, enthusiastic, and good-humoured. She happily shares her garden with him and takes pride in its unique beauty.

4. The poem portrays Mrs. Jones in a positive light. Support this statement.

Ans. The poem portrays Mrs. Jones positively by presenting her as a friendly, enthusiastic and imaginative person. She takes pleasure in her unusual garden and willingly shares it with the speaker. Her love for even the tiniest flowers shows that she appreciates small and delicate things. Her humorous interaction with the speaker also makes her character warm and likeable.

5. What does the poem tell us about the way people think differently about the world around them?

Ans. The poem shows that people can see and appreciate the same things in very different ways. The speaker finds Mrs. Jones's garden unusual and amusing, while Mrs. Jones clearly finds it beautiful and interesting. Her appreciation of tiny plants shows that something that seems insignificant to one person can be special and meaningful to another.

Let us learn

I. Select the appropriate word from the brackets that correctly replaces the underlined word in the sentences from the text.

1. A sundial with a strange device, (unusual, peculiar, new, rare, external)
2. ... which Mrs. Jones thinks rather nice. (pleasant, superior, agreeable, gentle, charming)
3. They are so delicate... (delicious, fragile, dainty, graceful, weak)
4. "Where is this lovely thing?" I cried. (exclaimed, wept, shouted, announced, whispered)

Ans. 1. peculiar 2. pleasant 3. fragile 4. exclaimed

II. The 'sundial' is referred to as a 'device' in the poem. Work in pairs to infer the meaning of 'device'. Share your thoughts with your classmates and teacher.

- Now, match the type of instruments in Column 1 with their definitions in Column 2. Column 3 shows one example of each type of instrument. Add more examples in Column 3.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
1. implement	(i) something that is electrical and is used to do work in the house	spade, knife
2. tool	(ii) something small that is mechanical or electronic	hammer
3. equipment	(iii) something that works on being moved by hand	cricket bat, helmet, batting gloves, etc.
4. appliance	(iv) a set of necessary items for a particular purpose	mixer grinder
5. gadget	(v) something used by hand to make or repair	mobile phone, laptop

Ans. The word “device” means a tool or mechanism designed for a particular purpose. In the poem, the sundial is called a device because it is an instrument used to show or measure time.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3 – More Examples
1. Implement	- (v) something used by hand to make or do something	- shovel, axe, rake
2. Tool	- (iii) something that works on being moved by hand	- screwdriver, saw, spanner
3. Equipment	- (iv) a set of necessary items for a particular purpose	- sports equipment, camping equipment, laboratory equipment
4. Appliance	- (i) something that is electrical and is used to do work in the house	- refrigerator, washing machine, microwave
5. Gadget	- (ii) something small that is mechanical or electronic	- smartwatch, calculator, digital camera

III. Complete the table by making new words in Column 1 using the hints given in Column 2. Replace the first letter of the given word to create new words. One example has been done for you.

1.

Column 1	Column 2
nice	
(i) dice	cut into small pieces
(ii)	grain that we cook
(iii)	plural of mouse
(iv)	bad habit

Ans. Replace the first letter of nice to form the words described by the clues:

Column 1 – New Word	Column 2 – Hint
i. dice	- dice cut into small pieces
ii. rice	- grain that we cook
iii. mice	- plural of mouse
iv. vice	- bad habit

2.

Column 1	Column 2
soil	
(i)	heat something
(ii)	work very hard
(iii)	length of wire in a circle
(iv)	sheets to wrap food items

Ans. Replace the first letter of soil to form new words:

Column 1 – New Word	Column 2 – Hint
i. boil	- heat something
ii. toil	- work very hard
iii. coil	- length of wire in a circle
iv. foil	- sheets to wrap food items

Let us listen

I. You will listen to a presentation about the wonderful Rock Garden of Chandigarh. As you listen, answer the following questions using one to three exact words from the presentation. (Transcript for teacher on page 47)

1. Where was Nek Chand's Rock Garden featured?

Ans. It was featured on an Indian postage stamp.

2. What kind of sculptures does the Rock Garden have?

Ans. It has colourful sculptures.

3. How is the Rock Garden divided?

Ans. It is divided into three distinct phases.

4. Name any one thing that has been transformed into a piece of art in the Rock Garden.

Ans. Broken toilet pots have been transformed into pieces of art.

5. Approximately, how many statues border the Rock Garden?

Ans. Around 5,000 statues border the Rock Garden.

Let us speak

I. The speaker of the poem might have felt sorry for stepping on Mrs. Jones' flower. When we make a mistake, we must express regret and apologise for our actions.

1. When we apologise to a friend or a family member, we use informal language. Take turns to apologise for the following situations and respond to the apology.

(i) You have eaten your brother's share of sweets.

(ii) You have broken your sister's flower craft.

(iii) You accidentally spilled ink on your mother's important documents.

(iv) You forgot to bring your friend's notebook to the school after borrowing it.

You may use the following phrases given below.

Phrases for Apology	Phrases to Respond to Apology
• I'm sorry about...	• That's alright.
• I'm really sorry...	• It's no big deal.
• Please forgive me for...	• No problem.
• Sorry, I didn't mean to...	• These things happen.

Ans. The following are suitable informal dialogues for each situation.

(i) You have eaten your brother's share of sweets.

- You: I'm really sorry. I ate your share of sweets without asking.
- Brother: That's alright. It's no big deal.

(ii) You have broken your sister's flower craft.

- You: Please forgive me for breaking your flower craft. I didn't mean to.
- Sister: No problem. These things happen.

(iii) You accidentally spilled ink on your mother's important documents.

- You: I'm really sorry about spilling ink on your important documents. It was an accident.
- Mother: That's alright. These things happen.

(iv) You forgot to bring your friend's notebook to school after borrowing it.

- You: Sorry, I didn't mean to forget your notebook. I'll bring it tomorrow.
- Friend: No problem. It's no big deal.

2. When we apologise to someone in authority like a Principal or a teacher in a formal setting, we use formal language. Work in pairs and take turns to apologise for the following situations and respond to the apology.

(i) You did not bring an assignment that was due for submission.

(ii) You were late to school for the past three days and had to meet the Principal.

(iii) You did not submit your project work and were asked to explain.

You may use the phrases given below.

Phrases for Apology	Phrases to Respond to Apology
• I'm extremely sorry for... - I promise it won't happen again.	• I accept your apology. - Please ensure you...
• I owe you an apology for... - I'll do my best not to repeat it.	• I appreciate you saying this, but...
• I really regret... - I assure you that this will never happen again.	• I'm glad you realised your mistake...

Ans. Formal Apologies – Speaking Activity

(i) You did not bring an assignment that was due for submission.

- Student: I'm extremely sorry for not bringing my assignment today. I really regret my mistake. I assure you that this will never happen again.
- Teacher: I accept your apology. Please ensure you bring the assignment tomorrow.

(ii) You were late to school for the past three days and had to meet the Principal.

- Student: I owe you an apology for being late to school for the past three days. I really regret my carelessness. I promise it won't happen again.
- Principal: I appreciate you saying this. Please ensure you arrive at school on time from now onwards.

(iii) You did not submit your project work and were asked to explain.

- Student: I'm extremely sorry for not submitting my project work on time. I assure you that this will never happen again. I'll do my best not to repeat it.
- Teacher: I'm glad you realised your mistake. Please ensure you complete and submit the project at the earliest.

Let us write

You are a member of the Nature Club of your school. Draft a notice informing the students of Grades 6–8 about the inauguration of the Herb Garden.

Points to remember:

- Mention the purpose of writing, date, time, venue, and any other relevant information—whom to contact, when, and where.
- Use formal language in the third person form.



Write the notice in a box.

NAME OF THE ORGANISATION	
NOTICE	
Date	Title
(Body of the notice)	
Name	
Signature	
Class	

Ans.

GREEN VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

NOTICE

One Point Learning

Date: 3 July 2026

Title: INAUGURATION OF THE HERB GARDEN

The Nature Club is organising the inauguration of the school Herb Garden on 10 July 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in the school garden. The Herb Garden will feature useful plants such as Aloe Vera, Mint, Carom and Holy Basil. The initiative aims to help students learn about the importance, uses and benefits of herbs and develop an appreciation for nature.

All students of Grades 6–8 are cordially invited to attend the inauguration and participate in this educational initiative.

For further details, students may contact the Nature Club.

Sumit
Secretary, Nature Club
Grades 6–8

Let us explore

- I. **Amrit Udyan** is a garden spread over an expanse of 15 acres around Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. It has multiple attractions that include a specially curated garden for children called Bal Vatika, a treehouse, nature's classroom, etc. It also has the Bonsai, Herbal-I, Herbal-II, Tactile Garden, Arogya Vanam, and Circular Gardens with a diverse variety of flora and fauna.

Now, find out about popular gardens in your region and share with your classmates and teacher.

Ans. Here is a sample answer that students can use and adapt according to their region:

Name of the Garden	Location	Special Features
• Lodhi Garden	- New Delhi	- Beautiful lawns, flowering plants, trees and historic tombs
• Nehru Park	- New Delhi	- Green lawns, colourful flowers, walking paths and recreational spaces
• Mughal Garden (Amrit Udyan)	- New Delhi	- Herbal gardens, Bonsai Garden, Bal Vatika and a variety of flowers
• Garden of Five Senses	- New Delhi	- Landscaped gardens, sculptures, fountains and beautiful plants

- **Sample presentation:** "Some popular gardens in my region are Lodhi Garden, Nehru Park, Amrit Udyan and the Garden of Five Senses. These gardens are known for their beautiful plants, flowers, trees and attractive landscapes. They provide peaceful spaces for people to relax and also help us appreciate the beauty and importance of nature."
- II. A herbarium is a collection of plant samples preserved for long-term study, usually in the form of dried and pressed plants mounted on paper.
- Now, collect some fallen flowers and leaves from your neighbourhood. Place them in folds of a newspaper carefully and put a pile of books on them. After one week, take them out and use them to make a card, wall hanging or any other artwork. A sample has been given for your reference.

Ans. Herbarium Activity – Sample Answer

Activity: Making artwork with dried flowers and leaves

I collected a few fallen flowers and leaves from my neighbourhood. I carefully placed them between the folds of a newspaper and kept a pile of books over them for one week. After they dried and became flat, I arranged them creatively to make a decorative greeting card.

I used dried leaves as the stems and leaves and small dried flowers as the flowers. I arranged and pasted them neatly to create a colourful natural design.

Conclusion: This activity helped me understand how plants can be preserved and used creatively. It also taught me to appreciate and protect nature.



III. Read and enjoy the poem.**A Sea of Foliage**

A sea of foliage girds our garden round,
But not a sea of dull unvaried green,
Sharp contrasts of all colours here are seen;
The light-green graceful tamarinds abound
Amid the mango clumps of green profound,
And palms arise, like pillars gray, between;
And o'er the quiet pools the seemuls lean,
Red—red, and startling like a trumpet's sound.
But nothing can be lovelier than the ranges
Of bamboos to the eastward, when the moon
Looks through their gaps, and the white lotus changes
Into a cup of silver. One might swoon
Drunken with beauty then, or gaze and gaze
On a primeval Eden, in amaze.

- Toru Dutt

Ans. Do it your self.

