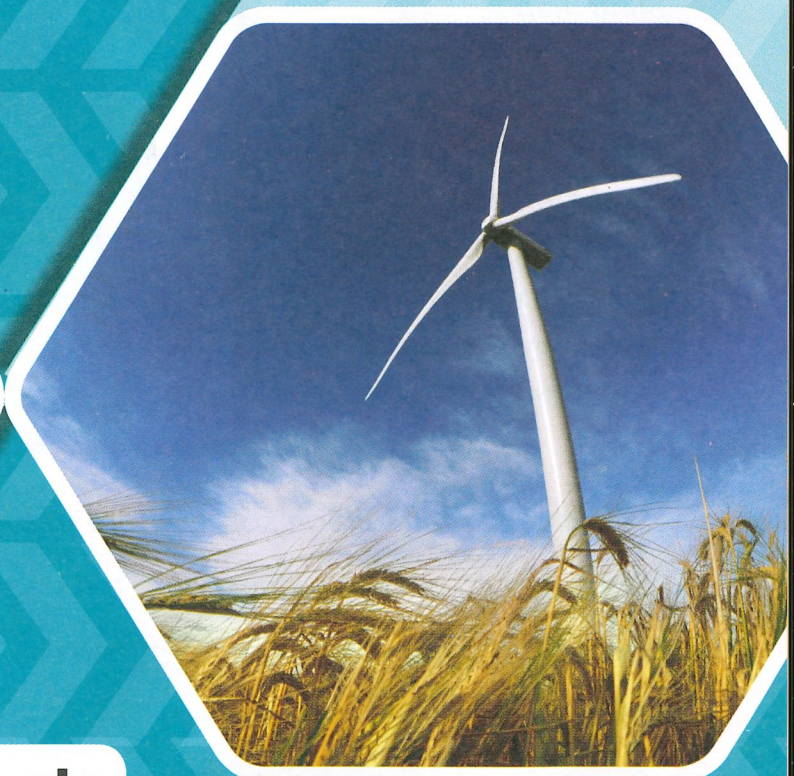
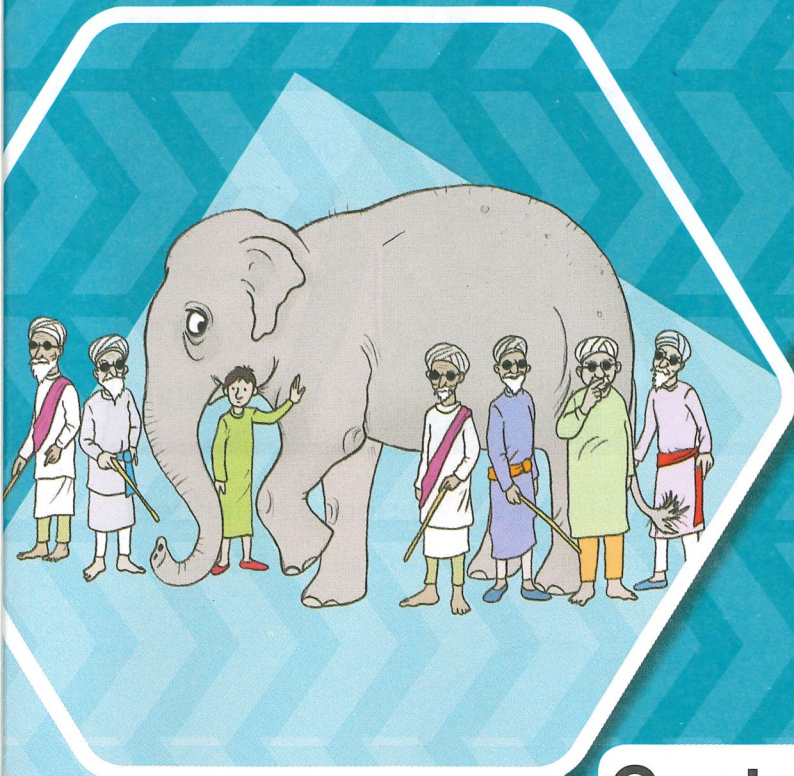




NTS
Assessments

Reading Booklet

AUTUMN



Contents

Year

5

The Blind Men and the Elephant
pages 2–5

New Energy
pages 6–7

RS★ASSESSMENT
FROM **HODDER EDUCATION**

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

This is a short play based on an old story from India.

Characters

Omar, a boy of 10

Alpa, a girl of 9

Ali, a boy of 14

A small group of villagers

Blind man 1

Blind man 2

Blind man 3

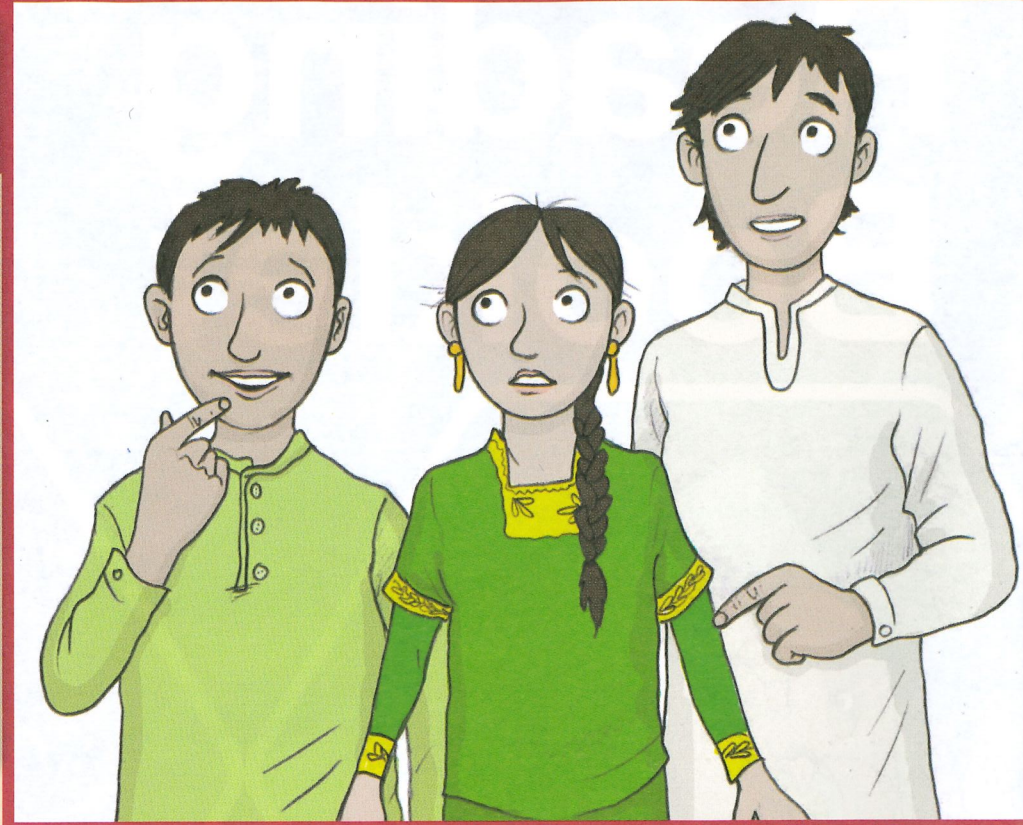
Blind man 4

Blind man 5

Blind man 6

Elephant keeper

Elephant (this could be a large cardboard cut-out, carried by the actors)



Setting: *a small village somewhere in India*

Omar and Alpa come running onto the stage.

Omar: Hurry up! We don't want to miss it!

Alpa: I'm coming! Wait for me!

Omar: Come on everyone! Mum! Dad!

Alpa: Are you sure it's coming this way?

Omar: I'm positive. Everybody! Hurry up – it's coming!

Ali comes out of a house slowly, holding a piece of bread.

Ali: Whatever is it, Omar? This had better be good – I was eating my dinner!

Alpa: *(out of breath)* It's an elephant! Everybody – come and see it... an elephant!

A small group of villagers enters. Last of all comes a group of six blind men, all walking slowly, with their canes.

Blind man 1: I don't know what an elephant looks like.

Blind man 2: Me neither.

Blind man 3: (*sighing*) Me neither. And I don't suppose I ever will.

Blind man 4: I would like to know what an elephant looks like.

Blind man 5: Let's wait here, so we can touch it.

Blind man 6: We'll touch it with our own hands. Our fingers are our eyes.

Blind man 5: That's right. This is a great chance for us.

Blind man 3: As I thought, nothing ever happens here. (*starting to turn back*)

The last time anyone new came to our village was last summer. And he was a stranger who'd lost his way. Let's go back home.

Blind man 5: No – wait! There's someone or something, very heavy, coming this way!

Blind man 6: An elephant! Just imagine. My goodness, we've never had an elephant come through our village before, ever. Is it coming, Ali?

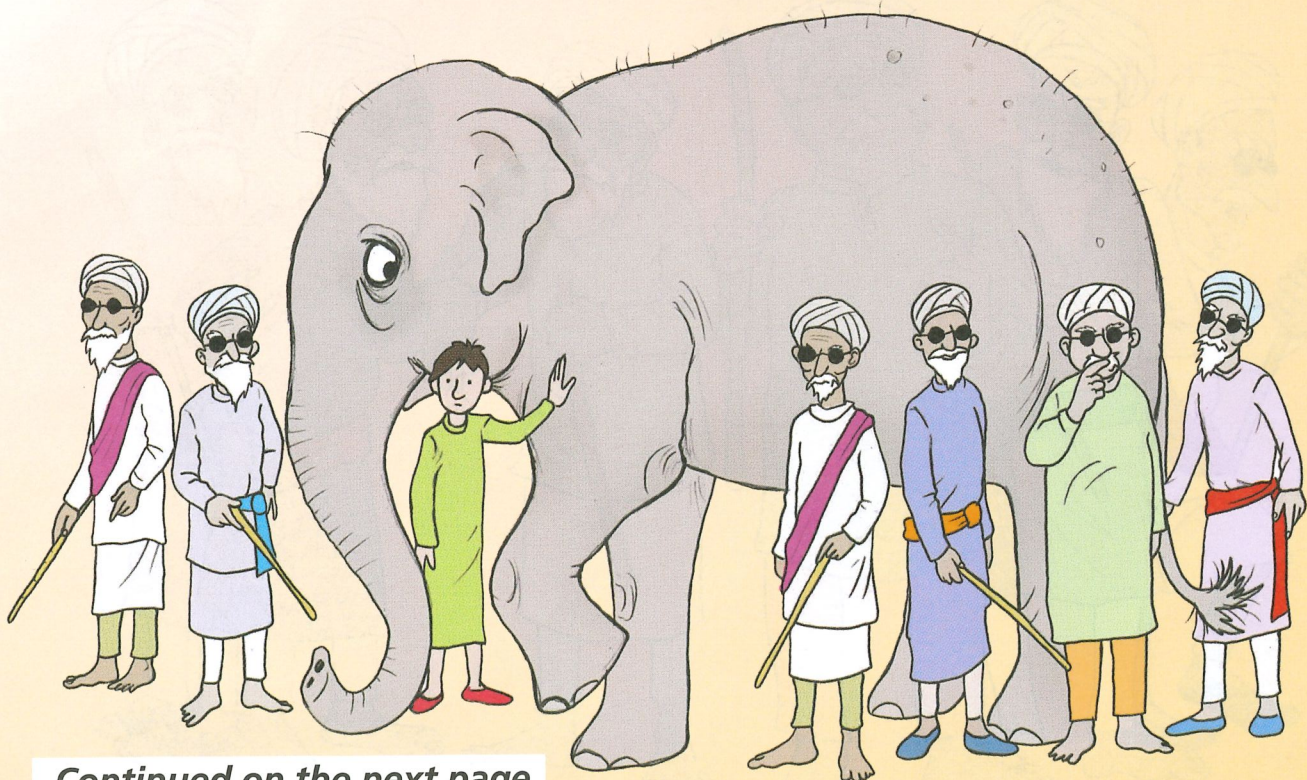
Ali: Yes, grandad. And it is an elephant! With its keeper. Wow! It's enormous!

Elephant keeper: (*enters with the elephant*) Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen.

Mind yourselves... this elephant needs to walk through here. Careful now, gentlemen. He's very big.

Blind man 1: (*walking towards the elephant keeper*) Good man, please let these poor blind men touch your elephant. We want to know what an elephant looks like.

Elephant keeper: OK. Walk towards me. Steady on... one at a time. Right now – you – the oldest – step forward a little more... he's not dangerous. Give me your hand.



Continued on the next page

Blind man 1: (*touches the elephant's body*) Mmmm, I see. The elephant is like a rough wall.

Blind man 2: (*touches the elephant's leg*) No, you're quite wrong. The elephant is like a tree.

Blind man 3: (*touches the elephant's tusk*) That's a lie, that's a lie! My hands tell me clearly that the elephant is like... a spear.

Blind man 4: (*touches the elephant's ear*) You're all completely wrong. I also touched it and I am sure that it's like a hand fan, and my fingers don't lie to me.

Blind man 5: (*touches the elephant's trunk*) Well... I think the elephant looks like a snake.

Blind man 6: (*touches the elephant's tail*) None of you knows what you're talking about! I think the elephant looks like a piece of rope.

Blind man 1: How do you dare to insult me? I'm sure that it looks like a wall.

Blind man 2: I'm telling you that it looks like a tree.

Blind man 5: No, it's like a snake. \

Blind man 3: (*poking Blind man 5 with his cane*) Snake? Not at all! I'm sure it looks like a spear.

Blind man 4: Well, that's not true. I know for a fact it looks like a hand fan.

Blind man 6: (*waving his cane above his head*) It's a rope! It's a rope!

The blind men start fighting with each other. There's great confusion and everybody is talking at the same time.

Blind men 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6: No one will say that I am wrong... take this! Ouch, ouch... but I'm right... it's a rope... it's a wall... it's a spear... no, I'm telling you that it's a hand fan... a tree, it's a tree... who hit me? Ouch, my back!



Elephant keeper: Calm down, calm down! Be quiet! Listen... listen... I'll explain everything.
Some of the villagers and Ali hold the men back and calm them down. There's silence on stage.

Blind men 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6: Why?... Why? How can you explain this?

Elephant keeper: *(gets onto the elephant)* Because each of you only touched a part of the elephant. The one who touched the body thought it was a wall. The one who touched the leg thought it was a tree. The one who touched the tusk imagined a spear. The one who felt the ear thought it was a hand fan. The one who touched the trunk remembered the snake, and the shortest one, you who could only reach the tail, was sure that the elephant was like a rope.

Blind man 5: *(slowly)* Now I understand. Yes, that's what happened and we all got angry.

Elephant keeper: You got so angry that you started fighting with each other.

Blind man 1: We behaved like fools.

Blind man 2: We were wrong.

Blind man 3: We all got so furious!

Blind man 4: Because we all thought we were right.

Blind man 5: But none of us was.

Blind man 6: *(shaking his head)* Instead of trying to understand...

Elephant keeper: Of course, to know the truth we have to know every part.

The elephant and the elephant keeper leave. The blind men wave farewell before turning to go back home.

NEW ENERGY

Why do we need it?

Once, all our energy came from the sun or from fire. Today, we use far more energy from many different sources than we have ever used in the past. This creates a huge challenge because the main sources we rely on – oil, gas and coal – will all eventually run out.

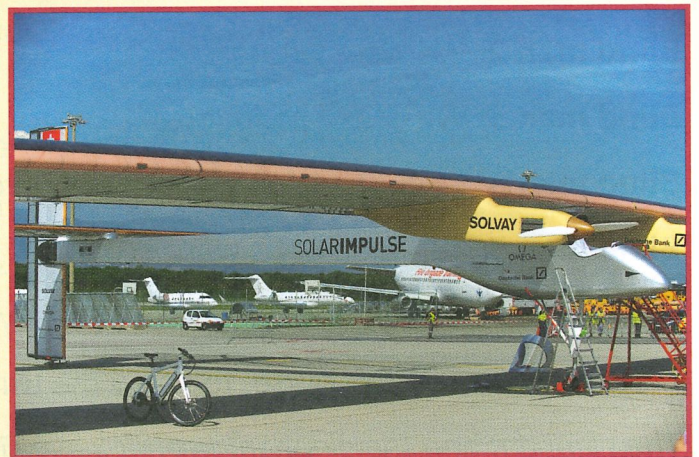
There is another reason why we need new energy resources. The gas created by burning carbon-based fuels (carbon monoxide) is building up in the atmosphere and gradually making the Earth warmer. Without cleaner sources of energy, carbon monoxide will increase. Some way must be found to feed our need for energy without permanent damage to the world we live in. Developing new, clean, sustainable sources of energy is the only way to do that.

Solar power

Energy from the sun is plentiful and free. Trees use their leaves to collect the sun's energy; the human versions of leaves are solar panels. Solar panels use the sun's heat to warm water or to operate batteries that convert sunshine directly into electricity. But these panels are expensive to make and to maintain.

Solar-powered hotel

All over the world, people are making use of solar power. In the Himalayas, in Nepal, where there is a lot of sun, there is a hotel that runs on solar power alone. Nepal also has little to no pollution that might block the sun's rays.



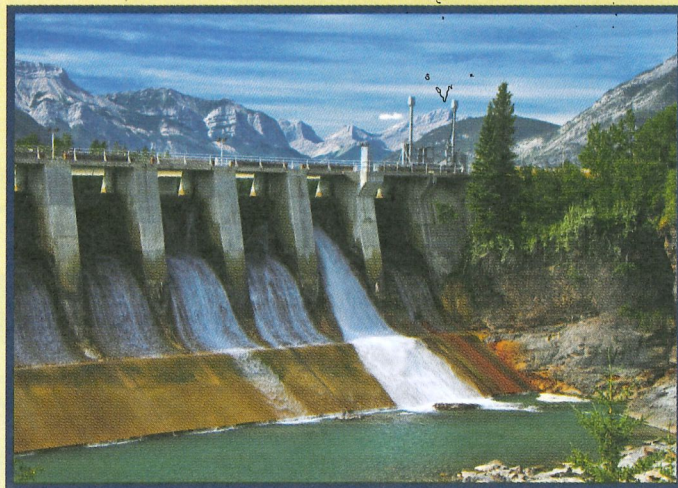
Solar-powered aeroplanes

Solar cells on the surface of the wings and tail of a light aircraft can create enough electricity to drive a propeller and keep the plane in the air – so long as the sun is shining. One recent invention is *Solar Impulse* – a plane which has set plenty of world records. It carries 17,000 solar cells on its wings, and can fly both during the day and at night, using the power it has stored in the day. Its aim is to fly around the world – a journey in several stages which will take years to accomplish.

Water power

Rivers and streams have been used to drive water wheels for more than a thousand years.

Today, schemes use dams to block the flow of water and make vast lakes. The water is allowed to escape down tunnels to drive turbines, which generate electricity. The fuel (water) is free, but constructing the dam is usually very expensive. Large expanses of countryside have to be flooded to create the storage lakes. This means moving thousands of people from their homes and destroying enormous areas of farmland.



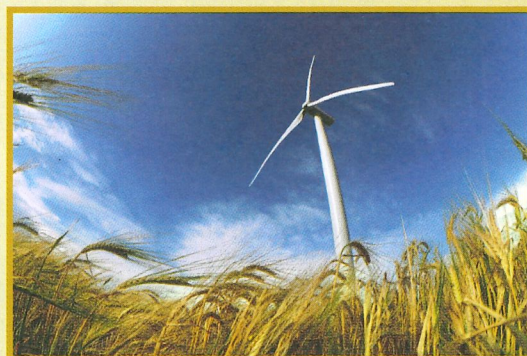
Q: Why aren't more wind turbines being built inland when they use wind that costs nothing at all?

A: The windiest places are usually remote and beautiful. Protestors say these areas should not be spoiled by having hundreds of machines planted on them.

Wind power

The first windmills were built centuries ago and were used to mill corn in Europe until the 20th century. Now wind power is making a comeback, in the form of large wind turbines with blades like those on an aircraft propeller.

Shallow water offshore is a good place to put turbines, as the wind there is often strong. There are plans to build the world's largest windfarm in the UK, off the Yorkshire coast. When finished, it will cover 500 square kilometres. It is expected to cost £8 billion, and will be able to power nearly two million homes!



Longshots

Lots of other ideas for producing energy have been tried, and some may make an important contribution in the future – although some do sound rather bizarre. Who knows? One day we may be using sugar to power our mobile phones, bacteria to fuel our cars, or vibrations from the dance floor to heat a building.