

## Unit 4: The reader's point of view

### Seeing things

#### **Task 1**

In this task you will:

- weigh up pros and cons of different opinions
- describe or depict ideas in ways that can be understood by others.



### The Blind Men and the Elephant

It was six men of Hindostan,  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind);  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
'Bless me, it seems the Elephant  
Is very like a wall.'

The Second, feeling of his tusk,  
Cried, 'Ho! What have we here  
So very round and smooth and  
sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear.'

The Third approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his  
hands,  
Then boldly up and spake:  
'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant  
Is very like a snake.'

The Fourth stretched out his eager  
hand  
And felt about the knee,  
'What most this mighty beast is like  
Is mighty plain,' quoth he;  
'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree.'

The Fifth who chanced to touch the  
ear  
Said: 'Even the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a fan.'

The Sixth no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope  
Than, seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope,  
'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant  
Is very like a rope.'

And so these men of Hindostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each of his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong.

*John Godfrey Saxe*

- 1 In pairs, **list** the six things the blind men thought the elephant was.
- 2 What does the poet mean when he says the following?  
'Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong.'
- 3 Does it matter how we approach things?