ENGLISH
Reading & Literature
Class VII

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Thimphu

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This book is compiled and printed for educational purposes exclusively for schools in Bhutan.

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Foreword

Following the advent of modern education in the country, the English language has been given an important place along with Dzongkha, the national language. English has, in fact, been the language of instruction for many school subjects, and it has served our purpose well even outside the curriculum.

The emphasis of the English curriculum is on the improvement of language skills of students, on literature studies written in the contemporary English language, the inclusion of non-fiction writing and changes in the approach to the assessment of students' performance. The curriculum also demands a change in the way in which students are taught, specifically a movement away from the teacher-centred classroom to a gender-sensitive, student-centred learning environment. This means that the teacher is responsible for designing activities that promote active learning while the students play a greater role in their own learning. The teacher will act as a facilitator to allow students to explore and create knowledge.

The selection of texts represents a conscious and rigorous effort to bring to our classrooms an assortment of rich and varied literary experiences presented through different genres which celebrate the dignity of content and the beauty of language.

The plans put forward in the curriculum offer a balanced programme with adequate instructional time to develop the skills in each strand of Reading & Literature, Writing, Listening and Speaking and Language. The goal is to provide adequate time to learn these skills so that students are able to communicate with eloquence and receive the communication of others with respect and clarity.

The Ministry of Education and Skills Development hopes that the English Curriculum will open the doors to new opportunities for our students to improve their English language skills. The learning programmes in the curriculum will ensure that they will acquire the knowledge to continue higher studies and the skills they require to become competent communicators – in reading, writing, listening and speaking as required in the workplace and society.

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the teachers and teacher-educators to the development of the curriculum.

Tashi Delek.

Karma Galay
Director General

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Foreword to Reading & Literature

"I am part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravl'd world, whose margin
Fades for ever and for ever when I move."

- "*Ulysses", Alfred Lord Tennyson*

Like Ulysses, when we read, we become travellers through worlds whose horizons beckon and entice us farther and farther into realms beyond our own daily experiences. We travel from our own world to different places and times, go to a universe beyond our own, a universe in which we meet people who hold ideas and beliefs which confirm, challenge, and elaborate what we know, understand and believe.

Reading is the key to unlocking the vault of the wisdom of the race. To read well is to be in contact with those who have gone before us, who have discovered what it is to be human and the best ways to organise themselves to achieve happiness.

We do not always read for such exalted reasons. Reading is also something we use to do everyday things at work or at home: things like shopping, reading mail, getting information on topics of interest and getting instructions on how to do things or put things together. We also read to learn the ideas of others on more abstract issues like political thought or religious beliefs. We read for pleasure and to pass the time. Sometimes we read our favourite authors simply because we like to read their works. Whatever the reasons we have for reading, it is making meaning with text in an interactive process that engages the reader, the writer, and the text in a dialogue about the subject of the piece.

Engaging in the dialogue begins when the reader tries to be clear about what the writer or his/her characters are saying and doing. Frequently, once that has been achieved and is clear, the reader does not want to go further. The knowledge of what has been read is enough. But just as frequently, readers want to move beyond the simple knowledge of a book to levels of dialogue, which engage them, the writer, and the text in negotiations about the significance of what has been said or enacted in the piece. It is in this kind of dialogue that the focus shifts from the surface knowledge of the text to attempts to comprehend what has been read at more profound levels, to delight in possible interpretations, to analyse how the writer achieves the cogency of the piece, and ultimately, the evaluation of the beauty and the validity of what has been said.

Whatever the level of the dialogue, the readers bring to the table not only their knowledge of the text under study, but also their experiences with other texts, the experiences they have had in real life or have imagined, and quite likely, sets of beliefs that challenge the point of view of the writer. Students need to be taught the strategies to read in these ways. And they need time to participate in activities which are planned by the teachers to allow them to practise the strategies.

The literature in the syllabus provides the material to teach students how to read, while at the same time permitting them to read some of the best literature available in English. Students have to learn how to make meaning by themselves and to appreciate what it means to have met some of the best writers and their works in the course of their studies. If we can build classroom communities where that can be arranged, then, like Ulysses, our readers will be drawn to travel through new worlds of experience whose horizons keep expanding.

Standards for Reading & Literature for Key Stage III (Class VII – VIII)

1. Read fluently and demonstrate comprehension of grade – appropriate texts with challenging themes and vocabulary from a variety of texts (fiction and non-fiction).
2. View and demonstrate comprehension of visual texts with complex ideas and specialized features (e.g., websites, reference books, magazines).
3. Use a variety of strategies to construct and confirm meaning, and evaluate texts in different media and technologies.
4. Understand and derive meaning from the structures and features of a range of texts.
5. Read academic articles to garner information and ideas.
6. Analyse how an author's choices of text structure create effects such as mystery, tension, and surprise.
7. Read relevant major literary works from Bhutan and other countries to reflect on the cultural and fundamental values like Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

Learning Objective for Reading & Literature

Sl No	Learning Objectives	Core Concepts/Topics	Essential Skills
1	Use appropriate reading strategies and skills developed in earlier classes to comprehend the texts.	Building on prior knowledge, concepts, and skills	**Language and literacy Skills**. • Identify, infer, and analyse the contents of a text • Use features of texts (lyrics and ballads) to enhance comprehension • Use of precise words to convey meanings aptly. • Infer meanings at different levels of understanding – literal and figurative • Analyse the emotive effects of poetry • Read critically to analyse and use information from non-fiction texts for further learning • Use the knowledge of the use of appropriate language and format for formal written communication • Use skimming and scanning skills to gather required information quickly • Use critical reading strategies to enhance knowledge of language • Use reading process to grow as readers for life-long learning **Social, behavioural, and affective skills:** • internalizing and making text-to-life connections • Empathy **Note**: Teachers should identify additional appropriate skills based on the lesson plans and learning activities.
2	Recognize denotative and connotative meanings of words in texts.	The different levels of meanings that words carry at different contexts.	
3	Employ the features of biography of worthy personalities to make meaning in their reading	Biography as a separate genre of literature	
4	Identify the features of the modern lyric and traditional ballad.	Lyrics and ballads specific types of poems	
5	Recognize the music in poetry achieved by rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration.	Definition of rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration	
6	Read poetry and discuss the emotions evoked in the reader by the language of poems.	Understanding poems at different levels of meaning	
7	Build vocabulary and use pronunciation skills to pronounce new words correctly.	Words and their correct pronunciation	
8	Read and recognize the difference between literal and figurative language in the texts.	Language can be used to convey different meanings from what is stated	
9	Make text to life connections.	Internalizing what is read	
10	Read critically about issues in the national and international community (non-fiction texts, newspapers, magazines, and technology assisted sources) and discuss how these issues relate to them.	Summarization and Information transfer	
11	Use the dictionary and other sources to find the meaning and use of idiomatic expressions.	Using multimedia for learning	
12	Read various kinds of formal writing – business letters, reports, applications, and invitations and know their different purposes.	Understanding the different types and formats for formal communications	
13	Apply skimming and scanning techniques where appropriate to gather information.	Applying skimming and scanning skills	
14	Apply close and critical reading and viewing skills to enhance their understanding of how lexical and grammatical items are used in context.	Using different reading strategies	
15	Read and view widely, at least 40 pieces of literature, for pleasure to demonstrate independent reading and learning in content area.	Sustained reading	

SHORT STORIES

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1. The Girl Who Couldn't See Herself – *Leena Dhingra*

Genre: *Short Story (Issue Driven)*

Rationale:

Have people ever looked 'through' you as if you weren't even there? Have you ever made a purchase when the store keeper simply took your money and handed you the item without acknowledging you in any way? This happens to all of us – sometimes in markets, on the streets, or even at school. Many of us begin to feel invisible as if the world doesn't realise that we even exist! At the beginning of this unit you were asked to consider your reflection in a mirror. Imagine if the only image you saw was nothing but a blur! A confusing shape that was abstract and meaningless. Read about someone who can't quite make out who she is and see if you share any of these same feelings.

Once upon a time there was a girl who couldn't see herself very clearly, and so she kept stumbling and losing herself all the time. For, since she couldn't see herself, she didn't know what she was, or where she fitted in, or how she should behave.

She decided to do something about it and went and bought herself a large mirror and put it up in her room. But when she looked at herself in it, all she saw was a blur. This was most confusing. She turned away from the mirror and sat down to think about it, and then, through the corner of her eye, she caught a reflection of herself in the mirror, but when she turned to see what it was, all that faced her was the same blur. This confused her even more.

She put on her coat, went out and walked down the street, but nobody seemed to notice her. Even in the shop, the cashier simply looked at the goods in the basket, took the note and placed the change on the counter. The girl started to wonder if, maybe, she was invisible, and so, on her way home, she walked right in the middle of the pavement to see what would happen. People gave way to her, some even grumbled as they almost bumped into her, but she returned home feeling reassured that, at least, she wasn't invisible.

"Really, this is most strange," she thought. "Why is it that others can see me and I can't see myself?" Then she had an idea. "Of course," she said to herself. "What I'll do is to ask someone to tell me who and what I am, and then I'll know..."

"You are a round soft ball," said the first person she asked. "And what you should do is bounce and simply roll along." So off went the girl, bouncing away and rolling along until she landed — ploof —into the gutter. She managed to crawl out and dragged herself home.

"No, no, no, no, no!" said the next person. "You are a square box. Firm and hard

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with sharp corners. You stand square and straight like other boxes." So, trying to make herself as boxish as she could, she went off to join the other square boxes. She tried to smile and stand as firmly and squarely as she could, but she was so dented and bruised that she didn't even appear like a straight, firm square box any more.

The next person told her that she was quite definitely a triangle! There was no doubt about it and she should just balance herself on her tip like a spinning-top. She tried that, and it felt lovely. So she spun away round and round and round until she got so dizzy that she lost herself completely. She returned home, feeling sad and lonely. She looked at the blur in the mirror, and no longer knew what to do.

Outside the sun was shining and she decided to go for a walk in the park. "If I were a tree, I could just grow. If I were a sun, I could simply shine. If I were a bench, I could just wait. But since I don't know what I am, how can I know what I'm supposed to do? With these thoughts she sat down wearily on the bench and looked around her at people spinning, standing square, bouncing, jumping and flying about. She felt so sorry for herself that she started to cry, and didn't notice that someone else had come to sit on the same bench.

"Isn't it a beautiful day!" said the someone. She stopped crying and turned to find a woman sitting beside her. She had a quiet face and smiled a wonderful smile. She smiled back at her, and her own smile warmed her heart and felt so right. The sun shone, the wind blew gently, fluttering the leaves on the tree, and the bench felt still and comforting. Her smile grew.

"You have a beautiful smile!" said the woman. "Thank you," replied the girl.

The woman laughed. "Why do you thank me?" she said. "You should thank yourself. Thank the sun, thank the tree, thank life..." She continued looking around her.

She suddenly felt very happy and joined the laughter. "Okay, then, I'll thank them all and thank you, too."

"All right," said the woman. "If you thank them all, then you may thank me, too."

They sat for a while in a comfortable silence, and then the woman got up to go. As she was leaving she said to the girl, "Treasure your smile... and be happy" and she walked away with a light step. The girl stayed on the silent bench, glowing in the warmth of the woman's smile. She looked around her and it seemed as though everything smiled; the sun, the tree, the people, even the wind.

She walked home feeling light. In her room she turned to the mirror and saw the same blur — but also a smile...

"What a beautiful smile," she said out loud, and then, as she looked at the smile, a light outline started to emerge around the blur...

Make connections

1. Does the mirror reflect exactly what the girl is?
2. Her image on the mirror was blurred and even out in the street she seemed non-existent. What is the author trying to say?
3. What did the girl do to see her own self?
4. Was she happy with what she heard from other people? Why?
5. The people have referred to her as being all sorts of shapes and sizes. What do you think the author is trying to say?
6. In what ways is this a story of self-discovery?

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2. Thank You, Ma'am - *Langston Hughes*

Genre: *Short Story*

Rationale:

People often make judgements about other people's characters without considering the stimulus of people's actions.

Thank You, Ma'am is a simple story that revolves around a lady and a young boy on a single event. Contrary to how others would react at being a victim of an attempted robbery, the character in the story behaves differently. Told in a straight chronological order with ample use of dialogue and colloquial expressions, students will easily relate to the events and characters of the story. Virtues of empathy, kindness, and the significance of giving second chance, where needed, stand out in the story.

She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. The strap broke with the single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy's weight and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance so, intsead of taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk, and his legs flew up. The large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue-jeaned sitter. Then she reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth rattled.

After that the woman said, "Pick up my pocketbook, boy, and give it here." She still held him. But she bent down enough to permit him to stoop and pick up her purse. Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm." The woman said, "What did you want to do it for?" The boy said, "I didn't aim to."

She said, "You a lie!"
By that time two or three people passed, stopped, turned to look, and some stood watching. "If I turn you loose, will you run?" asked the woman.

"Yes'm," said the boy.

"Then I won't turn you loose," said the woman. She did not release him.

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"I'm very sorry, lady, I'm sorry," whispered the boy.

"Um-hum! And your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face?"

"No'm," said the boy.

"Then it will get washed this evening," said the large woman starting up the street, dragging the frightened boy behind her.

He looked as if he were fourteen or fifteen, frail and willow-wild, in tennis shoes and blue jeans.

The woman said, "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?"

"No'm," said the being dragged boy. "I just want you to turn me loose." "Was I bothering you when I turned that corner?" asked the woman. "No'm."

"But you put yourself in contact with me," said the woman. "If you think that contact is not going to last awhile, you got another thought coming. When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones."

Sweat popped out on the boy's face and he began to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerked him around in front of her, put a half-nelson about his neck, and continued to drag him up the street. When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large kitchenette- furnished room at the rear of the house. She switched on the light and left the door open. The boy could hear other roomers laughing and talking in the large house. Some of their doors were open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone. The woman still had him by the neck in the middle of her room.

She said, "What is your name?"

"Roger," answered the boy.

"Then, Roger, you go to that sink and wash your face," said the woman, whereupon she turned him loose—at last. Roger looked at the door—looked at the woman—looked at the door—and went to the sink.

Let the water run until it gets warm," she said. "Here's a clean towel."

"You gonna take me to jail?" asked the boy, bending over the sink.

"Not with that face, I would not take you nowhere," said the woman. "Here I am trying

to get home to cook me a bite to eat and you snatch my pocketbook! Maybe, you ain't been to your supper either, late as it be. Have you?"

"There's nobody home at my house," said the boy.

"Then we'll eat," said the woman, "I believe you're hungry—or been hungry—to try to snatch my pockekbook." "I wanted a pair of blue suede shoes," said the boy.

"Well, you didn't have to snatch my pocketbook to get some suede shoes," said Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. "You could of asked me."

"M'am?" The water dripping from his face, the boy looked at her. There was a long pause. A very long pause. After he had dried his face and not knowing what else to do dried it again, the boy turned around, wondering what next. The door was open. He could make a dash for it down the hall. He could run, run, run, run, run!

The woman was sitting on the day-bed. After a while she said, "I were young once and I wanted things I could not get." There was another long pause. The boy's mouth opened. Then he frowned, but not knowing he frowned.

The woman said, "Um-hum! You thought I was going to say but, didn't you? You thought I was going to say, but I didn't snatch people's pocketbooks. Well, I wasn't going to say that." Pause. Silence. "I have done things, too, which I would not tell you, son—neither tell God, if he didn't already know. So you set down while I fix us something to eat. You might run that comb through your hair so you will look presentable."

In another corner of the room behind a screen was a gas plate and an icebox. Mrs. Jones got up and went behind the screen. The woman did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now, nor did she watch her purse which she left behind her on the day-bed. But the boy took care to sit on the far side of the room where he thought she could easily see him out of the corner of her eye, if she wanted to. He did not trust the woman not to trust him. And he did not want to be mistrusted now.

"Do you need somebody to go to the store," asked the boy, "maybe to get some milk or something?"

"Don't believe I do," said the woman, "unless you just want sweet milk yourself. I was going to make cocoa out of this canned milk I got here."

"That will be fine," said the boy.

She heated some lima beans and ham she had in the icebox, made the cocoa, and set

the table. The woman did not ask the boy anything about where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that would embarrass him. Instead, as they ate, she told him about her job in a hotel beauty-shop that stayed open late, what the work was like, and how all kinds of women came in and out, blondes, red-heads, and Spanish. Then she cut him a half of her ten-cent cake.

"Eat some more, son," she said.

When they were finished eating she got up and said, "Now, here, take this ten dollars and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto my pocketbook nor nobody else's—because shoes come by devilish like that will burn your feet. I got to get my rest now. But I wish you would behave yourself, son, from here on in."

She led him down the hall to the front door and opened it. "Good-night! Behave yourself, boy!" she said, looking out into the street.

The boy wanted to say something else other than "Thank you, m'am" to Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones, but he couldn't do so as he turned at the barren stoop and looked back at the large woman in the door. He barely managed to say "Thank you" before she shut the door. And he never saw her again.

About the Author:

Langston Hughes was an American poet and writer born in 1901. He was one of the early leaders of jazz poetry. He often wrote about his experiences as an African-American and was the leading figure in the Harlem Renaissance. Hughes passed away in 1967, at 66 years old.

Make Connections

1. Why did Roger attempt to steal Mrs. Jones' pocketbook?
2. "... shoes got by devilish ways will burn your feet." What did Mrs. Jones mean by this?
3. At the end of the story "The boy wanted to say something else other than, 'Thank you, Ma'am,' to Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones, but... he couldn't even say that. "What else besides "thank you" do you think Roger wanted to say to Mrs. Jones? Explain.
4. Why do you think Roger doesn't run away when he had a chance while washing his face at Mrs Jones' house?
5. Do you think Roger will change after meeting Mrs. Jones? Why?
6. Does Mrs. Jones remind you of someone you know? How?
7. From what point of view is the story told?
8. Which character's characteristic is the most striking to you? Why?
9. Conflict in a story is a struggle between two opposing forces. Conflicts can be internal, a struggle within a person's conscience, or external, between individuals, groups, or even the environment and nature. What conflicts do you see the story? What is the solution for each?

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3. One Day A Stranger Came - *Naomi Wakan*

Genre: *Short Story*

Rationale:

Rules are a necessary part of our communities, they outline the way that things are or should be done. They tell us what we can and cannot do. Rules can be good things but sometimes they can change how we live and how we see our world. Here is a short story that asks us to think about what happens when new rules enter our lives.

> ***Think about your experiences***
> *Have you ever had rules or expectations placed upon you that you felt were unfair? How did you feel? What did you do? As you read, find out how these families designed solutions to help them follow rules that they felt were unfair.*

Once upon a time there were three friends, John, Ivan, and Giovanni. Their farms all butted up to each other like this.

Their lands had been worked by their families for many generations. Each farm had a farmhouse, a barn, and a chicken run, but they all shared the water, which came down from the mountains in a winding brook. They also shared a duck pond. "How could they share a duck pond?" you will ask. Well, if you think about it, sharing things isn't that difficult.

"Spring is here," the children would shout, when the snow had melted and the soil had warmed up, and John, Ivan, and Giovanni ploughed their fields. Their wives, Sally, Helen, and Rosi, sowed the vegetable and herb gardens near their farmhouses. When the planting was done, all the families sat down to a big party and everyone wished for a good year's harvest.

As spring turned to summer, the children weeded the fields. When the corn was ready, everyone helped harvest it. When fall came around, the families harvested potatoes and later carrots and onions, so that by winter everyone had a good store of food. They all joined in preparing corn roasts, preserving, and, best of all, Thanksgiving dinner. In fact, any event on the farms turned into a party since the families enjoyed being together so much.

In winter the snow was too deep for the children to go to school, so they went to each farm in turn. At John and Sally's the children learned to make baskets and hats using

rushes from the edge of the duck pond. Helen taught them how to spin and weave using wool from the family's sheep. And Rosi showed the children how to make pottery using clay from the banks of the brook that flowed into the pond.

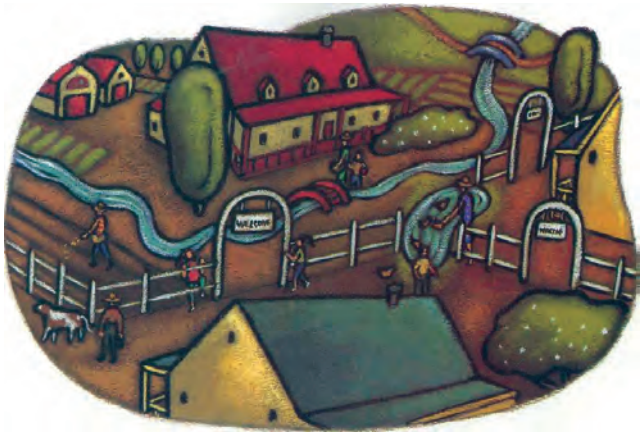
"Times are good," said the friends, "how fortunate we are!" But when bad luck did come around, such as when Rosi and Giovanni's youngest child lay in bed very pale and silent for many days, that was when the families helped each other a lot.

One day in early spring, when the men were having lunch down by the duck pond, an important-looking stranger rode up on a horse. He handed each of them a notice, and he announced that Berland, Monland, and Talland had decided to make their boundaries very clear in order to stop the fighting between their countries. John and Ivan and Giovanni looked bewildered. "What fighting?" they wondered. They had been friends for so long that they had completely forgotten that each of their farms was in a different country.

"That means," said the stranger, in a serious and solemn voice, "that because you each live in a different country, you must look at this map and build fences to mark the boundaries."

John, Ivan, and Giovanni scratched their heads and were very upset.

"But how can we divide the brook that we share?" they all said together. "That's for you to figure out," the stranger said in a severe voice. Then he turned his horse and galloped off.



John, Ivan, and Giovanni called their families together to announce the bad news. Everyone cried.

"Let's just not do it," said the children, but their parents were worried. Eventually Rosi spoke up and said as cheerfully as she could, "We've stood together through good times and bad times and this is not going to part us. We have to make fences, but we can put gates in, can't we? That way we can visit as usual."

They helped each other make the fences and everyone built big gates in each fence. Sally, with her beautiful handwriting, painted "Welcome" on each sign. Then she hung

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a sign over each family's gate. Now they still visited and helped one another, although maybe just a bit less than before.

Later that year, the stranger returned to inspect the fences. He was fairly satisfied with what the families had done, but he had some new rules to announce.

"Each of your countries has its own form of education," he began pompously. "Since the children live so far from the schools, and they cannot attend during the winter, each family will be sent lessons, and because each country has its own lessons, the children must study separately."

"This will make things more difficult for the children," said John to the stranger. "When they learn together, they help each other out..."

"That idea is of no consequence to the authorities," said the stranger, unmoved. "These are the rules and you had better follow them." And before anyone could move, he was gone.

"Let's study together anyway," said the children. But the parents were too worried to let them.

That winter was certainly different from others. Susan and Tom studied in their own home, as did Dimitri and Sonya, and Guido and Alberto. Soon the children were playing on their own, too. Having to go through gates seemed to make everything different. For the first time that anyone could remember, the families' holiday party was not so joyous. Everyone tried hard to have a good time, but they remembered the fences dividing their farms, and things just weren't the same.

In spring, when the snow started to melt, the stranger came to discuss the watering of the fields. "Since the brook runs through Ivan's property," the stranger declared, 'John and Giovanni will have to pay money to him for using his water..." Ivan shook his fist in protest, but the stranger continued, "and Ivan will have to pay some of the money to his government." The families could hardly believe their ears when they heard the news, and Ivan felt very ashamed when his old friends came to pay him. For while there was always plenty of food on the farms, money was scarce.

That year the families didn't plant their crops together, nor did they weed together. They were all terribly upset that things had got to such a sad state. But they were also angry with themselves and each other because no one had done anything earlier. John and Sally said cross words to Ivan and Helen, and Ivan shouted at Giovanni and Rosi, who in turn called angrily across the fence to John and Sally.

How could old friends fight like this?

They were standing outside one afternoon, arguing, when suddenly Sonya appeared. She climbed up into the apple tree.

"Stop it," she called to everyone. "Stop fighting like that."

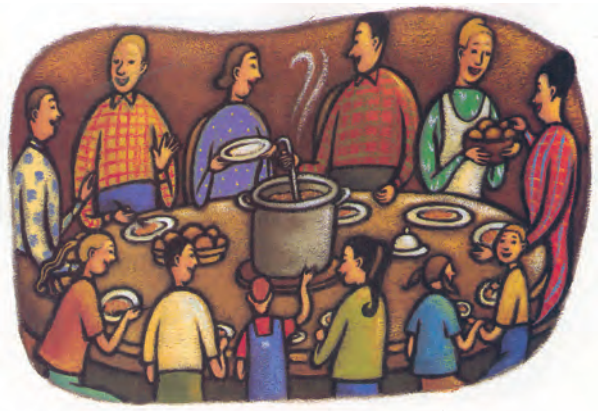
The families were very surprised, and they quieted down and listened to her.

"Don't you remember," she began, "don't you remember the great corn roasts we used to have? And when we all used to jump in the duck pond to cool off? And we had the best parties ... and I had lots of friends? Now no one plays with anyone else because the man from the government told us to put up these fences and not be friends. I hate it being like this and I want it to stop now!"

She stomped very hard on the branch and slipped. Everyone rushed forward to catch her.

Helen, her mother, took her in her arms and called out, "Neighbours, we have work to do, and there's no time to lose!"

They all followed Helen into the house and sat down around the large kitchen table, just like in the old days, and Ivan began:



"Well, Sonya is right for sure, because none of us like the fences that separate us ... and you all know how I feel about the money I have to take from you for the water...."

"Yes, yes," everyone nodded.

"The fences we can put up with, but you paying me for the water just doesn't feel right. It comes down from the mountain as a gift to all

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of us. Sometimes I wish we could stop it up there...."

"How about making it into a fountain at the bottom of the cliffs?" shouted Tom. "Then the water would splash and dribble all over the place and not just run through Ivan's land!" He threw his arms around, pretending to be a fountain.

"Well, how about that!" cried John, his face breaking into a smile.

The parents started to laugh, just in little embarrassed chuckles at first. It seemed as though it had been a long time since they had laughed together. Soon, the chuckles became giggles and hoots and they began to slap each other happily on the shoulders.

When silence finally settled, Rosi asked thoughtfully, "Would a fountain really work...?" "Well, now, it sounds a little wild," said Giovanni, "but who knows? Tom might have something there. Best thing is that we'll be working together again. That way we'll come up with an answer for sure. Tell you what though, we'd all think better with some food in front of us."

Everybody smiled and nodded in agreement.

Ivan sat down in the corner and started to write a letter to the authorities explaining that because the families wouldn't be using the brook as a source of water anymore, they wouldn't be paying any money in future.

Meanwhile everyone else began to help prepare a meal. They all felt like singing as they worked together and the children skipped and danced as they set the big table.

Then the three families sat down to eat, happy that they were friends once more, and they promised each other never to let fences come between them again.

Make connections

1. What two words can you use to describe the mood in the beginning of the story?
2. Which events or actions show that the three families lived like one big family?
3. What is the conflict in the story?
4. How does Sonya help in solving the conflict?
5. Write down some rules we have that do not promote happiness?
6. What lesson(s) does this short story teach you?
7. Which character did you like the best? Why?

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4. The Cherry Tree – *Ruskin Bond*

Genre: *Short Story*

Rationale:

Tree-ring dating, or dendrochronology, is the study of the chronological sequence of annual growth rings in trees. In other words, it's a way to find out how old an individual tree is (all you need to do is count the number of rings). Determining age is not quite that easy with human beings. We don't have anything to count with the exception of birthdays!

Perhaps, if you have lived in one place for a very long time, you have measured your growth with that of another living thing. Maybe you were born on or near the same date as a puppy, calf, or other domesticated animal near your home. Or maybe, just like the central character of this story, your growth is measured with that of a tree that was planted on or near your birthday. Read this simple story that parallels the growth of a boy with that of a cherry tree.

One day, when Rakesh was six, he walked home from the Mussoorie bazaar eating cherries. They were a little sweet, a little sour; small, bright red cherries, which had come all the way from the Kashmir Valley.

Here in the Himalayan foothills where Rakesh lived, there were not many fruit trees. The soil was stony, and the dry cold winds stunted the growth of most plants. But on the more sheltered slopes there were forests of oak and deodar.

Rakesh lived with his grandfather on the outskirts of Mussoorie, just where the forest began. His father and mother lived in a small village fifty miles away, where they grew maize and rice and barley in narrow terraced fields on the lower slopes of the mountain. But there were no schools in the village, and Rakesh's parents were keen that he should go to school. As soon as he was of school-going age, they sent him to stay with his grandfather in Mussoorie.

He had a little cottage outside the town.

Rakesh was on his way home from school when he bought the cherries. He paid fifty paise for the bunch. It took him about half-an-hour to walk home, and by the time he reached the cottage there were only three cherries left.
'Have a cherry, Grandfather,' he said, as soon as he saw his grandfather in the garden.

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Grandfather took one cherry and Rakesh promptly ate the other two. He kept the last seed in this mouth for some time, rolling it round and round on his tongue until the entire taste had gone. Then he placed the seed on the palm of his hand and studied it.

'Are cherry seeds lucky?' asked Rakesh.

'Of course.'
'Then I'll keep it.'

'Nothing is lucky if you put it away. If you want luck, you must put it to some use.

'What can I do with a seed?'

'Plant it.'

So Rakesh found a small space and began to dig up a flowerbed.

'Hey, not there,' said Grandfather. 'I've sown mustard in that bed. Plant it in that shady corner, where it won't be disturbed.'

Rakesh went to a corner of the garden where the earth was soft and yielding. He did not have to dig. He pressed the seed into the soil with his thumb and it went right in.

Then he had his lunch, and ran off to play cricket with his friends, and forgot all about the cherry seed.

When it was winter in the hills, a cold wind blew down from the snows and went whoo-whoo-whoo in the deodar trees, and the garden was dry and bare. In the evenings Grandfather and Rakesh sat over a charcoal fire, and Grandfather told Rakesh stories—stories about people who turned into animals, and ghosts who lived in trees, and beans that jumped and stones that wept—and in turn Rakesh would read to him from the newspaper, Grandfather's eyesight being rather weak. Rakesh found the newspaper very dull—especially after the stories—but Grandfather wanted all the news...
They knew it was spring when the wild duck flew north again, to Siberia. Early in the morning, when he got up to chop wood and light a fire, Rakesh saw the V-shaped formation

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streaming northward, the calls of the birds carrying clearly through the thin mountain air.

One morning in the garden he bent to pick up what he thought was a small twig and found to his surprise that it was well rooted. He stared at it for a moment, then ran to fetch Grandfather, calling, 'Dada, come and look, the cherry tree has come up!'

'What cherry tree?' asked Grandfather, who had forgotten about it. 'The seed we planted last year—look, it's come up!
Rakesh went down on his haunches, while Grandfather bent almost double and peered down at the tiny tree. It was about four inches high.

'Yes, it's a cherry tree,' said Grandfather. 'You should water it now and then.'

Rakesh ran indoors and came back with a bucket of water.

'Don't drown it!' said Grandfather.

Rakesh gave it a sprinkling and circled it with pebbles.

'What are the pebbles for?" asked Grandfather.

'For privacy,' said Rakesh.

He looked at the tree every morning but it did not seem to be growing very fast, So he stopped looking at it except quickly, out of the corner of his eye. And, after a week or two, when he allowed himself to look at it properly, he found that it had grown—at least an inch!

That year the monsoon rains came early and Rakesh plodded to and from school in raincoat and gumboots. Ferns sprang from the trunks of trees, strange-looking lilies came up in the long grass, and even when it wasn't raining the trees dripped and mist came curling up the valley. The cherry tree grew quickly in this season.

It was about two feet high when a goat entered the garden and ate all the leaves. Only the main stem and two thin branches remained.
'Never mind,' said Grandfather, seeing that Rakesh was upset. 'It will grow again, cherry trees are tough.'

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Towards the end of the rainy season new leaves appeared on the tree. Then a woman cutting grass scrambled down the hillside, her scythe swishing through the heavy monsoon foliage. She did not try to avoid the tree: one sweep and the cherry tree was cut in two.

When Grandfather saw what had happened, he went after the woman and scolded her; but the damage could not be repaired.

'Maybe it will die now,' said Rakesh.
'Maybe,' said Grandfather.
But the cherry tree had no intention of dying.

By the time summer came round again, it had sent out several new shoots with tender green leaves. Rakesh had grown taller too. He was eight now, a sturdy boy with curly black hair and deep black eyes. 'Blackberry eyes,' Grandfather called them.

That monsoon Rakesh went home to his village, to help his father and mother with the planting and ploughing and sowing. He was thinner but stronger when he came back to Grandfather's house at the end of the rain, to find that the cherry tree had grown another foot. It was now up to his chest.

Even when there was rain, Rakesh would sometimes water the tree. He wanted it to know that he was there.

One day he found a bright green praying-mantis perched on a branch, peering at him with bulging eyes. Rakesh let it remain there; it was the cherry tree's first visitor.

The next visitor was a hairy caterpillar, who started making a meal of the leaves. Rakesh removed it quickly and dropped it on a heap of dry leaves.

'Come back when you're a butterfly,' he said.

Winter came early. The cherry tree bent low with the weight of snow. Field-mice sought shelter in the roof of the cottage. The road from the valley was blocked, and for several days there was no newspaper, and this made Grandfather quite grumpy. His stories began to have unhappy endings.

In February it was Rakesh's birthday. He was nine—and the tree was four, but almost as tall as Rakesh.

One morning, when the sun came out, Grandfather came into the garden to 'let some warmth get into my bones,' as he put it. He stopped in front of the cherry tree, stared at it for a few moments, and then called out, 'Rakesh! Come and look! Come quickly before it falls!'

Rakesh and Grandfather gazed at the tree as though it had performed a miracle. There was a pale pink blossom at the end of a branch.

The following year there were more blossoms. And suddenly the tree was taller than Rakesh, even though it was less than half his age. And then it was taller than Grandfather, who was older than some of the oak trees.

But Rakesh had grown too. He could run and jump and climb trees as well as most boys, and he read a lot of books although he still liked listening to Grandfather's tales.

In the cherry tree; bees came to feed on the nectar in the blossoms, and tiny birds pecked at the blossoms and broke them off. But the tree kept blossoming right through the spring, and there were always more blossoms than birds.

That summer there were small cherries on the tree. Rakesh tasted one and spat it out.

'It's too sour,' he said.

'They'll be better next year,' said Grandfather.

But the birds liked them—especially the bigger birds such as the bulbuls and scarlet minivets—and they flitted in and out of the foliage, feasting on the cherries.

On a warm sunny afternoon, when even the bees looked sleepy, Rakesh was looking for Grandfather without finding him in any of his favourite places around the house. Then he looked out of the bedroom window and saw Grandfather reclining on a cane chair under the cherry tree.

'There's just the right amount of shade here,' said Grandfather. 'And I like looking at the leaves.'

'They're pretty leaves,' said Rakesh. 'And they are always ready to dance. If there's breeze.'

After Grandfather had come indoors, Rakesh went into the garden and lay down on the grass beneath the tree. He gazed up through the leaves at the great blue sky; and turning on his side, he could see the mountain striding away into the clouds. He was still lying beneath the tree when the evening shadows crept across the garden Grandfather came back and sat down beside Rakesh, and they waited in silence until the stars came out and the nightjar began to call. In the forest below, the crickets and cicadas began tuning up; and suddenly the trees were full of the sound of insects.

'There are so many trees in the forest,' said Rakesh. 'What's so special about this tree? Why do we like it so much?

'We planted it ourselves,' said Grandfather. That's why it's special.'

'Just one small seed,' said Rakesh, and he touched the smooth bark of the tree that had grown. He ran his hand along the trunk of the tree and put his finger to the tip of a leaf. 'I wonder,' he whispered. 'Is this what it feels to be God?'

Make connections

1. Who are the characters in the story?
2. How are they related? Why are they living together?
3. From where does the boy get the cherry?
4. What happens to the cherry seed at the end of the story? Does any character in this short story remind you of someone you know? Detail your answer with examples from the story.
5. Does any incident or action in this story remind you of your own life or something that happen to you?
6. In the conclusion of the story the boy says, 'I wonder . . . is this what it feels to be God?' Why do you think the boy makes this statement?
7. What similarities and differences do you find between the tree and the boy?
8. Do you like this story? Why or why not?

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SUPPLEMENTARY

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1. Charles - *Shirley Jackson*

Focus for Reading

Sometimes, family members do not know each other as well as they think they do. Read this story to find out what kind of boy Charles was and what happened when Charles' mother met his teacher.

The day my son Laurie started kindergarten he renounced corduroy overalls with bibs and began wearing blue jeans with a belt; I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended, my sweet-voiced nursery-school tot replaced by a long-trousered, swaggering character who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good-bye to me.

He came home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cap on the floor, and the voice suddenly become raucous shouting, "Isn't anybody *here?"*

At lunch he spoke insolently to his father, spilled his baby sister's milk, and remarked that his teacher said we were not to take the name of the Lord in vain.

"How *was* school today?" I asked, elaborately casual.

"All right," he said.

"Did you learn anything?" his father asked.

Laurie regarded his father coldly. "I didn't learn nothing," he said.

"Anything," I said. "Didn't learn anything."

"The teacher spanked a boy, though," Laurie said, addressing his bread and butter.

"For being fresh," he added, with his mouth full.

"What did he do?" I asked. "Who was it?"

Laurie thought. "It was Charles," he said. "He was fresh. The teacher spanked him and made him stand in a corner. He was awfully fresh."

"What did he do?" I asked again, but Laurie slid off his chair, took a cookie, and left, while his father was still saying, "See here, young man."

The next day Laurie remarked at lunch, as soon as he sat down, "Well, Charles was bad again today." He grinned enormously and said, "Today Charles hit the teacher."

"Good heavens," I said, mindful of the Lord's name, "I suppose he got spanked again?"

"He sure did," Laurie said. "Look up," he said to his father.

"What?" his father said, looking up.

"Look down," Laurie said. "Look at my thumb. Gee, you're dumb." He began to laugh insanely.

"Why did Charles hit the teacher?" I asked quickly.

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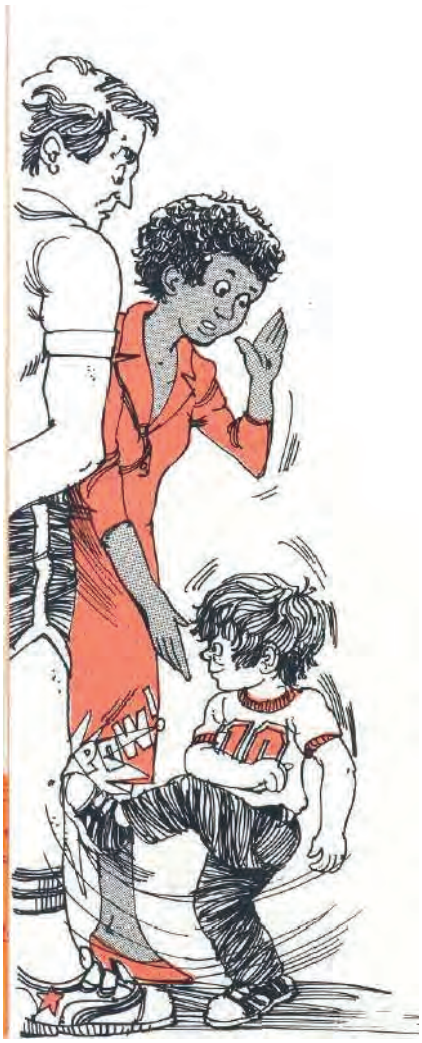
"Because she tried to make him color with red crayons," Laurie said. "Charles wanted to color with green crayons so he hit the teacher and she spanked him and said nobody play with Charles but everybody did."

The third day—it was Wednesday of the first week— Charles bounced a see-saw on to the head of a little girl and made her bleed, and the teacher made him stay inside all during recess. Thursday Charles had to stand in a corner during story-time because he kept pounding his feet on the floor. Friday Charles was deprived of blackboard privileges because he threw chalk.

On Saturday I remarked to my husband, "Do you think kindergarten is too unsettling for Laurie? All this toughness, and bad grammar, and this Charles boy sounds like such a bad influence."



"It'll be all right," my husband said reassuringly. "Bound to be people like Charles in the world. Might as well meet them now as later."

On Monday Laurie came home late, full of news. "Charles," he shouted as he came up the hill; I was waiting anxiously on the front steps. "Charles," Laurie yelled all the way up the hill, "Charles was bad again."

"Come right in," I said, as soon as he came close enough. "Lunch is waiting."

"You know what Charles did?" he demanded, following me through the door. "Charles yelled so in school they sent a boy in from first grade to tell the teacher she had to make Charles keep quiet, and so Charles had to stay after school. And so all the children stayed to watch him."

"What did he do?" I asked.

"He just sat there," Laurie said, climbing into his chair at the table. "Hi, Pop, y'old dust mop."

"Charles had to stay after school today," I told my husband. "Everyone stayed with him."

"What does this Charles look like?" my husband asked Laurie. "What's his other name?"

"He's bigger than me," Laurie said. "And he doesn't have any rubbers and he doesn't even wear a jacket."

Monday night was the first Parent-Teachers meeting, and only the fact that the baby

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had a cold kept me from going; I wanted passionately to meet Charles's mother. On Tuesday Laurie remarked suddenly, "Our teacher had a friend come to see her in school today."

"Charles's mother?" my husband and I asked simultaneously.

"Naaah," Laurie said scornfully. "It was a man who came and made us do exercises, we had to touch our toes. Look." He climbed down from his chair and squatted down and touched his toes. "Like this," he said. He got solemnly back into his chair and said, picking up his fork, "Charles didn't even *do* exercises."

"That's fine," I said heartily. "Didn't Charles want to do exercises?"

"Naaah," Laurie said. "Charles was so fresh to the teacher's friend he wasn't *let* do exercises."

"Fresh again?" I said.

"He kicked the teacher's friend," Laurie said. "The teacher's friend told Charles to touch his toes like I just did and Charles kicked him."

"What are they going to do about Charles, do you suppose?" Laurie's father asked him.

Laurie shrugged elaborately. "Throw him out of school, I guess," he said.

Wednesday and Thursday were routine; Charles yelled during story hour and hit a boy in the stomach and made him cry. On Friday Charles stayed after school again and so did all the other children.

With the third week of kindergarten Charles was an institution in our family; the baby was being a Charles when she cried all afternoon; Laurie did a Charles when he filled his wagon full of mud and pulled it through the kitchen; even my husband, when he caught his elbow in the telephone cord and pulled telephone, ashtray, and a bowl of flowers off the table, said, after the first minute, "Looks like Charles."

During the third and fourth weeks it looked like a reformation in Charles; Laurie reported grimly at lunch on Thursday of the third week, "Charles was so good today the teacher gave him an apple."

"What?" I said, and my husband added warily, "You mean Charles?"

"Charles," Laurie said. "He gave the crayons around and he picked up the books afterward and the teacher said he was her helper."

"What happened?" I asked incredulously.

"He was her helper, that's all," Laurie said, and shrugged.

"Can this be true, about Charles?" I asked my husband that night. "Can something like this happen?"

"Wait and see," my husband said cynically. "When you've got a Charles to deal with, this may mean he's only plotting."

He seemed to be wrong. For over a week Charles was the teacher's helper; each day

he handed things out and he picked things up; no one had to stay after school.

"The P.T.A. meeting's next week again," I told my husband one evening. "I'm going to find Charles's mother there."

"Ask her what happened to Charles," my husband said. "I'd like to know."

"I'd like to know myself," I said.

On Friday of that week things were back to normal. "You know what Charles did today?" Laurie demanded at the lunch table, in a voice slightly awed. "He told a little girl to say a word and she said it and the teacher washed her mouth out with soap and Charles laughed."

"What word?" his father asked unwisely, and Laurie said, "I'll have to whisper it to you, it's so bad." He got down off his chair and went around to his father. His father bent his head down and Laurie whispered joyfully. His father's eyes widened.

"Did Charles tell the little girl to say *that?"* he asked respectfully.

"She said it *twice?'* Laurie said. "Charles told her to say it *twice!'*

"What happened to Charles?" my husband asked.

"Nothing," Laurie said. "He was passing out the crayons."

Monday morning Charles abandoned the little girl and said the evil word himself three or four times, getting his mouth washed out with soap each time. He also threw chalk.

My husband came to the door with me that evening as I set out for the P.T.A. meeting.

"Invite her over for a cup of tea after the meeting," he said. "I want to get a look at her."

"If only she's there," I said prayerfully.

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"She'll be there," my husband said. "I don't see how they could hold a P.T.A. meeting without Charles's mother"

At the meeting I sat restlessly, scanning each comfortable matronly face, trying to determine which one hid the secret of Charles. None of them looked to me haggard enough. No one stood up in the meeting and apologized for the way her son had been acting. No one mentioned Charles.

After the meeting I identified and sought out Laurie's kindergarten teacher. She had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of chocolate cake; I had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of marshmallow cake. We manoeuvred up to one another cautiously, and smiled.

"I've been so anxious to meet you," I said. "I'm Laurie's mother."

"We're all so interested in Laurie," she said.

"Well, he certainly likes kindergarten," I said. "He talks about it all the time."

"We had a little trouble adjusting, the first week or so," she said primly, "but now he's a fine little helper. With occasional lapses, of course."

"Laurie usually adjusts quickly," I said. "I suppose this time it's Charles's influence".

"Charles?"

"Yes," I said, laughing, "you must have your hands full in that kindergarten, with Charles."

"Charles?" she said. "We don't have any Charles in the kindergarten."

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2. **The Blanket** - *Floyd Dell*

Petey hadn't really believed that Dad would be doing it—sending Granddad away. "Away" was what they were all calling it. Not until now could he believe it of Dad.

But here was the blanket that Dad had that day bought for him, and in the morning he'd be going away. And this was the last evening they'd be having together. Dad was off seeing that girl he was to marry. He'd not be back till late, and they could sit up and talk.

It was a fine September night, with a thin white moon riding high over the gully. When they'd washed up the supper dishes they went out on the shanty porch, the old man and the bit of a boy, taking their chairs. "I'll get me fiddle," said the old man, "and play ye some of the old tunes." But instead of the fiddle he brought out the blanket. It was a big double blanket, red, with black cross stripes.

"Now, isn't that a fine blanket!" said the old man, smoothing it over his knees. "And isn't your father a kind man to be giving the old fellow a blanket like that to go away with? It cost something, it did—look at the wool of it! And warm it will be these cold winter nights to come. There'll be few blankets there the equal of this one!"

It was like Granddad to be saying that. He was trying to make it easier. He'd pretended all along it was he that was wanting to go away to the great brick building—the government place, where he'd be with so many other old fellows having the best of everything. . . . But Petey hadn't believed Dad would really do it, until this night when he brought home the blanket.

"Oh, yes, it's a fine blanket," said Petey, and got up and went into the shanty. He wasn't the kind to cry, and, besides, he was too old for that, being eleven. He'd just come in to fetch Granddad's fiddle.

The blanket slid to the floor as the old man took the fiddle and stood up. It was the last night they'd be having together. There wasn't any need to say, "Play all the old tunes." Granddad tuned up for a minute, and then said, "This is one you'll like to remember."

The thin moon was high overhead, and there was a gentle breeze playing down the gully. He'd never be hearing Granddad play like this again. It was as well Dad was moving

into that new house, away from here. He'd not want, Petey wouldn't, to sit here on the old porch of fine evenings, with Granddad gone.

The tune changed. "Here's something gayer." Petey sat and stared out over the gully. Dad would marry that girl. Yes, that girl who'd kissed him and slobbered over him, saying she'd try to be a good mother to him, and all. . . . His chair creaked as he involuntarily gave his body a painful twist.

The tune stopped suddenly, and Granddad said: "It's a poor tune, except to be dancing to." And then: "It's a fine girl your father's going to marry. He'll be feeling young again, with a pretty wife like that. And what would an old fellow like me be doing around their house, getting in the way, an old nuisance, what with my talk of aches and pains! And then there'll be babies coming, and I'd not want to be there to hear them crying at all hours. It's best that I take myself off, like I'm doing. One more tune or two, and then we'll be going to bed to get some sleep against the morning, when I'll pack up my fine blanket and take my leave. Listen to this, will you? It's a bit sad, but a fine tune for a night like this."

They didn't hear the two people coming down the gully path, Dad and the pretty girl with the hard, bright face like a china doll's. But they heard her laugh, right by the porch, and the tune stopped on a wrong, high, startled note. Dad didn't say anything, but the girl came forward and spoke to Granddad prettily: "I'll not be seeing you leave in the morning, so I came over to say goodbye."

"It's kind of you," said Granddad, with his eyes cast down; and then, seeing the blanket at his feet, he stopped to pick it up. "And will you look at this," said in embarrassment, "the fine blanket my son has given me to go away with!"

"Yes," she said, "it's a fine blanket." She felt of the wool, and repeated in surprise, "A fine blanket—I'll say it is!" She turned to Dad, and said to him coldly, "It cost something, that."

He cleared his throat, and said defensively. "I wanted him to have the best..."

The girl stood there, still intent on the blanket. "It's double, too," she said reproachfully to Dad.

"Yes," said Granddad, "it's double—a fine blanket for an old fellow to be going away with."
The boy went abruptly into the shanty. He was looking for something. He could hear that girl reproaching Dad, and Dad becoming angry in his slow way. And now she was suddenly going away in a huff.. .As Petey came out, she turned and called back, "All the same, he doesn't need a double blanket!" And she ran up the gully path.

Dad was looking after her uncertainly.

"Oh, she's right," said the boy coldly. "Here, Dad"— and he held out a pair of scissors. "Cut the blanket in two."

Both of them stared at the boy, startled. "Cut it in two, I tell you, Dad!" he cried out. "And keep the other half!"

"That's not a bad idea," said Granddad gently. "I don't need so much of a blanket."

"Yes," said the boy harshly, "a single blanket's enough for an old man when he's sent away. We'll save the other half, Dad; it will come in handy later."

"Now what do you mean by that?" asked Dad.

"I mean," said the boy slowly, "that I'll give it to you, Dad—when you're old and I'm sending you—away."

There was a silence, and then Dad went over to Granddad and stood before him, not speaking. But Granddad understood, for he put out a hand and laid it on Pad's shoulder. Petey was watching them. And he heard Granddad whisper, "It's all right, son—I knew you didn't mean it...." And then Petey cried.

But it didn't matter—because they were all three crying together.

ESSAY/NON-FICTION

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1. Starfish - *Anonymous*

Genre: *Anecdote*

Rationale:

Sometimes we believe that we are small and powerless – especially when we are young. We believe that we cannot make a difference and as a result sometimes we don't even try. In this short anecdote we meet a young person, just like you, who tries to save the lives of living things. He refuses to give up. He believes that he can make a difference in the world – and he does.

As the old man walked down a Spanish beach at dawn, he saw ahead of him what he thought to be a dancer. A young man was running across the sand rhythmically, bending down to pick up a stranded starfish and throw it far into the sea. The old man gazed in wonder as the young man again and again threw the small starfish from the sand to the water. The old man approached him and asked why he spent so much energy doing what seemed a waste of time. The young man explained that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun.

"But there must be thousands of miles of beach and millions of starfish. How can your efforts make any difference?"

The young man looked down at the small starfish in his hand and as he threw it to safety in the sea, said, "It makes a difference to this one."

Make connections

1. What did the old man see as he walked down the beach?
2. What was the young man doing?
3. How does the young man answer the last question of the old man?
4. What kind of a person do you think is the young man?

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2. Tell the World: A Young Environmentalist Speaks Out

– Severn Cullis-Suzuki

Genre: *Speech*

Rationale:

This essay is a speech made by Severn Cullis Suzuki during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil. What is happening in the world today that makes you sad or afraid? As you read this speech, pause at paragraphs where Suzuki speaks about her fears and concerns. Think whether they are also your own fears and concerns. You will also come across sections where she blames the adults for creating problems. Is she right in blaming the adults? Is what she talks about also true to Bhutan? How? Look carefully on how Suzuki uses words to make her speech strong and effective.

Seven Cullis-Suzuki at UNCED plenary in Rio in 1992

Hello, I'm Severn Suzuki speaking on behalf of ECO, the Environmental Children's Organization. We're a group of twelve and thirteen-year-olds from Canada trying to make a difference. We raised all the money ourselves to come six thousand miles to tell you adults you must change your ways.

Coming up here today, I have no hidden agenda. I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election or a few points on the stock market.

I am here to speak for all future generations. I am here to speak on behalf of the starving children around the world whose cries go unheard. I am here to speak for the countless animals dying across this planet because they have nowhere left to go.

I am afraid to go out in the sun now because of the holes in the ozone. I am afraid to breathe the air because I don't know what chemicals are in it. I used to go fishing in Vancouver with my dad until, just a few years ago, we found the fish full of cancers. And now we hear about animals and plants becoming extinct every day — vanishing forever.

In my life, I have dreamt of seeing great herds of wild animals, jungles and rainforests full of birds and butterflies, but now I wonder if they will even exist for my children to see. Did you have to worry about these things when you were my age?

All this is happening before our eyes and yet we act as if we have all the time we want and all the solutions. I'm only a child and I don't have all the solutions, but I want you to realize, neither do you!

You don't know how to fix the holes in our ozone layer.

You don't know how to bring salmon back to a dead stream.

You don't know how to bring back an animal now extinct. And you can't bring back the forests that once grew where there is now a desert.

If you don't know how to fix it, please stop breaking it!

Here you may be delegates of your governments, businesspeople, organizers, reporters or politicians. But really you are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles. And each of you is somebody's child.

I'm only a child, yet I know we are all part of a family, five billion strong — in fact, thirty million species strong — and borders and governments will never change that. I'm only a child, yet I know we are all in this together and should act as one single world toward one single goal. In my anger I am not blind, and in my fear I'm not afraid to tell the world how I feel.

In my country we make so much waste. We buy and throw away, buy and throw away. And yet northern countries will not share with the needy. Even when we have more than enough, we are afraid to lose some of our wealth, afraid to let go.

In Canada, we live a privileged life with plenty of food, water, and shelter. We have watches, bicycles, computers, and television sets — the list could go on for days.

Two days ago here in Brazil, we were shocked when we spent time with some children living on the streets. And this is what one child told us: "I wish I was rich. And if I were, I would give all the street children food, clothes, medicine, shelter, and love and affection." If a child on the street who has nothing is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy?

I can't stop thinking that these children are my own age, and that it makes a tremendous difference where you are born. I could be one of those children living in the *favelas* of Rio, I could be a child starving in Somalia, a victim of war in the Middle East, or a beggar in India.

I'm only a child, yet I know if all the money spent on war was spent on ending poverty and finding environmental answers, what a wonderful place this Earth would be.

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us:

not to fight with others
to work things out
to respect others
to clean up our mess
not to hurt other creatures
to share, not be greedy

Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?

Do not forget why you are attending these conferences, who you are doing this for — we are your own children. You are deciding what kind of world we will grow up in.

Parents should be able to comfort their children by saying,

"Everything's going to be all right;" "We're doing the best we can;" and "It's not the end of the world." But I don't think you can say that to us anymore. Are we even on your list of priorities?

My dad always says, "You are what you do, not what you say."

Well, what you do makes me cry at night.

You grownups say you love us. I challenge you, *please,* make your actions reflect your words.

Thank you for listening.

Make connections

1. What feelings did you have as you read this speech? Which part caused you to react most strongly?
2. What methods or ways does Suzuki use to appeal to and affect her audience?
3. What impact do you think the speech had on the audience? How do you think they responded? Give reasons for your answer.
4. What did you learn about Suzuki from reading her speech? Give evidence for each quality you identify.
5. According to you what arguments or information do you think, Suzuki should have added to her speech?
6. What have you, on your own, done to protect the environment? What else can you do?

3. The Unfortunate Break - *Jeremiah I. Reyes*

Genre: *Non-fiction*

Rationale:
The Unfortunate Break *is a personal narrative of a 14-year-old boy during the Covid 19 pandemic. Students will be able to relate to the descriptions of what it is like not being able to do things that one took granted for.*

Our world as we know it will never be the same. The deadly and contagious virus named COVID-19 that originated in Wuhan, China early this year has arrived in America. The spread occurred quicker than our government anticipated, and we were unprepared for what was to come. I watched the news that came from the White House with disbelief and extreme concern. I held my breath for a second, trying to make sense of what I was hearing. Isolation has been difficult and sorrowful. It affected the moments I was able to spend time with friends and more importantly, go and stay with my dear grandparents, which I had always done on weekends. I couldn't visit them because they were at high risk due to their underlying health issues.

People were unable to go to work; some lost jobs. I felt very worried when my parents went to buy things we needed such as milk, bread, and water, and these basic things were scarce. I live with my older brother, younger sister, and my parents. My father and mother are both essential workers that do completely different types of jobs. I can tell it's stressful on them. They worry about getting the virus and passing it onto us, but they also understand they are essential and have to do what needs to be done.

I usually talk to everybody in my house, making sure they are OK and assisting them with anything they need help on. I have fun helping my younger sister create a fort, and making her laugh by telling her jokes or making funny faces whenever she is sad. She is young but quite a social butterfly, and it's been hard for her not to be with her girl group. My older brother misses playing basketball and football with friends. And it's hard on me. I miss going out, but, mostly, I miss my grandparents. I call them once or twice every day. We video chat, too, which is funny because they're not the type to use technology. We get cut of a lot.

My parents have taken us to ride by and see them from afar. We're happy to see them but sad we can't go hug them, kiss them and do things like before. I try to ease my mind by indulging in my farming venture. Tis spring I started planting in my backyard.

I have tomatoes, peppers, strawberries, eggplants, carrots, and cucumbers. I am not a professional gardener but I'm experimenting and learning diferent methods. My goal is to grow our own fresh fruit and vegetables because ... Why not? I'm encouraging others that now is the time to learn about all that. We don't need to be a food desert if we all do as our ancestors did and tend to the land. My parents still manage to buy, cook, and serve the less fortunate by distributing food, clothes, hygiene care kits, wipes, hand sanitizer, gloves and donated masks to help stop the spread of this awful virus. I help my parents by putting together all that's needed to distribute platters for the homeless around our city.

I like to play their favorite songs that my father introduced me to and I ended up enjoying oldies: songs like "Celebration" by Kool & The Gang, "September" by Earth Wind & Fire, and "Smile" by Kirk Franklin. I'm thankful my family is well because we have had 30 relatives, friends, and community members pass away from this virus. The losses seemed to be back-to-back. I try my best to remain positive that this too shall pass and we can go back to a somewhat normal life, although this has rocked us so hard nothing will truly be normal again. May all this that has occured, good and bad, change us all for the better.

Make Connections

1. What feelings did you have as you read this essay? Why did you feel so?
2. What were some of the problems the people faced during the pandemic?
3. How would you spend your time if you were not allowed to go out of your house for a week? Share with your friends.
4. Which part of the narration did you like the most? Why?
5. What values or lessons do you get from this essay?
6. Think of an event that has happened recently in your community that had an effect on many people. Was this a positive or negative effect? Explain.

4. Childhood - *Flora Jane Thompson*

Genre: *Nonfiction*

Rationale:

The passage which follows is taken from an autobiographical book called 'Lark Rise', in which the author, Flora Thompson describes her childhood in England at the beginning of the twentieth century.

This essay takes us through the life of teens in a community of uninvolved parenting and on a brighter side the freedom they had as children. Read through the account of narrator and think of how you and your life is similar to or different from the one the narrator describes.

School began at nine o'clock, but the hamlet children set out on their mile-and-a-half walk there as soon as possible after their seven o'clock breakfast, partly because they liked plenty of time to play on the road, and partly because their mothers wanted them out of the way before house-cleaning began.

Up the long, straight road they straggled, in twos and threes and gangs, their flat, rush dinner baskets over their arms. In cold weather some of them carried two hot potatoes which had been in the ashes all night, to warm their hands on the way and to serve as a light lunch on arrival.

They were strong, lusty children, let loose from control, and there was plenty of shouting, quarreling, and often fighting among them. In more peaceful moments they would squat in the dust of the road and play marbles or sit on a stone heap and play dibs with pebbles or climb into the hedges after birds' nests or blackberries. In winter they would slide on the ice on the puddles, or make snowballs- soft ones for their friends, and hard ones with a stone inside for their enemies.

After the first mile or so the dinner baskets would be raided; or they would creep through the bars of the padlocked field gates for turnips to pare with the teeth and munch, or for handfuls of green pea shucks, or ears of wheat, to rub out the sweet, milky grain and devour. In spring they ate the young green from the hawthorn hedges, which they called 'bread and cheese', and sorrel leaves from the wayside, which they called 'sour grass'. In autumn there was an abundance of haws and blackberries and sloes and crab-apples for them to feast upon. There was always something to eat, and they ate, not so much because they were hungry as from habit and relish of the wild fruit.

The process of civilization had not gone very far with some of the hamlet children. Although one civilization had them in hand at home and another at school, they were able to throw off both on the road between the two places and revert to a state of nature. A favorite amusement with this was to fall in a body on some unoffending companion, usually a small girl in a clean frock, and to 'run her', as they called it. This meant chasing her until they caught her, then dragging her down and sitting on her, tearing her clothes, smudging her face, and tousling her hair in the process. She might scream and cry and she would 'tell on' them; they took no notice until, tiring of the sport, they would run whooping off, leaving her sobbing and exhausted.

The persecuted one never 'told on' them, even when reproved by the schoolmistress for her disheveled condition, for she knew that if she had, there would have been a worse 'running' on the way home, and one that went to the tune of:

Tell-tale tit!
Cut her tongue a-slit,
And every little puppy-dog shall have a little bit!

It was no good telling the mothers either, for it was the rule of the hamlet never to interfere in children's quarrels. 'Let them fight it out among themselves,' the woman would say. If a child complained, the only response would be: 'you must have been doing something to them. If you'd left them alone, they'd have left you alone; so, don't come bringing your tales home to me!' It was harsh schooling, but the majority seemed to thrive on it. The few quieter and more sensitive children soon learned either to start early and get to school first, or to linger behind, dipping under bushes and lurking inside field gates until the main body had passed.

About the Author:

Flora Jane Thompson was an English novelist and poet best known for her semi-autobiographical trilogy about the English countryside, Lark Rise to Candleford.

Make Connections

1. The children described in the passage were never bored on their way to school. Which of their activities were seasonal, depending on whether it was autumn, winter, or spring?
2. How is the word 'civilization' portrayed in this essay?
3. Do you think it is good for adults not to interfere in children's quarrel? Why do you think so?
4. How is your life as students similar or different to the one described in the story?
5. Which of the events/incidents mentioned in the story you would wish to have been a part of? Why?
6. Find examples of alliteration and imagery used in the essay.
7. How can we call the text a narrative essay?

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SUPPLEMENTARY

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1. Anger – *Donna Doglas*

Everyone gets angry. But learning how to understand and rechannel anger can help you take charge of your life.

Why do you think some people have such a hard time coping with their anger? When you are angry about something, how do you react?

Anger is a reaction.

You might be hurt, stressed out, frustrated. You reach your trigger point. You get angry. Is it a good thing or a bad thing? That depends on your next reaction . ..

Is anger ever good?

Sure it is.

- It's a warning signal that something's wrong.
- It can mobilize us to defend something, or escape it.
- It helps us mobilize ourselves to set limits, reach goals.
- It helps overcome our fear of saying what we need.
- The stress caused by occasional anger makes us perform better, adapt to emergencies.

Is anger bad?

Anger is bad for us when we let it confuse us, when we don't deal with it right away and let it build. We forget we can like or love someone and still be angry with them.

- Staying angry, especially quietly, is bad for our health. . . .
- Anger gets in the way of our relationships. Anger doesn't go away. It sits there, stewing in the
  back of your mind and you find yourself screaming at someone you're not angry with at all.
- Anger makes us prone to accidents, errors, mistakes, and affects our creativity.

Is anger necessary?

We don't have to succumb to anger. When the first trigger hits us, if we deal with it honestly, we can bypass the anger. When we use anger just to justify ourselves instead of saying how we really feel, we become addicted to being angry. Anger never lets us get our painful feelings out.

Anger is the second emotion; it's the reaction to something else. For example, if someone or something hurts you, and you don't do something about it, eventually that hurt feeling turns into anger.

It's one of life's toughest lessons, but ultimately it's what gives us true personal power. We can't control other people or events, and we can't control how they make us feel,

but we can control how we react to those feelings. Getting control over our anger gives us control over our life, and in the end more personal power than the people still stuck in the treadmill of anger and violence.

When I'm angry ...

I get revenge. I have to pay people back for my pain. I want them to hurt as much as I do. As I get revenge, I destroy the relationship. People put up psychological barriers so I can't hurt them again.

I don't get what I want. It never seems to end up happy. I end up getting coldness from people. They withdraw.

I'm passive. I say nothing. I drag my feet, refuse to say no. Outside I know I seem compliant. Inside I feel suffocated by the demands of others.

I'm aggressive. I know how bad, how wrong people are and I think they should be punished. I want people to co-operate and sometimes I think maybe they do because they're afraid of me. Lots of times I look back on things and wish I'd handled them differently.

I'm passive, first, but then, look out! First I say nothing when I'm hurt. Then the pain builds and I feel helpless. When my pain gets so great I can't handle it, something triggers it and I explode. I never seem to explode at the real issue though.

What causes anger?

1. When people don't feel safe and secure, they feel anger.
2. When people feel their needs aren't being met, they feel anger.
3. When people can't identify what their needs are, their confusion can turn into anger.
4. When people want something, so much, that they feel they should have it, no matter what . . they feel anger.
5. When it feels only fair. No two people agree on what fairness is, and each person's need is equal and legitimate. The inability to compromise turns into anger.
6. When a person's sense of justice tells them that something is not logical. Being told how you should feel or what you should do causes anger.
7. When people try to change or control the behaviour of others, and these changes don't happen, they feel anger.

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If someone or something hurts you, and you don't do something about it, eventually that hurt feeling turns into anger.

Be assertive.
State clearly what you need. Don't blame someone else for what you don't get. Make clear statements that are positive, rather than negative. ... I think . . . , I feel. . . , I want. . . *"When you ignore me and talk to other girls at a party, I feel angry,"* is more accurate and less aggressive than the sarcastic, *"Thanks for all the attention at Rob's party Friday night."*

When you acknowledge the feelings that make up your anger, the other person can understand and co-operate. . .

Fight fair.
Expressing your anger can often result in a fight. . . . When people get into a fight, usually they have opposing needs. Start by assuming that each person has a right to their own needs.

Time out. By using the ***T*** for time out signal, and giving yourselves an hour or so, you'll be able to calm down, think things through to a logical conclusion and then continue. . . .

Admit your mistake. Watch what happens in an argument when you admit you're wrong.

Rechannel. An argument will work better if you take what has been said and re-apply it. If your parent is sending you to your room, you can respond by saying "You're right. We both need to cool down. Is it okay if we talk in an hour?"

Don't mind read. Often we make assumptions about another person's feelings, motives or attitudes. Often these assumptions are wrong.

Ask. Ask what hurts. A direct question like that helps the person you're arguing with to focus on their pain instead of blaming.

Move along. Don't get bogged down by who's at fault. Keep your energy channelled on expressing your feelings and needs.

Say what you need. Remember, anger begins with hurt. So, say something that will reduce your pain. . . . "What I think I need in this situation is ..." If you keep your demands to behaviours rather than attitudes, you'll have more success . . .
Negotiate. Get the other person involved in your problem solving. Have them propose a solution. *What do you think would solve this problem?* Meet half way. . .

Take care of yourself. If the other person won't negotiate, tell them you plan to take care of your own needs. Don't issue an ultimatum that sounds like punishment and revenge. Self care isn't something you do to the other person. It's something you do for yourself.
Once won't be enough. Making a change won't happen all at once. Don't let yourself get discouraged. . . .

How we deal with anger is as old as we are. We're not likely to change a behaviour with one attempt. Neither are the people we live with and get angry with.

The ANGER Hit List
Cry. It'll help discharge the tension, relax muscles.

Exercise. Aerobics, jogging, running all focus our energy on one activity and help dispel tension.

Work. Working hard lets us focus our energy to a specific task.
Laugh. Humour deflects our anger and lets us relax.
Write. It helps to discharge our feelings.
Talk. Talk about what's hurting; it'll help you calm down.
Play. Read, watch TV, play games, do a hobby; these are psychological sponges that sop up stress.
Solve the problem. Direct your energy toward what's wrong; it reduces stress because you anticipate relief.
Punch. Hit your pillow, your bed, a punching bag; have a private blowout.
Tune in. Music can be profoundly calming, take a little time alone with a favourite recording.
Tune out. No activity at all. Brief rest periods like taking a huge sigh before responding will help you feel calm.
Look again. Stand in the shoes of the person you're feeling angry with. Look at their needs, beliefs, values, limitations.
Argue with yourself. Take the other person's point of view; then express your own point of view. Argue for both.

DONNA DOUGLAS *born in 1948 in Orangeville, Ontario, has been editor of* TG *(Teen Generation} magazine for ten years. She has also written for many other magazines.*

2. A Writer's Education - *Jean Little*

Jean Little, the Canadian writer, describes in her autobiography Little by Little *how she first discovered the power of language and her own power over words.*

In the fall I went into Miss Ibbotson's class. We had to learn about decimals and percents. I disliked that year in school till the day Miss Ibbotson' started us writing journals.

When she passed out the notebooks, they did not look special. They had blue paper covers and lined pages with a thin red margin. I could not see those faint lines when I was writing.

"For the last half hour, every day this month," Miss Ibbotson told us, "you will keep a diary. You will write in them what happened in your life that day and how you felt."

She talked on for a few minutes, but I was not listening. I could hardly wait to begin.

That first afternoon, I did write down what had actually happened in my life that day. I may even have stuck to the truth till page three or four. But long before the first week was up, I had begun fancying things up a little.

My real life was simply too dull to be worth recording.

I began stealing ideas from a book we had at home called *Boyhood Stories of Famous Men.* In the book one boy saved the day by carving a lion out of butter to be used as a decoration for the King's table. Another made his own paints by crushing berries and boiling roots, and little Wolfgang Mozart and his big sister went to perform on the harpsichord before the child Marie Antoinette. The book went on to explain how each boy later became famous.

I liked the story about the young Mozart best. What drew me to it was his older sister. She was shown in the illustration, standing behind Wolfgang and the pretty little princess. I knew exactly how she must be feeling. She, too, was a gifted musician, but her little brother was the hero of the story. It never said what happened to her.

In my journal, I had myself carving wonderful animals, playing the piano brilliantly before I was five and making my own paints.

One day's entry read like this:

Last night, a famous artist came to have supper at our house. Mother took him down to the cellar. The great painter stopped dead in his tracks and pointed to our cellar walls.

"Madam," he cried, "whoever painted these magnificent murals on your walls?"

Mother stared at the wondrous paintings.

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"I have no idea," she said in a bewildered voice. She turned to her children.

"Children," she said, "have you any idea who painted these magnificent murals?" The other children shook their heads.

"As a matter of fact" I said, "I painted them."

"But you had no paints!" Mother cried.

"I know," I said modestly, "but I so longed to paint that I boiled roots and squeezed berries and made my own paints."

The great artist patted my head.

"Madam," he said, with tears in his eyes, "someday this little girl of yours will be world famous as an artist."

POETRY

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1. Lochinvar - *Sir Walter Scott*

Genre: *Ballad*

Rationale:

Lochinvar is a fascinating poem with some interesting viewpoints on relationships. The traditional form, style and subject matter mask an intricate set of power struggles and battles of will. It also shows the value of action and the results of passivity. As you read listen to the internal music of this famous ballad.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best,
And save his good broad-sword he weapons had none;
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Eske river were ford there was none;

But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby hall,
Among bride's-men and kinsmen, and brothers and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied; —
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now I am come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

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The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup,
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar, —
"Now tread me a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, ""Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;

So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran;
There was racing, and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

Make connections

1. Try and read the poem in regular beat (rhythm)
2. How does this poem make you feel about Lochinvar? Why?
3. What were the words and/or phrases that evoked strong emotions in you? Discuss why they had such an effect.
4. In your opinion which stanza reveals Lochinvar as a hero? Explain why you feel this way.
5. Which features of a ballad do you find in this poem?

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2. Unfolding Bud - *Naoshi Koriyama*

Genre: *Poetry*

Rationale:

There are many ways to read a poem and there are many ways to read a person. Perhaps this lyric poem asks us to appreciate more than just the beauty of a water lily as it unfolds. Read this poem carefully and see if you can begin to unfold its many layers of meaning.

One is amazed
By a water-lily bud
Unfolding
With each passing day,
Taking on a richer color
And new dimensions.

One is not amazed,
At a first glance,
By a poem,
Which is as tight-closed
As a tiny bud.

Yet one is surprised
To see the poem
Gradually unfolding,
Revealing its rich inner self,
As one reads it
Again
And over again.

Make connections

1. What is being compared to the 'unfolding bud' of a water lily?
2. What physical changes can you think of that occur as a flower bud opens wider?
3. What does the poet suggest a reader to do to see a poem's inner beauty?
4. Describe how you felt 'at first glance' when you read this poem.
5. How is a poem like an unfolding bud?
6. How can the idea expressed in this poem apply to growing children like you?

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3. To My Son – *Helen Fogwill Porter*

Genre: *Poetry – Free Verse*

Rationale:

To My Son *is a nostalgic poem of a mother whose attachment to her son never wavers even after he is grown up and living his life. She reminisces the days when he was a boy who sought refuge in them in times of troubles. Now that he is grown up and living separately she finds herself helpless when lightning strikes; yet her heart and soul still lingers round him. Mothers are mothers after all.*

When you were small
you used to climb
in our bed
when lightning ripped the sky.
We'd hold you tight
between us
while your father said:
"That storm is miles away"
a second before the room
was lit
with fearsome light.

Now when lightning strikes
you stay in your own
narrow bed
trying to think of other
safer things
and we in our wide bed
sigh separate sighs
because we no longer know how
to comfort you

About the Author:

Helen Porter was born 1930, St. John's, Newfoundland, writer of short stories, novels, plays, poetry and nonfiction, has had works appear in many Canadian publications. Her 1991 novel A Long and Lonely Ride is set in her birthplace. Several of her plays have been produced on stage and for CBC radio.

Make connections

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. What did the son used to do during lightening when he was small?
3. Do you remember doing something similar when you were a child?
4. Explain in your own words the line, ". . . and we in our own wide bed sighing separate sighs."
5. How are you like, or not like, the son in this poem?
6. What are some things for which you depend on your parents?
7. What do you think is making the speaker speak in the poem?
8. What other title might be appropriate for this poem? Why?

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4. Annabel Lee - Edgar Allen Poe

Genre: *Poem*

Rationale:

'Annabel Lee' is a haunting lyrical ballad with a wealth of hypnotic rhymes and song-like rhyme. It has a fairytale air and can also resonate with all who have been in love or felt tragedy and loss. There is intensity about this poem that builds up as the stanza progress, then subsides, before rebuilding. Using the literary devices of alliteration, repetition, hyperbole, Poe really displayed his dynamism as a poet. Read this poem that has a mix of rhythm within its lines, which makes it fascinating to read.

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)

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That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in Heaven above
Nor the demons down under the sea
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

About the Author:

Edgar Allan Poe was an American writer, poet, editor, and literary critic best known for his poetry and short stories. The poem Annabel Lee was published on 9th October 1849, two days after his death. Thought to be written in memory of his young wife Virginia who died in 1847, the poem expresses one of Poe's recurrent themes- the death of a young, beautiful, and beloved woman.

Make Connections

1. How does this poem make you feel about the speaker and why?
2. What words and/ or phrases make you feel strongly? Discuss why they have such an effect.
3. In your opinion, what killed Annabel Lee?
4. Identify an example of each of the following: Find examples of alliteration, hyperbole, repetition, and assonance used in the poem.
5. Annabel Lee is a ballad form of poetry. What do think are some of the features of a ballad?
6. What can you say about the end of the poem?

5. Identity - *Julio Noboa Polanco*

Genre: *Poem*

Rationale:

Oxford English Dictionary defines identity as, 'the distinguishing character or personality of an individual.'

Julio Noboa in his free verse 'Identity', sets out to drive the readers to embrace their individuality rather than conforming to the social mores. Letting the students explore, gripping metaphors and many other poetic devices which you will grasp as you read through the poem. Using the extended metaphor of a weed, the poet successfully compares his perception of a fulfilled life with a more conventional one.

Let them be as flowers,
Always watered, fed, guarded, admired,
But harnessed to a pot of dirt.

I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed,
Clinging on cliffs, like an eagle
Wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks.

To have broken through the surface of stone,
To live, to feel exposed to the madness
Of the vast, eternal sky.
To be swayed by the breezes of an ancient sea,
Carrying my soul, my seed,
Beyond the mountains of time or into the abyss of the bizarre.

I'd rather be unseen, and if
Then shunned by everyone,
Than to be a pleasant-smelling flower,

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Growing in clusters in the fertile valley,
Where they're praised, handled, and plucked
By greedy, human hands.

I'd rather smell of musty, green stench
Than of sweet, fragrant lilac.
If I could stand alone, strong and free,
I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed.

About the Author:

Julio Noboa Polanco was born in New York in 1949. He wrote 'Identity' in 1963 while in high school, originally in Spanish under the title 'Identidad' before, he later translated it.

Make Connections

1. Who do you think is the poem written for?
2. What kind of person do you think is the speaker in the poem?
3. How does this poem relate to your life?
4. How are you similar to or different from the speaker in this poem?
5. What do you think the phrase "To have broken through the surface of stone" mean?
6. Find examples of simile, metaphor, and hyperbole used in the poem.
7. What values or lessons do you learn from this poem?

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SUPPLEMENTARY

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1. The Rose That Grew From Concrete - *Tupac Shakur*

Did u hear about the rose that grew from a crack
in the concrete
Proving nature's laws wrong it learned to walk
without having feet
Funny it seems but by keeping its dreams
it learned to breathe fresh air
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
When no one else even cared!

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2. Teevee – *Eve Merriam*

In the house
of Mr. and Mrs. Spouse
he and she
would watch teevee
and never a word
between them spoken
until the day
the set was broken.

Then "How do you do?"
said he to she,
"I don't believe
that we've met yet.
Spouse is my name.
What's yours?" he asked.

"Why, mine's the same!"
said she to he,
"Do you suppose that we could be—?"
But the set came suddenly right about,
and so they never did find out.

Eve Merriam *was born in Philadelphia, U.S.A., in 1916. She has done all kinds of writing but likes poetry best because, as she says, "it is the most immediate and richest form of communication." Merriam believes that she is a very lucky person because her main pleasure is also her job—writing. Among her books of poetry are Catch a Little Rhyme, The Inner City Mother Goose, and Independent Voices.*

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Time Allocation for VII

The maximum number of instructional days available for curriculum delivery excluding examination is 150 days in a year. The school year divided into two terms of fifteen weeks each, and that each week will have 6 periods of 40 minutes for teaching English. The total time allocated for English in a week is 240 minutes. Therefore, class VII will have 120 hours in a year which is 180 periods.

The following is the suggestive period and time allocation per week for all strands.

	Period	**Time** *(minutes)*
Reading & Literature	2	80
Writing	2	80
Listening & Speaking	2	40
Language and Grammar	1	40
Total	**7**	**240**

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Modes of Assessment

Continuous (CA) and Examination Weighting for Class VII

Term One				Term Two				Grand Total (Total A + Total B)
CA		Examination	Total A	CA		Examination	Total B	
Listening and Speaking	10%	30%	50%	Listening and Speaking	10%	30%	50%	100%
Reading Portfolio	5%			Reading Portfolio	5%			
Writing Portfolio	5%			Writing Portfolio	5%			

Note:

1. The Term One examination should be conducted out of 80 marks and converted to 30%. The 10% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking, 5% from the Reading Portfolio, and 5% from the Writing Portfolio should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.

2. Similarly, the Term Two examination should be also conducted out of 80 marks and converted to 30%. The 10% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking, 5% from the Reading Portfolio, and 5% from the Writing Portfolio should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.

3. Finally, the total marks of term one and term two should be added to make it 100%.

4. Listening and Speaking activities such as debates, extempore speeches, presentations, book talks, reports, and discussions should be conducted consistently throughout the year ideally by integrating in other strands so that the students get maximum time to practice the skills. Teachers need to develop their own additional listening and speaking exercises wherever necessary. Use Continuous Formative (CFA) to help students achieve the desired goals.

5. At the end of each Term, a formal test should be administered to assess each learners' competencies in listening and speaking through oral test items and other listening and speaking exercises. The final score or mark should be converted to 10%.

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6. The Reading and the Writing Portfolios of each learner should be monitored regularly and consistently to check their progress on reading and writing skills. Teachers should provide timely feedback, support and take necessary remedial measures so that the learners achieve the expected objectives and competencies. At the end of each term, both the portfolios should be assessed and award marks accordingly, as shown in the table above.

English Paper (Writing, Reading and Literature, and Grammar) - Written Examination Marks Break-up

Sl No	Genre	Weighting	Remarks
1	Essay/story writing	15 marks	Realistic fiction/narrative writing
2	Personal letter/leave application/ invitation	8 marks	Any ONE can be asked
3	Grammar	15 marks	Items to be derived from the competencies and objectives. Questions can be asked from the lower classes as well.
4	Short Story	16 marks	From the prescribed short stories. Questions on more than ONE story can be asked.
5	Essay	16 marks	From outside the prescribed textbook.
6	Poetry	10 marks	Any ONE from the prescribed or outside textbook.
Total		**80**	

Note:
The above matrix is a sample of question items that can be tested in the examinations. The question types and patterns for written examinations shall remain dynamic. Questions can be asked to assess any of the competencies/learning objectives, which includes a combination of different types of writing items including short story and report writing.

Listening and Speaking CA (20%)

Listening and Speaking activities	Remarks
• Listening and Speaking skills • Reports • Debates • Extempore speeches • Presentation of their written pieces • Book talk	• Teachers can design additional activities as per the lesson plans. • Conduct oral test/listening and speaking tests and marks converted to 10% at the end of each term.

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Writing Portfolio and Reading Portfolio CA (20%)

Reading Portfolio (10%)	Writing Portfolio (10%)	Remarks
• Record of reading • Critical response to books read • Text talk or book talk	• Best pieces of writing selected by students • Best pieces selected by teacher • Journal writing for book review • Resumes • Reports • Fantasy • Summary writing • Simple poems	• Use notebooks for maintaining portfolios. • Consider process while assessing the quality of work. • The writing portfolio should show the records of the Writing Process • Plagiarism to be prohibited. • Both Reading and writing portfolios should be assessed at the end of each term and marks awarded accordingly.

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Reading Strategies

Secondary Reading Strategies

Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among:

- the reader's existing knowledge,
- the information suggested by the written language, and
- the context of the reading situation.

Four general purposes of reading are:

- to gain information
- to perform a task
- to experience and enjoy literature
- to form opinions

Critical Reading

Critical reading means **learning to look through texts rather than at them;** it means **reading beyond and beneath** surface meanings to the assumptions, arguments, and strategies behind them. Critical reading means learning about **how texts work:** how they make their meaning, how they appeal to your emotions and intellect, how they present arguments that are explicit and implicit; how they reason with readers and manipulate them.

To be a critical reader, you need to learn how to "slow down" your reading. Slowing down your reading doesn't mean you ought to read more slowly; it means that you need to **read in such a way that you learn to be aware of a text's various parts and processes.** Running your eye over the words on the page it is easy to think of any piece of writing as a smooth and solid object. But all writing — whether a short story by a famous writer or a paper by one of your classmates — is the result of a process and the product of a context. Both the process and context that produce a piece of writing are reflected in various ways in a text's parts and layers. When you learn to slow down your reading you will be able to see that all writing is made up of parts and layers that come together in the writing process to make something that seems whole.

Critical Reading Classroom Environment

For active, critical reading to occur, teachers must create an atmosphere which fosters inquiry. Students must be encouraged to question, to make predictions, and to organize ideas which support value judgments. Two techniques for developing these kinds of critical reading skills include **problem solving** and **learning to reason through**

reading. Flynn (1989) describes an instructional model for problem solving which promotes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas. She states that, "When we ask students to analyze we expect them to clarify information by examining the component parts. Synthesis involves combining relevant parts into a coherent whole, and evaluation includes setting up standards and then judging against them to verify the reasonableness of ideas."

Beck (1989) adopts a similar perspective, using the term "reasoning" to imply higher order thinking skills. Comprehension requires inferencing, which plays a central role in reasoning and problem solving. For Beck, children's literature has the potential to engage students in reasoning activities.

When literature is approached from a problem solving perspective, students are asked to evaluate evidence, draw conclusions, make inferences, and develop a line of thinking (Riecken and Miller, 1990). According to Flynn (1989), children are capable of solving problems at all ages and need to be encouraged to do so at every grade level. (See, for example, "Using Fairy Tales" 1991 for young children; Anton 1990 for elementary children; Johannessen 1989 for middle school children.) Teachers may want to experiment with a particular children's book and plan a lesson which places reasoning at the center of instruction.

Wilson (1988) suggests that teachers re-think the way they teach reading and look critically at their own teaching/thinking processes. She cautions against skills lessons that are repackaged in the name of critical thinking but which are only renamed worksheets. She points out that teaching students to read, write, and think critically is a dramatic shift from what has generally taken place in most classrooms.

According to Wilson, critical literacy advocates the use of strategies and techniques like formulating questions prior to, during, and after reading; responding to the text in terms of the student's own values; anticipating texts, and acknowledging when and how reader expectations are aroused and fulfilled; and responding to texts through a variety of writing activities which ask readers to go beyond what they have read to experience the text in personal ways.

Critical Reading Strategies

Mastering these strategies will not make the critical reading process an easy one, it can make reading much more satisfying and productive and thus help students handle difficult material well and with confidence.

Fundamental to each of these strategies is annotating directly on the page: underlining key words, phrases, or sentences; writing comments or questions in the margins; bracketing important sections of the text; constructing ideas with lines or arrows; numbering related points in sequence; and making note of anything that strikes you as interesting, important, or questionable.

Previewing: Learning about a text before really reading it. Previewing enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. This simple strategy includes seeing what you can learn from the headnotes or other introductory material, skimming to get an overview of the content and organization, and identifying the rhetorical situation.

Contextualizing: Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts. When you read a text, you read it through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is informed by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place. But the texts you read were all written in the past, sometimes in a radically different time and place. To read critically, you need to contextualize, to recognize the differences between your contemporary values and attitudes and those represented in the text.

Questioning to understand and remember: Asking questions about the content. As students, you are accustomed to teachers asking you questions about your reading. These questions are designed to help you understand a reading and respond to it more fully, and often this technique works. When you need to understand and use new information though it is most beneficial if you write the questions, as you read the text for the first time. With this strategy, you can write questions any time, but in difficult academic readings, you will understand the material better and remember it longer if you write a question for every paragraph or brief section. Each question should focus on a main idea, not on illustrations or details, and each should be expressed in your own words, not just copied from parts of the paragraph.

Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values: Examining your personal responses. The reading that you do for this class might challenge your attitudes, your unconsciously held beliefs, or your positions on current issues. As you read a text for the first time, mark an X in the margin at each point where you feel a personal challenge to your attitudes, beliefs, or status. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Now look again at the places you marked in the text where you felt personally challenged. What patterns do you see?

Outlining and summarizing: Identifying the main ideas and restating them in your own words. Outlining and summarizing are especially helpful strategies for

understanding the content and structure of a reading selection. Whereas outlining reveals the basic structure of the text, summarizing synopsizes a selection's main argument in brief. Outlining may be part of the annotating process, or it may be done separately (as it is in this class). The key to both outlining and summarizing is being able to distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas and examples. The main ideas form the backbone, the strand that hold the various parts and pieces of the text together. Outlining the main ideas helps you to discover this structure. When you make an outline, don't use the text's exact words.

Summarizing begins with outlining, but instead of merely listing the main ideas, a summary recomposes them to form a new text. Whereas outlining depends on a close analysis of each paragraph, summarizing also requires creative synthesis. Putting ideas together again — in your own words and in a condensed form — shows how reading critically can lead to deeper understanding of any text.

Evaluating an argument: Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact. All writers make assertions that want you to accept as true. As a critical reader, you should not accept anything on face value but to recognize every assertion as an argument that must be carefully evaluated. An argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The claim asserts a conclusion — an idea, an opinion, a judgment, or a point of view — that the writer wants you to accept. The support includes reasons (shared beliefs, assumptions, and values) and evidence (facts, examples, statistics, and authorities) that give readers the basis for accepting the conclusion. When you assess an argument, you are concerned with the process of reasoning as well as its truthfulness (these are not the same thing). At the most basic level, in order for an argument to be acceptable, the support must be appropriate to the claim and the statements must be consistent with one another.

Comparing and contrasting related readings: Exploring likenesses and differences between texts to understand them better. Many of the authors we read are concerned with the same issues or questions, but approach how to discuss them in different ways. Fitting a text into an ongoing dialectic helps increase understanding of why an author approached a particular issue or question in the way he or she did.

THE STUDENT ROLE

Critical thinking implies that a reader is actively and constructively engaged in the process of reading. The reader is continually negotiating what s/he knows with what s/he is trying to make sense of. The role of background knowledge and the student's ability to draw upon it are essential to critical thinking/learning.

It is not an easy task to incorporate higher level thinking skills into the classroom, but it is a necessary one. For students to participate in the society in which they live, they must have experiences which prepare them for life. In order to become critical thinkers, it is essential that students learn to value their own thinking, to compare their thinking and their interpretations with others, and to revise or reject parts of that process when it is appropriate.

A classroom environment which is student-centred fosters student participation in the learning process. Learning that is both personal and collaborative encourages critical thinking. Students who are reading, writing, discussing, and interacting with a variety of learning materials in a variety of ways are more likely to become critical thinkers.

THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Teachers who encourage **pre-reading discussions** to help readers activate prior knowledge or fill in gaps in background knowledge set the stage for critical reading. They help students identify purposes for reading, formulate hypotheses, and test the accuracy of their hypotheses throughout the reading process. In addition, asking students to examine their own reading and learning processes creates the awareness necessary for critical reading.

Post-reading activities that extend texts provide an opportunity for teachers to check for learning. Transforming ideas from reading into artwork, poetry, etc. is an evaluative, interpretive act that reveals the student's level of understanding. Critical readers are active readers. They **question, confirm, and judge** what they read throughout the reading process. Students engaged in such activities are likely to become critical thinkers and learners.

How Do I Sharpen My Critical Reading Strategies?

Reading critically does not mean that you are criticizing the writer's message but rather that you are **assessing the validity and reliability of the writer's material**. Critical readers are also aware that they bring their beliefs, values, experiences, and prior knowledge to the reading process. Critical readers ask questions about themselves, the writer, and the writing. Below is a set of questions to sharpen your critical reading strategies.

Menu of Critical Reading Questions

1. Reader's Background and Value Assumptions

- What do I know about the topic?
- What are my beliefs and values regarding the topic?
- What is my purpose for reading this material?

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2. **Writer's Background and Value Assumptions**
   - What is the writer's background?
   - How might it affect the writer's approach to the topic and the selection and interpretation of the evidence presented?
   - What are the writer's value assumptions regarding this topic?

3. **Writer's Argument, Conclusion, and Evidence**
   - What is the topic of the writer's argument?
   - What is the writer's conclusion?
   - How has the writer limited the scope of the argument through definitions of key terms and the use of qualifying words and phrases?

4. **Writer's Use of Evidence to Support the Conclusion**
   - Are there any logical fallacies?
   - What sort of evidence does the writer use to support the conclusion(s)?
   - Does the evidence offer adequate support for the writer's conclusion?
   - Are the sources creditable?
   - If the writer uses research studies as evidence, does the research satisfy these conditions:
   - Is it timely?
   - Is the sample group representative of the target population?
   - Who conducted the research? What was the purpose of the research?
   - Has the research been replicated?
   - Are the statistical findings and writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?
   - Do the graphic illustrations represent the data in a truthful manner?
   - Do the various physical dimensions of the graphic accurately portray the numerical relationships?
   - What is the source of the data in the illustration?
   - Are the statistical findings and the writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?

5. **Reader's Reaction to the Reading**
   - Do I accept the writer's evidence as reliable and valid support of the conclusion?
   - To what degree do I accept the conclusion?
   - How does the conclusion relate to what I already know and believe about the topic?
   - How has the writer's argument changed my views on this topic?

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Here are some strategies that may be used:

1. Take inventory of what you will be reading.
Think about what you already know about the subject. Write down some notes on these thoughts. Look over the material you are reading - look for key words and phrases that may be in italics or boldface. Look for any graphs, captions, pictures or other graphics. See if there is a summary at the end or a set of comprehension questions. Most textbooks have summaries and questions. These can be very helpful to guide your reading. You should always read the summary and the questions before you read the text. These will give you a good idea of what to look for when you read. Remember: not everything in the text is equally important: read for the main ideas.

2. See the forest, not the trees!
There is an English idiom that says, "You can't see the forest for the trees." This means that a person cannot see the overall picture or idea because she/he is concentrating on the details too much. When you are reading, don't try to understand every word - get the overall idea.

3. Don't just read —WRITE!
Take notes while you are reading. Sometimes notes can be words and phrases that help you remember main ideas. However, you can also draw pictures or diagrams of key ideas. It's like drawing a map with roads connecting different cities or locations. If each location is an idea, connect them together in your notes.

4. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.
If possible, read the text more than once.

5. Don't be afraid to make guesses.
Try to guess at meaning by looking at the context. The sentences and words immediately before and after the point you are reading can give you good ideas.

6. Try to analyze the text.
Look for the introduction and conclusion. Look for the topic sentences in each paragraph.

7. Make connections.
Try to make connections between main ideas and supporting details. Well-written texts will attempt to make connections of their ideas in a logical way.

8. Summarize & Paraphrase.
When you have finished reading a paragraph or a portion of the text, stop and try to summarize in your own words what you have read. You can do this in your notes or you can explain it orally to someone else.

9. Talk with your friends.
Discuss what you have read with others who have also read the same text.

SQ3R....for students & teachers

When you read, it is important to have a strategy or a plan for reading effectively. If you do not have a plan, you may be easily distracted or may not focus on the right things in the text. As a result, when you are finished reading, you may not understand very much of what you have read. Also, you may not have developed your English very much, either.

When you read, you must be actively involved in the reading process in order to understand most effectively. The SQ3R method is one way to help you do this.

How does the SQ3R method work?

Survey
Survey means to scan the main parts of the text you are going to read. This includes looking at the title, headings of paragraphs, introduction and conclusion, first lines of each paragraph, and any extra information that may be presented in boxes on the page. Doing this gives you some basic understanding of what the text is about and helps you know what to expect when you read in more detail.

Question
Questions are very helpful when you read a text. Most of the time, people read first, and then look at questions at the end of the text. However, this is not the best way to read. If possible, read the questions provided for you FIRST. This will help you know what specific information to look for. Questions (those that are provided with text and those provided by your teacher) are designed to focus on the main points. Therefore, if you read to answer these questions, you will be focusing on the main points in the text. This helps you read with a goal in mind - answering specific questions.

3 R's

Read

Once you have some idea of what the text is about and what the main points might be, start reading. Do not be afraid if the text has many words you cannot understand. Just read!

Follow these suggestions:

- Do not use your dictionary the first time through the text.
- Try to understand as much as you can from the context.
- Take notes as you go.
- Make a note of places that you do not understand, or words that are unclear.
- Go through the text a second time.
- Try to answer the questions.

Recite

Studies have suggested that students remember 80% of what they learn, if they repeat the information verbally. If they do not repeat verbally, they often forget 80%. Writing down the answers to questions from the text and saying these answers will help you remember the information. One good way to do this is to discuss the information with a friend or classmate, or with the professor. Try to summarize the main points you have learned from the reading and add to your knowledge from the comments and responses of the person you are talking with.

Review

Review means to go over something again. In order to remember information, you cannot simply memorize it one day and then put it aside. After you have read and discussed and studied your information, it is important to review your notes again a few days or weeks later. This will help you keep the information fresh in your mind.

Strategies for Teaching Reading Strategies

Modes of Reading

Different modes of reading offer varying levels of support for students, from having the teacher read the entire text aloud to having students read the text independently. It is frequently appropriate to combine several modes of reading at once. The combination provides a scaffold for learning that gradually releases responsibility to the students and helps them to become more proficient readers. Different combinations are used to meet the differing needs of students in relation to the materials they are reading.

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Reading Aloud

The teacher reads aloud from a text that is too challenging for the students to read and comprehend alone. Usually the students do not have a copy of the text. The teacher may complete the text in one reading or may continue reading a longer text over a period of time. Reading aloud is used to develop background information, to make connections across texts, or for enjoyment.

Teacher-Directed Interactive Reading

Using grade level materials which may include magazine or newspaper articles, poems, charts, or other forms of print, the teacher provides direct, supported reading of text to the whole class. The text is read in a variety of ways.

- The teacher introduces the text and sets a purpose for independent, silent reading of a part or all of the text.
- The teacher reads the text or part of the text aloud while students follow the reading in their own texts. The teacher pauses for predictions, clarifications, and questions. A summary of what was read is developed orally or in writing with the class.
- Students are paired for buddy reading of the text.
- Small groups of students read the text together using reciprocal teaching strategies.
- The teacher reads the text aloud to a small group of students while the rest of the class reads the selection independently, with a buddy, or in a small group.
- Groups of students or the whole class may read the text together as a choral reading activity.

Guided Reading

The teacher provides small group instruction using materials at the instructional level of the group. The teacher supports the development of effective reading strategies for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. This progression of difficulty must be in increments small enough to allow the reader to bridge the gap without being frustrated. Therefore, the best materials for guided reading are sets of books that have the progression built in. For elementary school students whose instructional reading level is close to grade level, the grade level basal may be used to provide guided reading instruction.

During Guided Reading, the teacher works with a small group of students who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. The teacher introduces a text to this small group and works briefly with individuals in the group as each student reads to him/herself. The teacher may select one or two reading strategies to present to the group following the reading and may have students participate in extension activities. Basic to Guided Reading is that the text is one that offers the reader a minimum of new concepts to learn so that students can read the text with the strategies they currently have, but it provides an opportunity for new learning.

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Structured Independent Reading

Students build reading fluency, practice strategic reading skills, and increase their vocabularies by spending sustained periods of in-class time engaged in independent reading. Books may be self-selected or teacher assigned, but is at the students' independent reading levels. Time for this fluency practice must be built into the school day and must include a daily homework assignment.

Students in Pre-primary should spend a minimum of 15 minutes each day in developmentally appropriate independent reading behavior. **Students in grades 1-12 must spend 30 minutes each day on in-class independent reading**. **All students, PP-12, must read 30 minutes each night as daily reading homework.** Activities which support and strengthen independent reading include:

- drawing a picture of a favorite part of the book;
- discussing the book/chapter read with a partner or a small group;
- keeping a record or log of each book completed;
- writing a brief summary of the content;
- making a personal response to the reading in a log or journal;
- writing dialogue journals to the teacher about the independent reading material; and/or
- taking the Accelerated Reader test.

Working With Words

Students receive daily explicit, systematic instruction in one or more of the following as appropriate:

- phonemic awareness, students are taught the sounds of the language;
- phonics instruction, students receive instruction in letter/sound matching;
- blending and segmenting sounds, and decoding;
- graphophonic instruction, students learn to use letter/sound correspondence to write;
- syntactic, students learn word patterns and spelling, prefixes, suffixes, root words, etymologies; and
- vocabulary, students learn word meanings, analogies, usage, and cognates.

Reciprocal Teaching

Students are taught to become **strategic readers through an active dialogue** with a teacher/leader and other students. Working in small groups, students practice the following critical reading strategies:

- making predictions based on titles, captions, pictures, prior knowledge, etc.;
- formulating good questions based on the text (e.g., writing test questions);
- seeking clarification of words, phrases, or concepts not understood;

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- summarizing, getting the main idea; and
- forming visual images while reading.

Questions and Discussion

Critical to reading comprehension is the ability to ask and answer higher order thinking questions about text and to defend or challenge answers using information and details from the text to support positions. Students at all levels and in all subject areas **must have daily opportunities** to raise questions to be used in group discussions about texts. Student-generated questions should be used to formulate teacher-made tests.

Read and Retell

Retellings are powerful tools because they serve authentic instructional and assessment purposes. Students retell, orally or in writing, narrative or expository text. In the retelling, they use the same form, style, and language of the original text. This strategy aids comprehension of text, expands vocabulary, and provides good models for students to transfer to their personal writing. Retellings provide insights into the thinking, organization, and comprehension levels of the readers. In primary grades students may use drawings in combination with oral retelling.

Learning to Write, Writing to Learn

Writing and reading are reciprocal skills which strongly support one another. It is important that students receive daily instruction in effective writing and that they use writing to demonstrate what they have learned. Writing is thinking made visible. It supports students in learning to construct meaning and become proficient readers. It involves many activities including:

- exploring different modes of writing;
- mini-lessons that include modeling; and
- engaging students in meaningful interactions with text.

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