

ENGLISH

Reading & Literature

Class IX



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Ministry of Education and Skills Development
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Thimphu

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Department of School Education
Ministry of Education and Skills Development
School Curriculum Division



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 untrav'l'd world, whose margin
Fades for ever and for ever when I move.*

From "Ulysses" by 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, and 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; also we read to learn the ideas of others on more abstract issues like political thought or religious beliefs. We also 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 doing it, 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 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 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. They 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 IV

- 1) Read different texts to confirm one's own beliefs, points of view and to critique.
- 2) View and apply the process of reading to analyze text in different media.
- 3) Analyze two or more texts that address similar themes or topics to build knowledge and to compare the approaches the writers take.
- 4) Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts when reading.
- 5) Demonstrate the ability of understanding implied meaning of texts – use of figurative language, word relationships, nuances, and word meanings.
- 6) Analyse how an author's choices of text structure create effects such as mystery, tension, and surprise.
- 7) Read different genres of level appropriate literature from Bhutan and other countries to gain insights into the cultural and fundamental values like Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

Learning Objectives 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read critically to evaluate texts at personal level
2	Read and articulate personal and critical responses to fiction and non-fiction texts.	Read fiction as well as non-fiction texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the efficacy of lexical and sentence structures used in the texts
3	Talk and write about major classical and modern writers, including Bhutanese writers, and their works.	Read a variety of texts including books from Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm or challenge the ideas encountered while reading
4	Use the features of literary texts to help them understand the ideas they encounter in the texts they are reading.	Identify different genres of literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim and scan to gather needed information quickly
5	Read, understand, and engage with the ideas expressed by different authors in different forms of texts.	Read for a range of purposes and contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the features of different genres of literature to enhance the understanding and comprehension of texts
6	Apply close and critical reading, and viewing to a variety of texts to enhance their understanding of how lexical and grammatical items are used in context.	Identifying lexical and grammatical items in language used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make inter-textual connections to analyse, evaluate and synthesise information, themes, and values
7	Analyse text to generate ideas and express them by connecting to other texts and situations.	Use of Analysing, synthesising and evaluation skills	
8	Evaluate the point of view of the writer on issues like right and wrong, justice and injustice, gender stereotypes, national and universal values in literature.	Distinguish right wrong and other universal values, gender stereotypes	Social, behavioural, and affective skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express views on issues like right and wrong, justice and injustice and universal values
9	Evaluate the effect of the use of relevant literary devices in a text.	Distinguish literary devices used in a text	
10	Build vocabulary and use the pronunciation skills to pronounce new words correctly.	Identify the use of newly acquired vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use exemplary characters, - their behaviour and conduct encountered in reading as models
11	Engage in sustained reading and viewing for pleasure, personal development, and learning.	Make reading fun beyond classroom	
12	Read and view widely, at least 40 pieces of literature, for pleasure to demonstrate independent reading and learning in content area.	Sustained reading	Note: Teachers should identify additional appropriate skills based on the lesson plans and learning activities.

SHORT STORIES

1. A Grain of Mustard Seed - *Edith Pargeter*

When I was a little girl in Lahore, my father had a friend who was a Muslim. Indeed, he had many, but Mahdar Iqbal was a special one. He was the shoemaker who used to make our sandals. When we first knew him, he was heavily in debt, but my father began to throw business his way, and tell our friends about him, and gradually he was able to pay off his debts, and even to save a little. He had only a poor booth in the doorway of his house, and his dream was to have a shop in the bazaar. By the time of the troubles, he had more than fifteen hundred rupees saved up towards it, so he told my father.

In appearance these two men were not unlike; both thin, bright, active men, but my father's slenderness was small-boned and frail, and Mahdar Iqbal's was sinewy and tough as his own leather. Two or three times a week I'd see them bent over the chessboard in the cool corner of my father's shop___ he was a jeweller, and we were quite well off in those days___putting the whole world right. One thing they had in common was that they both believed it was possible.

It was my father who taught me, also, to believe that god was universal and benevolent, and man was perfectible, and by his very origin, disposed to good. I adored him, so naturally, I took his word for it.

The bad days were already coming upon us then. In Lahore, when partition came, the hate burst out from nowhere and overwhelmed everything. We dared not go out in the streets at all. Our shop and house were looted and burnt down. They left us a roof at least, and there we stayed in hiding, and thought now only of getting away___back to India. It was very strange for us; Lahore was no longer India.

My father suffered, perhaps, more than most of our people, because all his ideas about men were being broken in pieces, one by one, and kicked into the dust. At first he would not believe that this hatred and unreason could go on, and he would not run before it. But in the end, it was plain that we must run or die.

Those of our people who had left in good time had been able to take some of their possessions with them. By the time we set our minds on leaving, we had nothing left to take but the clothes we stood in, and by then, too, it seemed that we might not be able to leave at all. But at last they said that a train would be allowed to leave on a certain day; but no one was permitted to take anything of value.

On the morning when the tram was to leave, we crept out of the shell of our house, and went to the railway station. The streets were full of Muslims, decent people who had been our neighbours, all screaming threats at us, spitting at us, even throwing stones as we hurried by. It was on my mother we leaned on then; she had never thought as highly of her fellow men as my father had, and therefore she was not so terribly hurt as he was; she could hate them back, and he could not.

On the platform, the crowd broke through the barrier and ran after us. And suddenly, I saw Mahdar Iqbal's face among them. We had not seen him for weeks; no one dared move about normally, or go near his friends. I saw the flare of hope that brightened the wreckage

of my father's face, for one meaningful glance exchanged with Mahdar Iqbal could at least save something for him.

And Mahdar Iqbal shoved his way through the press, flung himself upon my father, and shook him savagely by the shoulders.

'Dog of a Hindu!' he yelled into his face, 'Let's see what you've got there in your pockets! Let's see what you're stealing from us!'

He plunged his hands into my father's pockets and turned out everything he had there: his handkerchief, his spectacle case, the fragments he had left from a life, all the time raving and reviling him like a madman.

My father stood like a dead creature, and let himself be mishandled. The man who had been his friend pawed over the last of his possessions disgustedly, spat his contempt on the ground, and laughed, bundling the poor bits back again.

'Go, then, and get fat on it! Take your pocketful of garbage home with you!' he shouted. And he took my father by the shoulders and threw him into the train, so roughly, that he stumbled and fell.

My mother thrust me in after him, and put herself between me and the rush of people that suddenly welled down the train, beating at the slatted windows and yelling curses at us. The last I ever saw of Mahdar Iqbal, he was standing on the platform with a demon's grin on his face, shaking a fist at us. But we were in the train, we had a corner to crouch in, a wall at our backs.

We were lucky enough ___is that the word?___ to escape with nothing worse than my father's broken glasses and broken heart.

People died in the train, too, before we reached Amritsar. We were crushed together so that we could scarcely move. And that was terrible, to be welded to my father's side like a piece of his very flesh, and to know that he was not there with me at all, but somewhere a long way off, and quite alone.

'What did you expect?' my mother said to him, sounding angry. 'Could he fold you in his arms, and wish you a safe journey? He has a wife and children to consider, just as much as you.'

My father sat with his broken glasses sagging on his nose, and stared at nothing.

'I know he could not come to me with his blessing', he said. 'But could he not be content with holding off from me. Why was it necessary to lay hands on me in unkindness? Was he forced to do me violence?'

'He had to show himself a good Muslim,' said my mother bitterly, 'and good Muslims hate us. It is not enough not to love us. He wanted to show how utterly he had cut us off. Do you think they don't know he used to visit us?'

'He could have put that out of mind better,' said my father, with quiet, hopeless certainty, 'by staying out of sight, not by running to be the first to humiliate me. No, he is gone mad with hate, like all the world.'

And after a while of silence he said, in that soft, distant, haunting voice, 'I would not have claimed him. He need not have come near me. One look of kindness would have been enough. I could have lived on that, simply knowing he was as he had always been.'

My mother, because she was frightened, began to abuse him a little, saying that there were still good men in the world; but I knew she did not really believe it. If hatred could destroy Mahdar Iqbal, it could destroy every man.

My father turned his face to the wall. And in a moment I heard him say in a cold voice: 'Man is irreclaimable. There is no hope for him. And God does not care.'

I had been listening to every word that he uttered, and I could understand what he meant. But he had taught me so well that I could not believe what he was now telling me.

If God did not care then why had Lord Vishnu entered the world nine times already to help his people? Why had Christ come to be among men, and suffer? Why did the Bodhisattva turn his back on the perfect bliss of Nirvana and return to the world, to show men the way by which they could enter and share enlightenment? Why should God___all the aspects of God in all the world___spend so much time on the reclamation of man if man was irreclaimable? Who would know it better than he? My heart told me it could not be true.

It seemed to me that if I really had faith, it ought to be possible to turn this experience inside out, to find in it the fallacy that quite altered its meaning, and would restore my father to life. So I made up a very short and pointed prayer within my mind, and said it to God.

'Please consider, God,' I said to him reasonably, 'that I am only a little girl, and you can't leave it all to me. I know I'm right, I know the proof is there, but I don't know how to find it. Please take my hand and lead me to whatever it is I need, or else my father will surely die.'

I didn't expect anything to happen at once, and nothing happened. I didn't mind that. I had taken action in declaring myself, and that is always a liberating thing to do. The oppression seemed to lift from me at once, I even felt cooler.

I looked again at my father, and I saw that there were tears streaming down his cheeks. We were so crushed he could not get his hand to the pocket of his *achkan* to pull out his handkerchief. But my hand was smaller and already folded into the hollow of his side, and by wriggling patiently, I got my fingers into the opening, and drew out a corner of the handkerchief between them.

And something else came out with it, a tight little roll screwed into a square of tissue. It rolled into my father's lap, and the wrapping parted; we saw the crumpled edges of a number of banknotes slowly uncoiling, and a scrap of white paper in the heart of the roll.

My mother instinctively put out her hand to cover all that money from sight.

My father had taken up the scrap of paper in a trembling hand, and was staring from that to the banknotes as though he had been shocked back into life by the certainty that he was going mad.

'But it is impossible! I had no money. I had nothing, I swear. Where did this come from?'

But I knew! I pressed my cheek close to his shoulder, and gasped into his ear: 'Don't you see? Don't you understand? Who put his hands into your pockets, turned out all your belongings, and then pushed everything back in again?'

'Mahdar Iqbal!' he breathed, and stared at the money; but I knew it was not the money that was bringing back feeling and form and meaning into his face. 'Read the note,' said my

mother urgently.

It was as he read it through for the first time, silently, that he became in his essence the man he had always been, and a little nearer, surely, to being indestructible. And when he read it the second time, aloud, he was already a little less and a little more than he had always been. A little less by not being able to make amends, a little more by accepting humbly his eternal disability.

“Forgive me,” he read, “but there is no other way of getting this to you. If I spoke with you as a friend, both you and I would be torn to pieces. Take in kindness to me what you now need so much more than I. Forgive me, and remember me not as I am to you today, but as I shall be to you always in spirit. I shall never know a better man.”

There were more than fifteen hundred rupees in the roll of notes. Mahdar Iqbal had given us everything he had.

About the Author

Edith Pargeter was born in 1913 at Horsehay, Shropshire. She attended Dawley Church of England School and the Coalbrookdale High School for Girls. Her first published novel was *Hortensius, friend of Nero* (1936), a rather dry tale of martyrdom that was not a great success but she persevered and *The city lies foursquare* (1939) was much more warmly received.

During the war she worked in an administrative role with the Women’s Royal Navy Service in Liverpool and she received the British Empire Medal. Many more novels appeared at this time, including **Ordinary people** (1941) and **She goes to war** (1942), the latter based on her own wartime experiences.

She won awards for her writing from both the British Crime Writers Association and the Mystery Writers of America. After her death in October 1995, **The Times** published a full obituary that declared that here was “a deeply sensitive and perceptive woman....an intensely private and modest person” whose writing was “direct, even a little stilted, matching a self-contained personality”.

Make Connections

1. Who is the narrator?
2. Why did the father help Mahdar Iqbal?
3. What are the similarities between the two men?
4. Why does the narrator say that her father suffered more than others?
5. Describe Mahdar Iqbal’s behaviour at the train station.
6. What is your reaction to the ending? How does the ending affect your reaction to the story?

2. I've Got Gloria - M.E. Kerr

"Hello? Mrs. Whitman?"

"Yes?"

"I've got Gloria."

"Oh, thank heaven! Is she all right?" "She's fine, Mrs. Whitman."

"Where is she?"

"She's here with me."

"Who are you?"

"You can call me Bud."

"Bud who?"

"Never mind that, Mrs. Whitman. I've got your little dog and she's anxious to get back home."

"Oh, I know she is. She must miss me terribly. Where are you? I'll come and get her right away."

"Not so fast, Mrs. Whitman. First, there's a little something you must do."

"Anything. Just tell me where to find you."

"I'll find *you*, Mrs. Whitman, *after* you do as I say."

"What do you mean, Bud?"

"I mean that I'll need some money before I get Gloria home safely to you".

"Money?"

"She's a very valuable dog."

"Not really. I got her from the pound."

"But she's valuable to you, isn't she?" "She's everything to me."

"So you have to prove it, Mrs. Whitman."

"What is this?"

"A dognapping. I have your dog and you have to pay to have her returned safely to you."

There was a pause.

I could just imagine her face___that face I hated ever since she flunked me. That mean, freckled face, with the glasses over those hard little green eyes, the small, pursed lips, the mop of frizzy red hair topping it all... Well, top this, Mrs. Whitman: I do not even have that nutsy little bulldog of yours. She *is lost*, just as your countless signs nailed up everywhere announce that she is...All I have is this one chance to get revenge, and I'm grabbing it!

Now her voice came carefully. "How much do you want?"

"A thousand dollars, Mrs. Whitman. A thou, in one-hundred-dollar bills, and Gloria will be back drooling on your lap."

"A *thousand* dollars?"

Got to you, didn't I? Did your stomach turn over the way mine did when I saw that F in math?

"You heard me, Mrs. Whitman." "Are you one of my students?" "Oh, like I'm going to

tell you if I am.”

“You must be.”

“I could be, couldn’t I? You’re not everyone’s dream teacher, are you?”

“Please, don’t hurt my dog.”

“I’m not cruel by nature.”

I don’t take after my old man. He said he was sorry that I flunked math because he knew how much I was counting on the hike through Yellow-stone this summer. He said maybe the other guys would take some photos so I could see what I was missing while I went to summer school to get a passing grade. “Gee, Scott,” he said, “what a shame, and now you won’t get an allowance, either, or have TV in your bedroom, or the use of the computer. But never mind, sonny boy,” he said, there’ll be lots to do around the house. I’ll leave lists for you every day of things to be done before I get home.”

Mrs. Whitman whined, “I just don’t have a thousand dollars. I don’t know where I’ll get so much money, either.”

Sometimes I whined that way, and my mom would say, “Scotty, we wouldn’t be so hard on you if you’d only take responsibility for your actions. We tell you to be in at eleven p.m. and you claim the bus was late. We ask you to take the tapes back to Videoland and you say we never said to do it. You always have an excuse for everything! You never blame yourself!”

“Mrs. Whitman? I don’t mean to be hard on you but that’s the deal, see. A thou in hundreds”.

“Just don’t hurt Gloria.”

“Gee, what a shame that you have to worry about such a thing. She’s a sweet little dog, and I know she misses you because she’s not eating.”

“She doesn’t eat dog food, Bud. I cook for her.”

“That’s why she doesn’t eat, hmm? I don’t know how to cook”.

“You could just put a frozen dinner in the microwave. A turkey dinner, or a Swanson’s pot roast. I’ll pay you for it.”

“A thousand dollars plus ten for frozen dinners? Is that what you’re suggesting?”

“Let me think. Please. I have to think how I can get the money.”

“Of course, you do. I’ll call you back, Mrs. Whitman, and meanwhile I’ll go to the store and get some Swanson’s frozen dinners.”

“When will you___”

I hung up.

I could hear Dad coming up the stairs.

“Scott?”

“Yes, sir?”

“I’m going to take the car in for an oil change. I want you to come with me.”

“I have some homework, sir.”

“I want you to come with me. *Now.*”

In the car, he said, “We need to talk.”

“About what?” I said.

There was one of her Lost Dog signs tacked to the telephone pole at the end of our street.

“We need to talk about this summer,” he said.

“What about it?”

“You *have* to make up the math grade. That you *have* to do. I’m sorry you can’t go to Yellowstone.”

“Yeah.”

“There’s no other way if you want to get into any kind of college. Your other grades are fine. But you need math... What’s so hard about math, Scott?”

“I hate it!”

“I did, too, but I learned it. You have to study.”

“Mrs. Whitman doesn’t like me.”

“Why doesn’t she like you?”

“She doesn’t like anyone but that bulldog.”

“Who’s lost, apparently?”

“Yeah.”

“The signs are everywhere.”

“Yeah.”

“But she wouldn’t deliberately flunk you, would she?”

“Who knows?”

“Do you really think a teacher would flunk you because she doesn’t like you?”

“Who knows?”

“Scott, you’ve got to admit when you’re wrong. I’ll give you an example. I was wrong when I said you couldn’t have an allowance or TV or use of the computer, et cetera. I was angry and I just blew! That was wrong. It wouldn’t have made it any easier for you while you’re trying to get a passing grade in math. So I was wrong! I apologize and I take it back.”

“How come?”

“How come? Because I’m sorry. I thought about it and it bothered me. I’m a hothead, and I don’t like that about myself. Okay?”

“Yeah.”

“Maybe that’s what’s wrong here”.

“What’s wrong where?”

“Between *us*”

“Is something wrong between us?”

“Scotty, I’m trying to talk with you. About us. I want to work things out so we get along better.”

“Yeah.”

“Sometimes I do or say rash things.”

“Yeah.”

“I always feel lousy after.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“Do you understand? I shouldn’t take things out on you. That’s petty. Life is hard enough. We don’t have to be mean and spiteful with each other. Agreed?”

“Yeah.” I was thinking about the time our dog didn’t come home one night. I couldn’t sleep. I even prayed. When he got back all muddy the next morning, I broke into tears and told him, “Now you’re making me blubber like a baby!”

Dad was still on my case.

“Scott, I want you to think about why Mrs. Whitman flunked you.”

“I just told you: she doesn’t like me.”

“Are you really convinced that you’re good at math but the reason you failed was because she doesn’t like you?”

“Maybe.”

“Is she a good teacher?”

“She never smiles. She’s got these tight little lips and these ugly freckles.”

“So she’s not a good teacher?”

“I can’t learn from her.”

“Did you study hard?”

“I studied. Sure. I studied.”

“How many others flunked math?”

“What?”

“How many others flunked math?”

“No one.”

“Speak up.”

“I said, I’m the only one.”

“So others learn from her despite her tight little lips and ugly freckles?”

“I guess.”

“Scott, who’s to blame for your flunking math?”

“Okay,” I said. “Okay.”

“Who is to blame?”

“Me. Okay? I didn’t study that hard.”

He sighed and said, “There. Good. You’ve accepted the blame...How do you feel?”

“I feel okay.” I really didn’t, though. I was thinking about that dumb bulldog running loose somewhere, and about Mrs. Whitman worried sick now that she thought Gloria’d been dognapped.

Dad said, “I think we both feel a lot better.”

We sat around in the waiting room at the service centre.

Dad read *Sports Illustrated*, but I couldn’t concentrate on the magazines there or the ballgame on TV. I was down. I knew what Dad meant when he’d told me he felt bad after he “blew” and that he didn’t like himself for it.

I kept glancing toward the pay phone. I stuck my hands in my pants pockets. I had a few quarters.

“I’m going to call Al and see what he’s doing tonight,” I said.

Dad said, “Wait until you get home. We’ll be leaving here very shortly. “

“I’m going to look around,” I said.

I didn’t know Mrs. Whitman’s number. I’d copied it down from one of the Lost Dog signs and ripped it up after I’d called her. I hadn’t planned to follow up the call, get money from her: nothing like that. I just wanted to give her a good scare.

I went over to the phone book and looked her up.

Then I ducked inside the phone booth, fed the slot a quarter, and dialed.

“Hello?”

“Mrs. Whitman? I don’t have your dog. I was playing a joke.”

“I know you don’t have my dog. Gloria’s home. The dog warden found her and brought her back right after you hung up on me.”

I was relieved. At least she wouldn’t have to go all night worrying about getting Gloria back.

“I was wrong,” I said. “It was petty. I’m sorry.”

“Do you know what you put me through, Scott Perkins?”

I just hung up.

I stood there with my face flaming.

“Scott?” My father was looking all over for me, calling me and calling me. “Scott! Are you here? The car’s ready!”

All the way home, he lectured me on how contrary I was. Why couldn’t I have waited to phone Al? What was it about me that made me just go ahead and do something I was expressly told I shouldn’t do? “Just when I think we’ve gotten someplace,” he said, “you turn around and go against my wishes.

“*Why?*” he shouted.

I said, “What?” I hadn’t been concentrating on all that he was saying.

I was thinking that now she knew my name ___ don’t ask me how ___ and now what was she going to do about it?

“I asked you *why* you go against my wishes,” Dad said. “Nothing I say seems to register with you.”

“It registers with me,” I said. “I just seem to screw up sometimes.”

“I can hardly believe my ears.” He was smiling. “You actually said sometimes you screw up. That’s a new one.”

“Yeah,” I said. “That’s a new one.”

Then we both laughed, but I was still shaking, remembering Mrs. Whitman saying my name that way.

When we got in the house, Mom said, “The funniest thing happened while you were gone. The phone rang and this woman asked what number this was. I told her, and she asked whom she was speaking to. I told her and she said, ‘Perkins...Perkins. Do you have a boy named Scott?’ I said that we did, and she said, ‘This is Martha Whitman. Tell him I’ll see him this summer. I’m teaching remedial math.’”

I figured that right after I’d hung up from calling her about Gloria, she’d dialed *69. I’d heard you could do that. The phone would ring whoever called you last. That was why she’d

asked my mother what number it was and who was speaking.

Dad said, “You see, Scott, Mrs. Whitman doesn’t dislike you, or she wouldn’t have called here to tell you she’d see you this summer.”

“I was wrong,” I said. “Wrong again.”

Oh, was I ever!

About the Author

M.E.Kerr was born on May 27, 1927 as Marijane Agnes Meaker in Auburn, NY. She received B.A. from the University of Missouri in 1949.

She was partly influenced by her father who was an ardent reader. “Our living room was lined with book cases and I was always borrowing books from them to take up to my room and devour”, she says about herself.

During her prolific writing career she has published under the pseudonyms of M.E. Kerr, Ann Aldrich, Mary James and Vin Packer. At present she is a member of PEN, Authors League of America and society of children’s Book Writers. M.E Kerr is the winner of 1993 Margaret Edwards Award for her life time achievement in writing books for young adults.

Make Connections

1. What do we know about Scott’s motivation for calling?
2. What more do we find out about Mrs. Whitman?
3. What does Scott think about his father?
4. What kind of a person is Scott?
5. What do you think Mrs. Whitman will do after Scott hangs up?
6. In what ways are you similar to or different from Scott Perkins?

3. The Story of an Hour – Kate Chopin

Rationale

Marriage is a complex relationship. Many young couples believe that they will be in love forever, but that is not always the case. In fact, there is nothing perfect about life. Everything shifts.

In “The Story of an Hour”, Louise Mallard experiences a sense of freedom and independence when being told of her husband Brently Mallard’s supposed death in a railroad crash only to have a heart attack and die when he walks in the door an hour later.

Does the psychological ambivalence dramatize in “The Story of an Hour” ring true or uncomfortably real when we consider honestly our own feelings?

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband’s death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half-concealing. Her husband’s friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard’s name leading the list of “killed.” He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister’s arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself, she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this, she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song that someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried herself to sleep continues to sob in her dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the colour that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulse beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or was not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and grey and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often, she had not. What did it matter? What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering. Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg, open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of an accident and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Richards’ quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came, they said she had died of heart disease-- of joy that kills.

Make Connections

1. What is the message of the story?
2. Why does Mrs. Mallard die at the end of the story?
3. What kind of a woman do you think was Mrs. Mallard?
4. What is the main conflict in the story and how is it resolved?

About the Author

*Kate Chopin was a forgotten American voice until her literary reputation was resuscitated by critics in the 1950s. Today her novel *The Awakening* (1899) the story of a sensual, determined woman who insists on her independence, is widely read and highly honoured, a feminist work which was decidedly ahead of its time. Born Katherine O’Flaherty into an upper-middle-class family in St. Louis, she married Oscar Chopin when she was twenty and moved to her husband’s home in Louisiana. In the ten years that she resided in Louisiana, she was aware of and receptive to Creole, Cajun, black, and Indian cultures, and when she later came to write fiction, she would incorporate people from these cultures in her work, especially her short stories. When her husband died as a young man, Kate Chopin returned to St. Louis with her six children. Financially secure, she began writing fiction as best she could while rearing her children. She is a good example of an American realist, someone trying to represent life the way it actually is lived, and she acknowledged her debt to the contemporary French naturalists Emile Zola and Guy de Maupassant.*

4. A Retrieved Reformation - O' Henry

About the Author

O' Henry is the pen name of William Sydney Porter (1862-1910). He was an American writer who established himself as a master of the short story. O' Henry was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, USA. In his youth, he borrowed money from the bank to start a literary magazine. He roamed about the back streets of New York where he found ample materials for his tales. His stories are well known for coincidence and trick endings, purple phraseology and caricature. His writings also evince technical brilliance and boldness. His important published works include "Cabbages and Kings", "The Four Million", "The Roads of Destiny", "Rolling Stones", "The Voice of the City" etc.

Rationale

We all have heard or read about people who have indulged in unwarranted criminal acts triggered by different circumstances. But it is seldom, we hear that for some reason, they come back strong and right the wrong. The story "A Retrieved Reformation" is one such story wherein love has changed the fate of a robber who could end up doing unimaginable criminal acts and never get to redeem his actions.

A guard came to the prison shoe shop, where Jimmy Valentine was assiduously stitching uppers and escorted him to the front office. There the warden handed Jimmy his pardon, which had been signed that morning by the governor. Jimmy took it in a tired kind of way. He had served nearly ten months of a four-year sentence. He had expected to stay only about three months, at the longest. When a man with as many friends on the outside as Jimmy Valentine had been received in the "stir" it is hardly worthwhile to cut his hair.

"Now, Valentine," said the warden, "you'll go out in the morning. Brace up, and make a man of yourself. You're not a bad fellow at heart. Stop cracking safes, and live straight."

"Me?" said Jimmy, in surprise. "Why, I never cracked a safe in my life."

"Oh, no," laughed the warden. "Of course not. Let's see, now. How was it you happened to get sent up on that Springfield job? Was it because you wouldn't prove an alibi for fear of compromising somebody in an extremely high-toned society? Or was it simply a case of a mean old jury that had it in for you? It's always one or the other with you innocent victims."

"Me?" said Jimmy, still blankly virtuous. "Why, warden, I never was in Springfield in my life!"

"Take him back, Cronin!" said the warden, "and fix him up with outgoing clothes. Unlock him at seven in the morning, and let him come to the bull-pen. Better think over my advice, Valentine."

At a quarter past seven on the next morning, Jimmy stood in the warden's outer office. He had on a suit of villainously fitting, ready-made clothes and a pair of the stiff, squeaky shoes that the state furnishes to its discharged compulsory guests.

The clerk handed him a railroad ticket and the five-dollar bill with which the law expected him to rehabilitate himself into good citizenship and prosperity. The warden gave him a cigar and shook hands. Valentine, 9762, was chronicled in the book, "Pardoned by Governor," and Mr. James Valentine walked out into the sunshine.

Disregarding the song of the birds, the waving green trees, and the smell of the flowers, Jimmy headed straight for a restaurant. There he tasted the first sweet joys of liberty in the shape of a broiled chicken and a bottle of white wine--followed by a cigar a grade better than the one the warden had given him. From there he proceeded leisurely to the depot. He tossed a quarter into the hat of a blind man sitting by the door and boarded his train. Three hours set him down in a little town near the state line. He went to the cafe of one Mike Dolan and shook hands with Mike, who was alone behind the bar.

"Sorry we couldn't make it sooner, Jimmy, me boy," said Mike. "But we had that protest from Springfield to buck against, and the governor nearly balked. Feeling all right?"

"Fine," said Jimmy. "Got my key?"

He got his key and went upstairs, unlocking the door of a room at the rear. Everything was just as he had left it. There on the floor was still Ben Price's collar button that had been torn from that eminent detective's shirt band when they had overpowered Jimmy to arrest him.

Pulling out from the wall a folding bed, Jimmy slid back a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust-covered suitcase. He opened this and gazed fondly at the finest set of burglar's tools in the East. It was a complete set, made of specially tempered steel, the latest designs in drills, punches, braces and bits, jimmies, clamps, and augers, with two or three novelties, invented by Jimmy himself, in which he took pride. Over nine hundred dollars they had cost him to have made at ----, a place where they make such things for the profession.

In half an hour Jimmy went downstairs and through the cafe. He was now dressed in tasteful and well-fitting clothes and carried his dusted and cleaned suitcase in his hand.

"Got anything on?" asked Mike Dolan, genially.

"Me?" said Jimmy, in a puzzled tone. "I don't understand. I'm representing the New York Amalgamated Short Snap Biscuit Cracker and Frazzled Wheat Company."

This statement delighted Mike to such an extent that Jimmy had to take a seltzer and milk on the spot. He never touched "hard" drinks.

A week after the release of Valentine, 9762, there was a neat job of safe-burglary done in Richmond, Indiana, with no clue to the author. A scant eight hundred dollars was all that was secured. Two weeks after that a patented, improved, burglar-proof safe in Logansport was opened like a cheese to the tune of fifteen hundred dollars, currency; securities and silver untouched. That began to interest the rogue-catchers. Then an old-fashioned bank safe in Jefferson City became active and threw out of its crater an eruption of bank notes amounting to five thousand dollars. The losses were now high enough to bring the matter up into Ben Price's class of work. By comparing notes, a remarkable similarity in the methods of the burglaries was noticed. Ben Price investigated the scenes of the robberies, and was heard to remark:

“That's Dandy Jim Valentine's autograph. He's resumed business. Look at that combination knob--jerked out as easily as pulling up a radish in wet weather. He's got the only clamps that can do it. And look how clean those tumblers were punched out! Jimmy never has to drill but one hole. Yes, I guess I want Mr. Valentine. He'll do his bit next time without any short-time or clemency foolishness.”

Ben Price knew Jimmy's habits. He had learned them while working on the Springfield case. Long jumps, quick getaways, no confederates, and a taste for good society--these ways had helped Mr. Valentine to become noted as a successful dodger of retribution. It was given out that Ben Price had taken up the trail of the elusive cracksman, and other people with burglar-proof safes felt more at ease.

One afternoon Jimmy Valentine and his suitcase climbed out of the mail hack in Elmore, a little town five miles off the railroad down in the black-jack country of Arkansas. Jimmy, looking like an athletic young senior just home from college, went down the board side-walk toward the hotel.

A young lady crossed the street, passed him at the corner and entered a door over which was the sign, “The Elmore Bank.” Jimmy Valentine looked into her eyes, forgot what he was, and became another man. She lowered her eyes and coloured slightly. Young men of Jimmy's style and looks were scarce in Elmore.

Jimmy collared a boy that was loafing on the steps of the bank as if he were one of the stockholders, and began to ask him questions about the town, feeding him dimes at intervals. By and by the young lady came out, looking royally unconscious of the young man with the suitcase, and went her way.

“Isn't that young lady Polly Simpson?” asked Jimmy, with specious guile.

“Naw,” said the boy. “She's Annabel Adams. Her pa owns this bank. Why'd you come to Elmore for? Is that a gold watch chain? I'm going to get a bulldog. Got any more dimes?”

Jimmy went to the Planters' Hotel, registered as Ralph D. Spencer, and engaged a room. He leaned on the desk and declared his platform to the clerk. He said he had come to Elmore

to look for a location to go into business. How was the shoe business, now, in the town? He had thought of the shoe business. Was there an opening?

The clerk was impressed by his clothes and manner of Jimmy. He, himself, was something of a pattern of fashion to the thinly gilded youth of Elmore, but he now perceived his shortcomings. While trying to figure out Jimmy's manner of tying his four-in-hand he cordially gave information.

Yes, there ought to be a good opening in the shoe line. There wasn't an exclusive shoe store in the place. The dry goods and general stores handled them. Business in all lines was fairly good. Hoped Mr. Spencer would decide to locate in Elmore. He would find it a pleasant town to live in, and the people very sociable.

Mr. Spencer thought he would stop over in the town for a few days and look over the situation. No, the clerk needn't call the boy. He would carry up his suitcase, himself; it was rather heavy.

Mr. Ralph Spencer, the phoenix that arose from Jimmy Valentine's ashes --ashes left by the flame of a sudden and alterative attack of love-- remained in Elmore, and prospered. He opened a shoe store and secured a good run of trade.

Socially he was also a success and made many friends. And he accomplished the wish of his heart. He met Miss Annabel Adams and became more and more captivated by her charms.

At the end of a year, the situation of Mr. Ralph Spencer was this: he had won the respect of the community, his shoe store was flourishing, and he and Annabel were engaged to be married in two weeks. Mr. Adams, the typical, plodding, country banker, approved of Spencer. Annabel's pride in him almost equalled her affection. He was as much at home in the family of Mr. Adams and that of Annabel's married sister as if he were already a member.

One day Jimmy sat down in his room and wrote this letter, which he mailed to the safe address of one of his old friends in St. Louis:

Dear Old Pal:

I want you to be at Sullivan's place, in Little Rock, next Wednesday night, at nine o'clock. I want you to wind up some little matters for me. And, also, I want to make you a present for my kit of tools. I know you'll be glad to get them--you couldn't duplicate the lot for a thousand dollars. Say, Billy, I've quit the old business--a year ago. I've got a nice store. I'm making an honest living, and I'm going to marry the finest girl on earth two weeks from now. It's the only life, Billy--the straight one. I wouldn't touch a dollar of another man's money now for a million. After I get married, I'm going to sell out and go West, where there won't be so much danger of having old scores brought up against me. I tell you, Billy, she's an angel. She believes in me, and I wouldn't do another crooked thing for the whole world. Be sure to be at Sully's, for I must see you. I'll bring along the tools with me.

Your old friend,

Jimmy.

On the Monday night after Jimmy wrote this letter, Ben Price jogged unobtrusively into Elmore in a livery buggy. He lounged about town in his quiet way until he found out what he wanted to know. From the drug store across the street from Spencer's shoe store he got a good look at Ralph D. Spencer.

"Going to marry the banker's daughter are you, Jimmy?" said Ben to himself, softly. "Well, I don't know!"

The next morning Jimmy took breakfast at the Adamses. He was going to Little Rock that day to order his wedding suit and buy something nice for Annabel. That would be the first time he had left town since he came to Elmore. It had been more than a year now since those last professional "jobs," and he thought he could safely venture out.

After breakfast, quite a family party went downtown together--Mr. Adams, Annabel, Jimmy, and Annabel's married sister with her two little girls, aged five and nine. They came by the hotel where Jimmy was still boarded, and he ran up to his room and brought along his suitcase. Then they went on to the bank. There stood Jimmy's horse and buggy and Dolph Gibson, who was going to drive him over to the railroad station.

All went inside the high, carved oak railings into the banking room-- Jimmy included, for Mr. Adams's future son-in-law was welcome anywhere. The clerks were pleased to be greeted by the good-looking, agreeable young man who was going to marry Miss Annabel. Jimmy set his suitcase down. Annabel, whose heart was bubbling with happiness and lively youth, put on Jimmy's hat and picked up the suitcase. "Wouldn't I make a nice drummer?" said Annabel. "My! Ralph, how heavy it is? Feels like it was full of gold bricks."

"Lot of nickel-plated shoe horns in there," said Jimmy, coolly, "that I'm going to return. Thought I'd save express charges by taking them up. I'm getting awfully economical."

The Elmore Bank had just put in a new safe and vault. Mr. Adams was very proud of it and insisted on an inspection by everyone. The vault was a small one, but it had a new, patented door. It fastened with three solid steel bolts thrown simultaneously with a single handle and had a time-lock. Mr. Adams beamingly explained its workings to Mr. Spencer, who showed a courteous but not too intelligent interest. The two children, May and Agatha, were delighted by the shining metal and funny clock and knobs.

While they were thus engaged Ben Price sauntered in and leaned on his elbow, looking casually inside between the railings. He told the teller that he didn't want anything; he was just waiting for a man he knew.

Suddenly there was a scream or two from the women and a commotion. Unperceived by the elders, May, the nine-year-old girl, in a spirit of play, had shut Agatha in the vault. She had then shot the bolts and turned the knob of the combination as she had seen Mr. Adams do.

The old banker sprang to the handle and tugged at it for a moment. "The door can't be opened," he groaned. "The clock hasn't been wound nor the combination set."

Agatha's mother screamed again, hysterically.

"Hush!" said Mr. Adams, raising his trembling hand. "All be quiet for a moment. Agatha!" he called as loudly as he could. "Listen to me." During the following silence, they could just hear the faint sound of the child wildly shrieking in the dark vault in a panic of terror.

"My precious darling!" wailed the mother. "She will die of fright! Open the door! Oh, break it open! Can't you men do something?"

"There isn't a man nearer than Little Rock who can open that door," said Mr. Adams, in a shaky voice. "My God! Spencer, what shall we do? That child--she can't stand it long in there. There isn't enough air, and, besides, she'll go into convulsions from fright."

Agatha's mother, frantic now, beat the door of the vault with her hands. Somebody wildly suggested dynamite. Annabel turned to Jimmy, her large eyes full of anguish, but not yet despairing. To a woman, nothing seems quite impossible to the powers of the man she worships.

"Can't you do something, Ralph, won't you?"

He looked at her with a queer, soft smile on his lips and in his keen eyes.

"Annabel," he said, "give me that rose you are wearing, will you?"

Hardly believing that she heard him aright, she unpinned the bud from the bosom of her dress and placed it in his hand. Jimmy stuffed it into his vest pocket, threw off his coat and pulled up his shirt-sleeves. With that act, Ralph D. Spencer passed away and Jimmy Valentine took his place.

"Get away from the door, all of you," he commanded, shortly.

He set his suitcase on the table and opened it flat. From that time on he seemed to be unconscious of the presence of anyone else. He laid out the shining, queer implements swiftly and orderly, whistling softly to himself as he always did when at work. In a deep silence and immovable, the others watched him as if under a spell.

In a minute Jimmy's pet drill was biting smoothly into the steel door. In ten minutes--breaking his own burglarious record--he threw back the bolts and opened the door.

Agatha almost collapsed but was safe, and was gathered into her mother's arms.

Jimmy Valentine put on his coat and walked outside the railings towards the front door. As he went, he thought he heard a far-away voice that he once knew called "Ralph!" But he never hesitated.

At the door, a big man stood somewhat in his way.

"Hello, Ben!" said Jimmy, still with his strange smile. "Got around at last, have you? Well, let's go. I don't know that it makes much difference, now."

And then Ben Price acted rather strangely.

"Guess you're mistaken, Mr. Spencer," he said. "Don't believe I recognize you. Your buggy's waiting for you, ain't it?"

Make Connections

1. What must have Jimmy Valentine thought before he decided to open the safe/ vault?
2. Why do you think Ben Price pretended not to recognize Jimmy Valentine
3. To save the life of Agatha Jimmy had to make a difficult decision, Why was it a difficult decision?
4. If you know, share with your friends an incident where a supposedly bad person does a good deed.
5. Identify some of the lines or phrases in the story that contain imagery. What kind of imagery are those?
6. Discuss the theme of the story.

SUPPLEMENTARY

1. Tom Whitewashes the Fence - *Mark Twain*

SATURDAY morning was come, and all the summer world was bright and fresh, and brimming with life. There was a song in every heart; and if the heart was young the music issued at the lips. There was cheer in every face and a spring in every step. The locust-trees were in bloom and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air. Cardiff Hill, beyond the village and above it, was green with vegetation and it lay just far enough away to seem a Delectable Land, dreamy, reposeful, and inviting.

Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence, and all gladness left him and a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of board fence nine feet high. Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a burden. Sighing, he dipped his brush and passed it along the topmost plank; repeated the operation; did it again; compared the insignificant whitewashed streak with the farreaching continent of unwhitewashed fence, and sat down on a treebox discouraged. Jim came skipping out at the gate with a tin pail, and singing Buffalo Gals. Bringing water from the town pump had always been hateful work in Tom's eyes, before, but now it did not strike him so. He remembered that there was company at the pump. White, mulatto, and negro boys and girls were always there waiting their turns, resting, trading playthings, quarrelling, fighting, skylarking. And he remembered that although the pump was only a hundred and fifty yards off, Jim never got back with a bucket of water under an hour—and even then somebody generally had to go after him. Tom said:

'Say, Jim, I'll fetch the water if you'll whitewash some.' Jim shook his head and said:

'Can't, Mars Tom. Ole missis, she tole me I got to go an' git dis water an' not stop foolin' roun' wid anybody. She say she spec' Mars Tom gwine to ax me to whitewash, an' so she tole me go 'long an' 'tend to my own business—she 'lowed SHE'D 'tend to de whitewashin'.'

'Oh, never you mind what she said, Jim. That's the way she always talks. Gimme the bucket—I won't be gone only a a minute. SHE won't ever know.'

'Oh, I dasn't, Mars Tom. Ole missis she'd take an' tar de head off'n me. 'Deed she would.'

'SHE! She never licks anybody—whacks 'em over the head with her thimble—and who cares for that, I'd like to know. She talks awful, but talk don't hurt—anyways it don't if she don't cry. Jim, I'll give you a marvel. I'll give you a white alley!'

Jim began to waver. 'White alley, Jim! And it's a bully taw.'

'My! Dat's a mighty gay marvel, I tell you! But Mars Tom I's powerful 'fraid ole missis —'

'And besides, if you will I'll show you my sore toe.'

Jim was only human—this attraction was too much for him. He put down his pail, took the white alley, and bent over the toe with absorbing interest while the bandage was being unwound. In another moment he was flying down the street with his pail and a tingling rear, Tom was whitewashing with vigor, and Aunt Polly was retiring from the field with a slipper

in her hand and triumph in her eye. But Tom's energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.

He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben's gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned dingdong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them: 'Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!' The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk.

'Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!' His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.
'Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow. ch-chow-wow! Chow!' His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.
'Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chowch-chow-chow!' The left hand began to describe circles.
'Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard.' Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what're you about there! Take a turn round 2 that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go. Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH'T! S'H'T. SH'T!' (trying the gauge-cocks).

Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said:

'Hi-YI. YOU'RE up a stump, ain't you!'

No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before.

Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom's mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work. Ben said:

'Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?'

Tom wheeled suddenly and said: 'Why, it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing.'

'Say—I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther

WORK— wouldn't you? Course you would!

Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said: 'What do you call work?'

'Why, ain't THAT work?'

Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly:

'Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know, is, it suits Tom Sawyer.'

'Oh come, now, you don't mean to let on that you LIKE it?'

The brush continued to move. 'Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?'

That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth— stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there— criticised the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:

'Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little.'

Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:

'No—no—I reckon it wouldn't hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly's awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn't mind and SHE wouldn't. Yes, she's awful particular about this fence; it's got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it's got to be done.'

'No—is that so? Oh come, now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I'd let YOU, if you was me, Tom.'

'Ben, I'd like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn't let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn't let Sid. Now don't you see how I'm fixed. If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it —'

'Oh, shucks, I'll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I'll give you the core of my apple.'

'Well, here—No, Ben, now don't. I'm afeard —'

'I'll give you ALL of it!'

Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was fagged out, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel,

and a dilapidated old window sash.

He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.

Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a treadmill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passengercoaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign. The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.

2. The Sniper - *Liam O'Flaherty*

The long June twilight faded into night. Dublin lay enveloped in darkness but for the dim light of the moon that shone through fleecy clouds, casting a pale light as of approaching dawn over the streets and the dark waters of the Liffey. Around the beleaguered Four Courts the heavy guns roared. Here and there through the city, machine guns and rifles broke the silence of the night, spasmodically, like dogs barking on lone farms. Republicans and Free Staters were waging civil war.

On a rooftop near O'Connell Bridge, a Republican sniper lay watching. Beside him lay his rifle and over his shoulders was slung a pair of field glasses. His face was the face of a student, thin and ascetic, but his eyes had the cold gleam of the fanatic. They were deep and thoughtful, the eyes of a man who is used to looking at death.

He was eating a sandwich hungrily. He had eaten nothing since morning. He had been too excited to eat. He finished the sandwich, and, taking a flask of whiskey from his pocket, he took a short drought. Then he returned the flask to his pocket. He paused for a moment, considering whether he should risk a smoke. It was dangerous. The flash might be seen in the darkness, and there were enemies watching. He decided to take the risk. Placing a cigarette between his lips, he struck a match, inhaled the smoke hurriedly and put out the light. Almost immediately, a bullet flattened itself against the parapet of the roof. The sniper took another whiff and put out the cigarette. Then he swore softly and crawled away to the left.

Cautiously he raised himself and peered over the parapet. There was a flash and a bullet whizzed over his head. He dropped immediately. He had seen the flash. It came from the opposite side of the street.

He rolled over the roof to a chimney stack in the rear, and slowly drew himself up behind it, until his eyes were level with the top of the parapet. There was nothing to be seen – just the dim outline of the opposite housetop against the blue sky. His enemy was under cover.

Just then an armoured car came across the bridge and advanced slowly up the street. It stopped on the opposite side of the street, fifty yards ahead. The sniper could hear the dull panting of the motor. His heart beat faster. It was an enemy car. He wanted to fire, but he knew it was useless. His bullets would never pierce the steel that covered the gray monster. Then round the corner of a side street came an old woman, her head covered by a tattered shawl. She began to talk to the man in the turret of the car. She was pointing to the roof where the sniper lay. An informer.

The turret opened. A man's head and shoulders appeared, looking toward the sniper. The sniper raised his rifle and fired. The head fell heavily on the turret wall. The woman darted toward the side street. The sniper fired again. The woman whirled round and fell with a shriek into the gutter.

Suddenly from the opposite roof a shot rang out and the sniper dropped his rifle with a curse. The rifle clattered to the roof. The sniper thought the noise would wake the dead. He stooped to pick the rifle up. He couldn't lift it. His forearm was dead.

"I'm hit," he muttered.

Dropping flat onto the roof, he crawled back to the parapet. With his left hand he felt the injured right forearm. The blood was oozing through the sleeve of his coat. There was no pain--just a deadened sensation, as if the arm had been cut off.

Quickly he drew his knife from his pocket, opened it on the breastwork of the parapet, and ripped open the sleeve. There was a small hole where the bullet had entered. On the other side there was no hole. The bullet had lodged in the bone. It must have fractured it. He bent the arm below the wound. The arm bent back easily. He ground his teeth to overcome the pain.

Then taking out his field dressing, he ripped open the packet with his knife. He broke the neck of the iodine bottle and let the bitter fluid drip into the wound. A paroxysm of pain swept through him. He placed the cotton wadding over the wound and wrapped the dressing over it. He tied the ends with his teeth.

Then he lay still against the parapet, and, closing his eyes, he made an effort of will to overcome the pain.

In the street beneath all was still. The armoured car had retired speedily over the bridge, with the machine gunner's head hanging lifeless over the turret. The woman's corpse lay still in the gutter.

The sniper lay still for a long time nursing his wounded arm and planning escape. Morning must not find him wounded on the roof. The enemy on the opposite roof covered his escape. He must kill that enemy and he could not use his rifle. He had only a revolver to do it. Then he thought of a plan.

Taking off his cap, he placed it over the muzzle of his rifle. Then he pushed the rifle slowly upward over the parapet, until the cap was visible from the opposite side of the street. Almost immediately there was a report, and a bullet pierced the centre of the cap. The sniper

slanted the rifle forward. The cap clipped down into the street. Then catching the rifle in the middle, the sniper dropped his left hand over the roof and let it hang, lifelessly. After a few moments he let the rifle drop to the street. Then he sank to the roof, dragging his hand with him.

Crawling quickly to his feet, he peered up at the corner of the roof. His ruse had succeeded. The other sniper, seeing the cap and rifle fall, thought that he had killed his man. He was now standing before a row of chimney pots, looking across, with his head clearly silhouetted against the western sky.

The Republican sniper smiled and lifted his revolver above the edge of the parapet. The distance was about fifty yards – a hard shot in the dim light, and his right arm was paining him like a thousand devils. He took a steady aim. His hand trembled with eagerness. Pressing his lips together, he took a deep breath through his nostrils and fired. He was almost deafened with the report and his arm shook with the recoil.

Then when the smoke cleared, he peered across and uttered a cry of joy. His enemy had been hit. He was reeling over the parapet in his death agony. He struggled to keep his feet, but he was slowly falling forward as if in a dream. The rifle fell from his grasp, hit the parapet, fell over, bounded off the pole of a barber's shop beneath and then clattered on the pavement.

Then the dying man on the roof crumpled up and fell forward. The body turned over and over in space and hit the ground with a dull thud. Then it lay still.

The sniper looked at his enemy falling and he shuddered. The lust of battle died in him. He became bitten by remorse. The sweat stood out in beads on his forehead. Weakened by his wound and the long summer day of fasting and watching on the roof, he revolted from the sight of the shattered mass of his dead enemy. His teeth chattered, he began to gibber to himself, cursing the war, cursing himself, cursing everybody.

He looked at the smoking revolver in his hand, and with an oath he hurled it to the roof at his feet. The revolver went off with a concussion and the bullet whizzed past the sniper's head. He was frightened back to his senses by the shock. His nerves steadied. The cloud of fear scattered from his mind and he laughed.

Taking the whiskey flask from his pocket, he emptied it a drought. He felt reckless under the influence of the spirit. He decided to leave the roof now and look for his company commander, to report. Everywhere around was quiet. There was not much danger in going through the streets. He picked up his revolver and put it in his pocket. Then he crawled down through the skylight to the house underneath.

When the sniper reached the laneway on the street level, he felt a sudden curiosity as to the

identity of the enemy sniper whom he had killed. He decided that he was a good shot, whoever he was. He wondered if he knew him. Perhaps he had been in his own company before the split in the army. He decided to risk going over to have a look at him. He peered around the corner into O'Connell Street. In the upper part of the street there was heavy firing, but around here all was quiet.

The sniper darted across the street. A machine gun tore up the ground around him with a hail of bullets, but he escaped. He threw himself face downward beside the corpse. The machine gun stopped.

Then the sniper turned over the dead body and looked into his brother's face.

3. Too Soon a Woman - *D. Johnson*

WE LEFT the home place behind, mile by slow mile, heading for the mountains, across the prairie where the wind blew forever.

At first there were four of us with the one-horse wagon and its skimpy load. Pa and I walked, because I was a big boy of eleven. My two little sisters romped and trotted until they got tired and had to be boosted up into the wagon bed.

That was no covered Conestoga, like Pa's folks came West in, but just an old farm wagon, drawn by one weary horse, creaking and rumbling westward to the mountains, toward the little woods town where Pa thought he had an old uncle who owned a little two-bit sawmill.

Two weeks we had been moving when we picked up Mary, who had run away from somewhere that she wouldn't tell. Pa didn't want her along, but she stood up to him with no fear in her voice.

"I'd rather go with a family and look after kids," she said, "but I ain't going back. If you won't take me, I'll travel with any wagon that will."

Pa scowled at her, and her wide blue eyes stared back.

"How old are you?" he demanded.

"Eighteen," she said. "There's teamsters come this way sometimes. I'd rather go with you folks: But I won't go back."

"We're prid' near out of grub," my father told her. "We're clean out of money. I got all I can handle without taking anybody else." He turned away as if he hated the sight of her. "You'll have to walk," he said.

So she went along with us, looked after the little girls, wouldn't talk to her.

On the prairie, the wind blew. But in the mountains, there was rain. When we stopped at little timber claims along the way, the homesteaders said it had rained all summer. Crops among the blackened stumps were rotted and spoiled. There was no cheer anywhere, and little hospitality. The people we talked to were past worrying. They were scared and desperate.

So was Pa. He traveled twice as far each day as the wagon, ranging through the woods with his rifle, but never saw game. He had been depending on venison. But we never got any except as a grudging gift from the homesteaders.

"He brought in a porcupine once, and that was fat meat and good. Mary roasted it in chunks over the fire, half crying with the smoke. Pa and I rigged up the tarp sheet for shelter to keep the rain from putting the fire clean out.

The porcupine was long gone, except for some of the tried-out fat that Mary had saved, when we came to an old, empty cabin. Pa said we'd have to stop. The horse was wore out, couldn't pull anymore up those grades on the deep-rutted roads in the mountains.

At the cabin, at least there was shelter. We had a few potatoes left and some corn meal. There was a creek that probably had fish in it, if a person could catch them. Pa tried it for half a day before he gave up. To this day I don't care for fishing. I remember my father's sunken eyes in his gaunt, grim face.

He took Mary and me outside the cabin to talk. Rain dripped on us from branches overhead.

"I think I know where we are," he said. "I calculate to get to old John's and back in about four days. There'll be grub in the town, and they'll let me have some whether old John's still there or not."

He looked at me. "You do like she tells you," he warned. It was the first time he had admitted Mary was on earth since we picked her up two weeks before.

"You're my pardner," he said to me, "but it might be she's got more brains. You mind what she says."

He burst out with bitterness. "There ain't anything good left in the world, or people to care if you live or die. But I'll get grub in the town and come back with it".

He took a deep breath and added, 'If you get too all-fired hungry, butcher the horse. It'll be better than starving."

He kissed the little girls good-bye and plodded off through the woods with one blanket and the rifle.

The cabin was moldy and had no floor. We kept a fire going under a hole in the roof, so it was full of blinding smoke, but we had to keep the fire so as to dry out the wood.

The third night we lost the horse. A bear scared him. We heard the racket, and Mary and I ran out, but we couldn't see anything in the pitch-dark.

In gray daylight I went looking for him, and I must have walked fifteen miles. It seemed like I had to have that horse at the cabin when Pa came or he'd whip me. I got plumb lost two or three times and thought maybe I was going to die there alone and nobody would ever know it, but I found the way back to the clearing.

That was the fourth day, and Pa didn't come. That was the day we ate up the last of the grub.

The fifth day, Mary went looking for the horse. My sisters whimpered, huddled in a quilt by the fire, because they were scared and hungry.

I never did get dried out, always having to bring in more damp wood and going out to yell to see if Mary would hear me and not get lost. But I couldn't cry like the little girls did, because I was a big boy, eleven years old.

It was near dark when there was an answer to my yelling, and Mary came into the clearing.

Mary didn't have the horse - we never saw hide nor hair of that old horse again - but she was carrying something big and white that looked like a pumpkin with no color to it.

She didn't say anything, just looked around and saw Pa wasn't there yet, at the end of the fifth day.

"What's that thing?" my sister Elizabeth demanded.

"Mushroom," Mary answered. "I bet it hefts ten pounds."

"What are you going to do with it now?" I sneered. "Play football here?"

"Eat it -maybe," she said, putting it in a corner. Her wet hair hung over her shoulders. She huddled by the fire.

My sister Sarah began to whimper again. "I'm hungry!" she kept saying.

"Mushrooms ain't good eating," I said. "They can kill you."

"Maybe," Mary answered. "Maybe they can. I don't set up to know all about everything,

like some people.”

“What’s that mark on your shoulder?” I asked her. “You tore your dress on the brush.”

“What do you think it is?” she said, her head bowed in the smoke.

“Looks like scars,” I guessed.

“ ‘Tis scars. They whipped me. Now mind your own business. I want to think.”

Elizabeth whimpered, “Why don’t Pa come back?”

“He’s coming,” Mary promised.

“Can’t come in the dark. Your pa’ll take care of you soon’s he can.”

She got up and rummaged around in the grub box.

“Nothing there but empty dishes,” I growled. “If there was anything, we’d know it.”

Mary stood up. She was holding the can with the porcupine grease. “I’m going to have something to eat,” she said coolly. “You kids can’t have any yet. And I don’t want any squalling, mind.”

It was a cruel thing, what she did then. She sliced that big, solid mushroom and heated grease in a pan.

The smell of it brought the little girls out of their quilt, but she told them to go back in so fierce a voice that they obeyed. They cried to break your heart.

I didn’t cry. I watched, hating her.

I endured the smell of the mushroom frying as long as I could. Then I said, “Give me some.”

“Tomorrow,” Mary answered.

“Tomorrow, maybe. But not tonight,” She turned to me with a sharp command: “Don’t bother me! Just leave me be.”

She knelt there by the fire and finished frying the slice of mushroom.

If I’d had Pa’s rifle, I’d have been willing to kill her right then and there.

She didn’t eat right away. She looked at the brown, fried slice for a while and said, “By tomorrow morning, I guess you can tell whether you want any.”

The little girls stared at her as she ate. Sarah was chewing an old leather glove.

When Mary crawled into the quilts with them, they moved away as far as they could get.

I was so scared that my stomach heaved, empty as it was.

Mary didn’t stay in the quilts long. She took a drink out of the water bucket and sat down by the fire and I looked through the smoke at me.

She said in a low voice, “I don’t know how it will be if it’s poison. Just do the best you can with the girls. Because your pa will come back, you know. You better go to bed. I’m going to sit up.”

And so would you sit up. If it might be your last night on earth and the pain of death might seize you at any moment, you would sit up by the smoky fire, wide-awake, remembering whatever you had to remember, savoring life.

We sat in silence after the girls had gone to sleep. Once I asked. “How long does it take?”

“I never heard,” she answered.

“Don’t think about it.”

I slept after a while, with my chin on my chest. Maybe Peter dozed that way at Gethsemane as the Lord knelt praying.

Mary's moving around brought me wide-awake. The black of night was fading.

"I guess it's all right," Mary said. "I'd be able to tell by now, wouldn't I?"

I answered gruffly, "I don't know."

Mary stood in the doorway for a while, looking out at the dripping world as if she found it beautiful. Then she fried slices of the mushroom while the little girls danced with anxiety.

We feasted, we three, my sisters and I, until Mary ruled, "That'll hold you," and would not cook any more. She didn't touch any of the mushroom herself.

That was a strange day in the moldy cabin. Mary laughed and was gay; she told stories, and we played "Who's Got the Thimble?" with a pine cone.

In the afternoon we heard a shout, and my sisters screamed and I ran ahead of them across the clearing.

The rain had stopped. My father came plunging out of the woods leading a pack horse ___ and well I remember the treasures of food in that pack.

He glanced at us anxiously as he tore at the ropes that bound the pack.

"Where's the other one?" he demanded.

Mary came out of the cabin then, walking sedately. As she came toward us, the sun began to shine.

My stepmother was a wonderful woman.

POETRY

1. The Road Not Taken - Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence;
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I___
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Author: Robert Frost.

Robert Frost (1874 – 1963) was born in San Francisco but moved to New England at the age of eleven and became interested in reading and writing poetry during his high school years in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Frost was much influenced by contemporary poets like Edward Thomas, Rupert Brooke, and Robert Graves. By the nineteen-twenties, he was the most celebrated poet in America, and with each new book – including New Hampshire, A Further Range, Steeple Bush, and In the Clearing – his fame and honours (including four Pulitzer Prizes) increased. The author is a quintessentially modern poet in his adherence to language as it is actually spoken, in the psychological complexity of his portraits, and in the degree to which his work is infused with layers of ambiguity and irony.

Make Connections

1. Do you think that the speaker in the poem was correct to make the choice he made?
2. What are the values that are embedded in this poem 'The Road Not Taken'?
3. In what ways are this poem a metaphor for life?
4. In what ways do you think you are unique?

2. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings - *Maya Angelou*

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.
But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.
The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the caged bird
sings of freedom.
The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing
The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

About the Author

Maya Angelou, born April 4, 1928 as Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, was raised in segregated rural Arkansas. She is a poet, author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director. She has published ten best selling books and numerous magazine articles earning her Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award nominations.

Maya Angelou was among the first African-American women to hit the bestsellers list with her “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”, held the Great Hall audience spellbound with stories of her own childhood. “The honorary duty of a human being is to love” Angelou said. She is currently Reynolds Professor at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Make Connections

1. Why does the free bird claim the sky?
2. Why does the caged bird sing with the fearful trill?
3. What are the unknown things the caged bird longs still?
4. What message does the song of the caged bird convey?
5. What are some of the things that occupy the thoughts of the free bird?
6. What do you understand by ‘his bars of rage’?
7. What do you understand by, ‘But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams/his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream’?
8. Why do you think the caged bird sings?
9. In what ways are the metaphors in the poem metaphors for life?

3. IF – Rudyard Kipling

Rationale

Rudyard Kipling's 'If' lists the necessary characteristics or qualities that an individual should acquire or cultivate in order to be a person of virtue, so it is a motivational poem. The poem walks the reader through various ways to overcome adversity that will almost certainly come one's way at some point. It evokes positive emotions in the reader gaining insight into how to deal with challenges that life may throw. Not only that, they begin to understand what success entails.

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

Make Connections

1. Discuss why you think that the poem is called “If.”
2. What emotions does the poem “If—” evoke in you?
3. What are the values represented in the poem?
4. List down some of the qualities not mentioned in the poem that you think people should have.
5. How can you connect the poem to your life?

About The Author

Rudyard Kipling was born in December 1865 in Bombay, India. As a child, he enjoyed the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Wilkie Collins. He began writing when he was about eleven years old. The Jungle Book, Kipling's best-known work, was published in the late 1890s. Kipling's life took a tragic turn in the 1930s when his second child died. Kipling died less than a week after developing an ulcer and undergoing surgery. His ashes were interred in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey.

4. Buddha's Death - *Romesh Chander Dutt*

I

Thus in many lands they wandered,
 Buddha and his faithful friend,
Teaching truth to many nations,
 Till his life approached its end.
And they say, along the pathway,
 As the saintly Master went,
Fruit trees blossomed out of season
 And a lovely fragrance lent!
And that flowers and sandal-powder
 Gently fell on him from high,
And came strains of heavenly music
 Gently wafted from the sky!

II

But the saintly Master whispered
 To his friend beloved and blest,
'Tis not thus, O friend Ananda!
 That the Buddha's honoured best.
Not by flowers or sandal-powder,
 Not by music's heavenly strain,
Is the soul's true worship rendered,
 Useless are these things and vain!
But the brother and the sister,
 Man devout and woman holy,___
Pure in life, in duty faithful,___
 They perform the worship truly!

III

Night came on, and saintly Buddha
 Slept in suffering, sick and wan,
When a Brahman, seeking wisdom,
 Came to see the holy man.
Anxiously Ananda stopped him.
 But spoke Buddha, though in pain,
"He who comes to seek for wisdom
 Shall not come to me in vain!"
And he to the pious stranger

Told the truth, in language plain,
Taught the law with dying accents,
Stopped and never spoke again!

Make Connections

1. What do you think the Buddha meant when he said: “He who comes to seek for wisdom/shall not come to me in vain”?
2. If you were Ananda, how would you respond to the request of the Brahmin “to see the holy man”?
3. Do you think that the Buddha really died?
4. Is the Buddha still living?
5. How do you think we can ensure that the Buddha continues living?

5. The Character of a Happy Life - Sir Henry Wotton

Rationale

The ultimate goal of every human being is to be happy. The poem, The Character of a Happy Life, through the use of different poetic techniques like alliteration, repetition and anaphora, addresses the things that one should possess if they are seeking to maintain happiness beyond the immediate.

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend;

—This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall:
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all.

Make Connections

1. Who is the central figure of the poem, and what are some qualities that a happy person should possess?
2. What is the main message/theme of the poem?
3. What is the armour of a happy man?
4. What do you think made the poet write this poem OR to whom do think is the poem written for?
5. Do you think you can be happy in life? Why?
6. Think about why or how are we the servants of our 'passions'.

About the author:

Sir Henry Wotton (30 March 1568 – December 1639) was an English author, diplomat and politician who sat in the House of Commons in 1614 and 1625.

SUPPLEMENTARY

1. You are Happy - *Margaret Atwood*

The water turns
a long way down over the raw stone,
ice crusts around it

We walk separately
along the hill to the open
beach, unused
picnic tables, wind
shoving the brown waves, erosion, gravel
rasping on gravel.

In the ditch a deer
carcass, no head. Bird
running across the glaring
road against the low pink sun.

When you are this
cold you can think about
nothing but the cold, the images

hitting into your eyes
like needles, crystals, you are happy.

2. The Slave's Dream - *H.W. Longfellow*

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand!____
A tear burst from the sleepers lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank;
His bridle reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

3. Forest and River- *Zhaleh Esfahani*

“I wish I were like you,”
Said the forest
to the roaring river,
“Always travelling,
always sightseeing;
Rushing towards the pure domain
of the sea,
The kingdom of water;
Water,
The passionate, vigorous spirit
of life,
The liquid turquoise of light
With eternal flow ...
“But what am I?
Only a captive,
chained to the earth.
In silence I grow old,
In silence I wither and die,
And before long
nothing will remain of me
But a handful of ashes.”
“O forest, half-asleep, half-awake”,
Cried the river,
“I wish I were you,
Enjoying a seclusion
of living emerald,
And illuminated by moonlit nights;
Being a mirror
reflecting the beauties
of Spring;
A shaded rendezvous for lovers.
“Your destiny, a new life
every year;
My life, running away from myself
all the time;

Running, running, running
in bewilderment;
And what is my gain
Of all this meaningless journey?
Ah ... never having a moment of calm
and rest!
“No one can ever know
what the other feels;
Who does care to ask
about a passer-by
If he really existed
or was only a shadow?”
Now a passer-by
Aimlessly walking in the shade
Comes to ask himself,
“Who am I? a river? a forest?
Or both?
River and forest?
River and forest!”

ESSAY

1. The Dignity of Work – Charles Finn

“No person ever stood lower in my estimation for having a patch in their clothes.”

We work in factories, on farms, in blazing sun, and on the sides of the roads, in forests, in ditches. You see us in shipyards, apartment buildings, under your cars. Ask us our names: We’re Alex, Rob, Peter, and Hank. We’re Sally, Susan, Deborah, and Pam.

What do we do? We bring home a pay cheque, fibreglass in our lungs, and have a few beers. We’re what people call working stiffs. We feel that way. We have strong backs, set minds, dirt under our nails. We look you straight in the eye. It’s no joke, we say. We have bills to pay.

The other day I was standing in a drugstore looking through a rack of greeting cards. My greasy overalls and thick fingers confirmed I belonged to the dented pickup outside. Turning the carousel, my eyes fell on a black-and-white photo of a well-dressed man and a woman standing on the corner of a busy city street. They were holding a cardboard sign that read, “Will work for latte.”

The card got an audible chuckle out of me, more of a snicker really, but my amusement was quickly followed by a very real sadness. It seemed to me the card was exposing a general callousness toward the plight of the poor, and I felt a slight embarrassment because of my filthy clothes.

Still holding the card, I looked around at the other casual but well-dressed customers. I’m not poor, I wanted to tell them, just trying to get by. Then I thought of how many times I’d been to urban centres and walked past the homeless, putting a few coins in their cups but avoiding their eyes. Such uneasiness, I believe, is an indicator of an increasingly harmful society; the accumulated buildup of guilt, silent, yet a subtlecrippler of soul.

There was also an undercurrent of classism the card hinted at. Although fictitious, I could hardly imagine this couple accepting a minimum-wage job as high-school janitor or letting themselves sink to the status of a construction labourer like me. It was Thoreau who said, “No person ever stood lower in my estimation for having a patch in their clothes.”

The knees of my pants were testimonies to what Henry David would probably have viewed as frugality. These days it’s called hard luck, and it goes along with the attitude that to work with your hands implies you don’t have the wherewithal to work with your head. The assumption is if you sit at a computer you’re more useful than if you mix cement for a living.

To her credit, my mother has always supported me no matter what occupation I’ve tried, even as a banger of nails, but there are friends who continually ask me when I’m going to get a real job. I’d like to ask them how real is the mechanic that fixes their car when it breaks down, or the nurse who empties bedpans for a living? A doctor is a vital part of any community. So, too, the man who comes every week to haul away garbage.

Still in the store, I realized it’s not the odd greeting card, or the media as a whole teaching this classism, it’s adults. Too often we’re not proud of ourselves or the jobs that we do.

We think people with degrees and white-collar jobs are the only ones worthy to hold their heads in the air. Don't become a farmer, we say to our children. There's no money in that. With this subtle form of bigotry, our children are growing up believing the lower classes are lower beings. We're teaching them a person's worth is gauged by economic, not moral, success.

I didn't buy that card. I went home and reheated some chili. In the shower I scrubbed the tar from my hands and looked down at my feet. Chips of sawdust were being washed out of my hair and sliding past my toes. Each one represented a skill I'd learned and a few pennies earned. Looking in the mirror I was proud of my working-class tan and before going to bed, I fixed my lunch for the next day and set the alarm.

Then for the hell of it, or maybe in defiance, I made a large decaf latte and read for an hour in bed. I told my partner I'd had a good day.

Notes

Charles Finn lives in Argenta, British Columbia.

Classism: discrimination against people from a different social class.

Henry David Thoreau: famous nineteenth-century American writer who lived a simple, frugal, life.

2. Nature is Not Always Kind - *Helen Keller*

I RECALL many incidents of the summer of 1887 that followed my soul's sudden awakening. I did nothing but explore with my hands and learn the name of every object that I touched; and the more I handled things and learned their names and uses, the more joyous and confident grew my sense of kinship with the rest of the world.

When the time of daisies and buttercups came Miss Sullivan took me by the hand across the fields, where men were preparing the earth for the seed, to the banks of the Tennessee River, and there, sitting on the warm grass, I had my first lessons in the beneficence of nature. I learned how the sun and the rain make to grow out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, how birds build their nests and live and thrive from land to land, how the squirrel, the deer, the lion and every other creature finds food and shelter. As my knowledge of things grew I felt more and more the delight of the world I was in. Long before I learned to do a sum in arithmetic or describe the shape of the earth, Miss Sullivan had taught me to find beauty in the fragrant woods, in every blade of grass, and in the curves and dimples of my baby sister's hand. She linked my earliest thoughts with nature, and made me feel that "birds and flowers and I were happy peers."

But about this time I had an experience which taught me that nature is not always kind. One day my teacher and I were returning from a long ramble. The morning had been fine, but it was growing warm and sultry when at last we turned our faces homeward. Two or three times we stopped to rest under a tree by the wayside. Our last halt was under a wild cherry tree a short distance from the house. The shade was grateful, and the tree was so easy to climb that with my teacher's assistance I was able to scramble to a seat in the branches. It was so cool up in the tree that Miss Sullivan proposed that we have our luncheon there. I promised to keep still while she went to the house to fetch it.

Suddenly a change passed over the tree. All the sun's warmth left the air. I knew the sky was black, because all the heat, which meant light to me, had died out of the atmosphere. A strange odor came up from the earth. I knew it, it was the odor that always precedes a thunderstorm, and a nameless fear clutched at my heart. I felt absolutely alone, cut off from my friends and the firm earth. The immense, the unknown, enfolded me. I remained still and expectant; a chilling terror crept over me. I longed for my teacher's return; but above all things I wanted to get down from that tree.

There was a moment of sinister silence, then a multitudinous stirring of the leaves. A shiver ran through the tree, and the wind sent forth a blast that would have knocked me off had I not clung to the branch with might and main. The tree swayed and strained. The small twigs snapped and fell about me in showers. A wild impulse to jump seized me, but terror held me fast. I crouched down in the fork of the tree. The branches lashed about me. I felt the intermittent jarring that came now and then, as if something heavy had fallen and the shock had travelled up till it reached the limb I sat on. It worked my suspense up to the

highest point, and just as I was thinking the tree and I should fall together, my teacher seized my hand and helped me down. I clung to her, trembling with joy to feel the earth under my feet once more. I had learned a new lesson - that nature "wages open war against her children, and under softest touch hides treacherous claws."

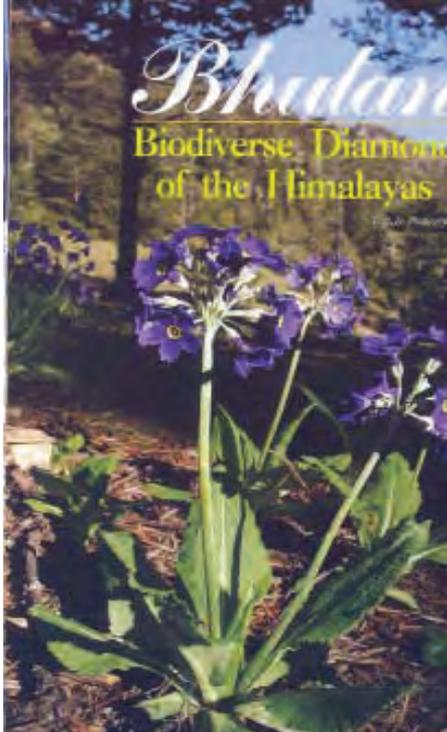
After this experience it was a long time before I climbed another tree. The mere thought filled me with terror. It was the sweet allurements of the mimosa tree in full bloom that finally overcame my fears. One beautiful spring morning when I was alone in the summerhouse, reading, I became aware of a wonderful subtle fragrance in the air. I started up and instinctively stretched out my hands. It seemed as if the spirit of spring had passed through the summerhouse. "What is it?" I asked, and the next minute I recognized the odor of the mimosa blossoms. I felt my way to the end of the garden, knowing that the mimosa tree was near the fence, at the turn of the path. Yes, there it was, all quivering in the warm sunshine, its blossom-laden branches almost touching the long grass. Was there ever anything so exquisitely beautiful in the world before! Its delicate blossoms shrank from the slightest, earthly touch; it seemed as if a tree of paradise had been transplanted to earth. I made my way through a shower of petals to the great trunk and for one minute stood irresolute; then, putting my foot in the broad space between the forked branches, I pulled myself up into the tree. I had some difficulty in holding on, for the branches were very large and the bark hurt my hands. But I had a delicious sense that I was doing something unusual and wonderful, so I kept on climbing higher and higher, until I reached a little seat which somebody has built there so long ago that it had grown part of the tree itself. I sat there for a long, long time, feeling like a fairy on a rosy cloud. After that I spent many happy hours in my tree of paradise, thinking fair thoughts and dreaming bright dreams.

About the Author

Helen Keller became blind and deaf when she was very young. If you happen to watch the movie "The Miracle Worker," you will be able to learn more about Helen and her teacher, Anne Sullivan. This essay is an excerpt from Helen Keller's autobiography, The Story of My Life. We have chosen for a title a phrase from one of the most important sentences in the excerpt. This essay is both narrative and descriptive. It will help you understand the argument of the essay, and the important lessons that Helen learned from her experience.

3. Bhutan: Biodiverse Diamond of the Himalayas - Robin Smilie

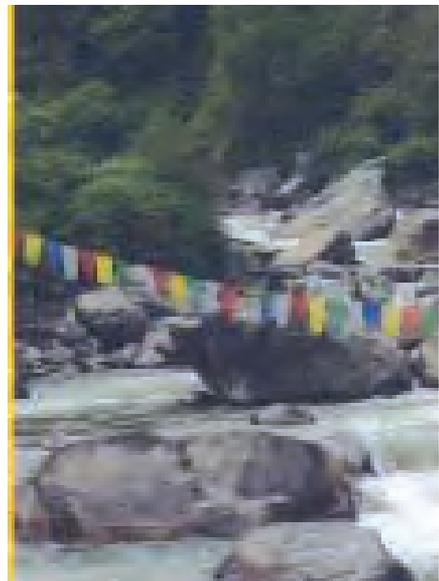
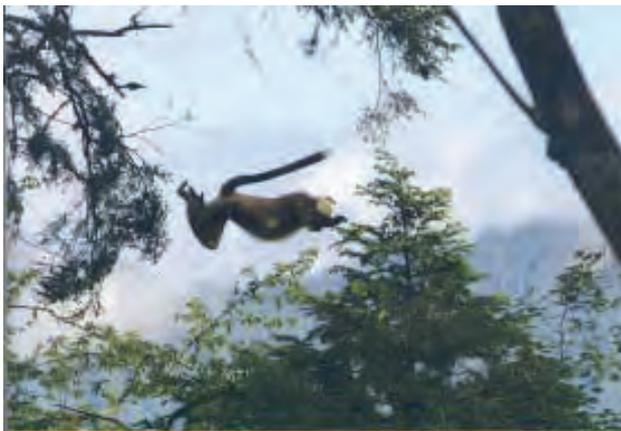
Like a jewelled bracelet crusted with large and small stones, the Himalayan Mountains stretch for 1,500 miles from Kashmir to Assam. The tiniest diamond of the four countries that make up the Himalayas is Bhutan. In terms of biological diversity and retention of native habitat – acre for acre – Bhutan is the richest country in Asia. Christened as the “Land of the Thunder Dragon”, it is one of the most biological diverse countries in the world, on par with Madagascar and the tropical rainforest countries in Central and South America.



While the meaning of the word Himalaya is “abode of snow”, one should not think that Bhutan’s landscape is made up solely of permanently covered snowcapped peaks or alpine scrub zones. Several distinctly different biological realms converge between the low-lying rain forest in the south and the alpine meadows in the north – the altitude difference is nearly 24,000 feet.

Situated in the heartland of Bhutan, between these two regions, are vast rhododendron and conifer forests. With heavy rains of the monsoon

season and different climates associated with varying altitudes, it is easy to see how biodiversity has been able to take hold of the country.





Within the scientific community, Bhutan's list of rare and endangered wildlife and fauna is legendary: Bengal tigers sighted above 2,900 meters, snow leopards, golden langur, blue sheep, red panda, takin, black-necked crane, over 600 species of birds – 70 discovered in the last ten years, over 5,000 plants, many of which contain medicinal properties, rare

orchids, carnivorous plants, and 50 species of rhododendrons round up the list. One species of bird, the Satyr Tragopan, was once thought to be extinct but was recently sighted in Jigme Dorji National Park. Several white bellied heron, one of the fifty rarest birds on the planet with a population estimated between 20 and 200, have been recently sighted a number of times.



The challenge of conserving these national, indeed, world treasures, has fallen on various government agencies that are charged by the King and the National Assembly with policies that mandate strict conservation of Bhutan's natural wonders. A trust fund has been set up for environmental conservation. In 1995, the National Assembly passed a resolution that the country must maintain no less than 60 per cent of its area under forest cover (Bhutan currently has approximately 70 per cent of its area under forest cover). These forests are home to some of the rarest plants and animals in the world.

For many conservations, the crown jewel of Bhutan's effort to maintain biodiversity are the "biological corridors" that connect four national parks, four wildlife sanctuaries, and one nature preserve. These nine areas make up 26 per cent of the country's total land area, with the corridors accounting for another 9 per cent.

The purpose of these biological or ecological corridors is to prevent fragmentation of natural habitats by preserving the connection between protected areas. The parks and conservation areas might otherwise be separated by human activities such as farming and other developments. When a species is cut off from its main population, i.e. its genetic pool, sub-species begin to develop. The genetic survival of the new and smaller population is more difficult. By designing this system of interconnecting corridors, Bhutan has made significant strides to promote the survival of future generations of its diverse ecosystems.

Presently, the most significant ecotourism area of Bhutan is Jigme Dorje National Park, the largest protected area within the country, where popular trekking routes cross rivers at 1,400 metres and traverse mountains that soar to 7,000 metres. Visitation within the park is confined to visitor zones. Bhutan is approaching development of ecotourism even more cautiously than it has approached general tourism, recognising that areas of tiger habitat and rare medicinal plants cannot withstand an onslaught of tourists.

In an effort to pursue ecotourism, while protecting the environment, new efforts are being implemented to promote community-based tourism and trekking. This new approach actively engages the local community in development and management of ecotourism, as well as promoting the conservation of nature.

Religion plays a role

Bhutan remains the only surviving Mahayana Buddhist country in the world. To live in harmony with the mysteries and complexities of nature is a crucial Buddhist practice. One has only to look at acid rain, the ozone hole, and contamination of the earth's waters to realise how mankind harms itself by harming nature. The Buddhist approach to nature is to show reverence and compassion to all forms of life, as well as limiting consumption to basic needs, i.e. food, shelter and clothing.

The Buddhist philosophy, coupled with longstanding belief that the key ecological areas are inhabited by underworld spirits, gods and goddesses, as well as a variety of deities have served to protect much of Bhutan's landscape. If the local people believe that a powerful deity resides in a certain lake, then they will not pollute the stream originating from it. Likewise, if a certain forest is thought to be the home of gods and goddesses, the trees of that forest are not hewed. Since habitat preservation is a key element in preservation of species such belief encourages a culture that supports biodiversity and conservation of natural resources.

The world scientific community recognises that Bhutan has a significant portion of the planet's remaining rare and endangered species. It is, therefore, actively assisting the kingdom in its efforts to balance environmental management and economic development.

With the help of these worldwide stakeholders, the government and people of Bhutan, and every person that visits Bhutan, we do hope that this biodiverse diamond of the Himalayas will continue to shine forever.

SUPPLEMENTARY

1. A Small Cheese Pizza - *Rachel Svea Bottino*

It was an intensely cold November day with a biting wind. My mom and I entered the first restaurant we saw in a hurry to get away from the harsh weather. Mom ordered a pizza and I found a cozy booth near the heater. As I gazed around, I saw a homeless man sitting at a corner table. For some reason - I'm still not sure why - he intrigued me.

I studied him, absorbing every detail. Growing up, I was taught never to stare, but the temptation was overwhelming. Because of the way his knees grazed the bottom of the tabletop, it was evident that he was tall. His clothes were filthy. Even though he was wearing endless layers of clothing, he looked as though he weighed nothing. A mass of tangled hair, thick as a lion's mane, covered most of his face and a shaggy, knotted beard covered the rest. I focused on his eyes because they were the only part I could see.

His eyes were transfixed, almost hypnotized by the steam that curled up from the coffee cup sitting in the middle of the table. An employee came over and gave him a small cheese pizza, and what I saw next would change my whole perspective on life.

The man looked at that pizza as if it were the most precious thing in the world. He didn't touch it at first, almost like a person who has a priceless object he is afraid might break. He stared at that pizza as though it were made of gold. When he finally decided to eat it, he didn't grab a slice and devour it like we do. He ate unusually slowly, savouring every bite.

When we got our pizza, my mom placed it in the middle of the table and started eating. She couldn't see the man from where she was sitting and asked me why I wasn't eating. I nodded toward the man and she turned. When she saw him, she understood. That circular piece of dough in the middle of our table suddenly looked different. It was no longer just an inexpensive supper. People think of pizza as a matter-of-fact thing that has no significance whatsoever. But now, after seeing this man, something as simple as a small cheese pizza was suddenly so much more complicated.

I was drawn to this man not out of pity, but curiosity. I wanted to know who he was. I wanted to know what was going on in his mind. He is a human being, like everyone else, but is viewed as though he is incapable of having thoughts and feelings. When people look at him, they see a lost cause. But I saw a soul waiting to be found.

I watched him as he got up to leave. He finished the last of his coffee and headed toward the door. As the door opened, a gust of frigid air rushed into the store. Holding his collar tightly around his neck and bowing his head against the snapping wind, he walked through the parking lot and out of sight.

Notes

Rachel Svea Bottino wrote this story when she was a high-school student.

2. Restaurants - R.K. Narayan

Someone recently complained that the serving boy in a hotel dipped all his five fingers into a tumbler while fetching drinking water; this brought out the indignant repudiation from the manager, 'How could he have had all the five fingers in? It must have been only four. Otherwise he could not have carried the tumbler.' This seems to me typical of the utter divergence in outlook between two sections of the present-day population: those who visit hotels and those who run them. Probably in order to improve the situation a questionnaire was sent out sometime ago, intended to catch all aspects of the problem. I believe when the investigators attempted to elicit facts all that they got was complaints from the servers regarding work and wages, complaints from hotel-goers regarding quality, quantity, cost and everything. I think the committee gathered a voluminous quantity of paper, properly filled up. It is probably too early even to say what they will do with it.

Most people are miles away from their homes at tiffin time. This is a characteristic of urban life. Students, office-goers, businessmen, have no choice in the matter. It would be unthinkable for a man from Adyar working in First Line Beach to return home for his afternoon coffee; nor can he wait till the closing of his office. At office awaiting the tiffin-break is one of the pleasantest states of existence. When one returns to one's desk an hour later chewing a *beeda* one has definitely acquired a pleasanter outlook. Now, I would like to examine what has happened to the man between his leaving his office table and returning to it an hour later. No doubt when he returns our friend is chewing betel leaves and looking the picture of satisfaction but he has been through a trial.

He goes to his favourite hotel as fast as his feet can take him, but he cannot enter it. He has to wait, then push his way through a file of others moving in, and finally stand in a corner scanning the hall for a vacant seat. It is most awkward standing there, he has a feeling of waiting for a dole. His trained eye catches someone at a table sipping the last few ounces of coffee in his cup, and our friend knows that the other will presently get up. He cleverly slips through the crowd and approaches the about-to-be vacated chair cautiously: he does not like to appear too inquisitive about the other man's movements lest it should look ungracious but hovers about the back of the chair with a look of unconcern while the man is enjoying the last drop. If the man at the table knows that his seat is wanted he will try to brave it for a while but will ultimately vacate it, unable to bear the silent, implacable pressure exerted by the one waiting behind him. If our friend is lucky - that is, if someone else more nimble-footed does not descend on the seat like a bolt from the blue - he can feel certain that he has won his seat. I don't think any election candidate could reflect with greater gratification on his triumph.

When our friend gets his hard won seat, what happens? He looks at the time. Half-an-hour wasted in manoeuvres alone. The sands of time are running low, he will have to be back soon at his office. He desperately tries to draw the attention of the man serving at his table as he

catches glimpses of him here and there. At this point one is reminded of the epitaph for a restaurant waiter, 'God finally caught his eye.' Finally, when the server comes, his demeanour may be affable or sour according to his constitution; but it is patent that he is extremely harassed and fatigued. If he should run amok he would knock down all plates and cups and tiffin and tiffin-eaters as the greatest irritants in life....But he asks formally, 'What do you want, sir?' And then the counter-question, 'What have you?' It is a routine question that a hundred others have already asked although the whole menu - Sweets, Savoury, and Today's Special - is chalked up on the board. The server mechanically repeats the catalogue of edibles at lightning speed, takes his order, and goes out of sight.

As our friend awaits the arrival of his food he notices that his table is littered with used cups and plates and remnants left by other people, and as he eyes them distastefully, a tremendous cry rings out, 'Table clean!', and a man arrives with a bucket overflowing with unwashed crockery and vessels, reaches over the shoulder of our friend, leaving him in acute suspense for the safety of his clothes, and clears the table: he then rubs the table-surface with a very damp blue cloth, which our friend would rather avoid looking at. There are a few other things which he attempts to ignore while he is in the process of appeasing his hunger. He tries not to look at the wash-basin right across his table which sprays around a vast quantity of water as person after person comes up to wash his hands, some of them none-too-gently. The general noise in this hall is something that frays his nerves - the radio (somehow our restaurants seem to have stations to tune in to at all the twenty-four hours), the deafening clatter of vessels dumped out for cleaning, somebody shouting orders to the kitchen, shouting across of the bill amount, customers greeting each other... through all this babble our friend can hardly make himself heard. He ignores the crack in the china cup which bears his coffee, and the notches and grease on the spoon given to him. He thinks these are minor terrors which ought to be borne patiently. When he carries his bill to the payment counter and the man there sticks it on a miniature harpoon on his table while sweeping the cash in, our friend is happy that he is out of all this trouble. Perhaps that's why he wears such a merry look coming out of a restaurant.

About the Author

R.K.Narayan was born in Madras, South India, and educated there at Maharaja's College in Mysore. His first novel Swami and Friends (1935) and its successor The Bachelor Of Arts (1937) are both set in the enchanting fictional territory of Malgudi. Other "Malgudi" novels are The Dark Room (1938), The English Teacher (1945), Mr. Sampath (1949), The Financial Expert (1952), The Painter Of Signs (1977), ATiger for Malgudi(1983), The Talkitive Man (1986). His Novel The Guide (1958) won him the National Prize of the Indian Literacy Academy, India's highest Literary honour. He was awarded in 1980 the A.C. Benson Medal by the Royal Society of Literature and in 1981 he was made an Honorary Member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and letters.

He has also written five collections of Short Stories, A Horse and Two Goats, An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories, Lawley Road, Under the Banyan Tree and Malgudi Days. He has also written three collections of essays, A writers Nightmare, Next Sunday and Reluctant Guru.

3. The Songs of Ap Dawpel - *Jigme Dukpa*

I first met Ap Dawpel in 1986 when I was a student. As I began learning from him, I discovered how much there was to learn about the wonderful tradition of Bhutanese music.

Ap Dawpel, the ‘father of Bhutanese music’, is now 72, years old. Dawpel, short for his name Daw Peljor (moon wealth), comes from Talo in Punakha, the former capital and residence of the old Dharma Rajas (priestly Kings) where a particularly fine tradition of music was preserved.

Ap Dawpel became the Queen Mother’s painter and musician in 1945. Also known as *Ge-te* (ex-monk) and *Lhadrip* (painter), he was the *Chhampon* (mask dance master) for several years in Talo monastery. For the past five decades, Ap Dawpel has taught and influenced many young musicians and dancers. Had it not been for his zeal to share his knowledge with many young musicians, the Bhutanese *dramnyen* (a lute with six and a half strings) and its music would have long become a forgotten tradition.

Ap Dawpel’s professional life saw its peak in 1999 when he was awarded the *Thugsey* (son of Bhutan) medal for his outstanding musical services by His Majesty the King.

An Oral Tradition

Like all musicians of his time, Apa never had formal music training. He learnt the songs and dances in the ‘teacher- pupil’ tradition. Barely nine years old, he became a monk and lived in Punakha Dzong until he was twenty-three. During those years, he learnt some popular songs like *Dramnyen Ludra* and *Bermo Bermo*, from Sewla Pem Dorji, a renowned *dramnyen* player.

Repertoire and Traditions

Apa’s music repertoire consists mainly of *Zhungdra*, or classical music, and *Boedra*, or court music. Some of the first songs he learned, such as *Choki Tsawa Mitsu*, *Dranyen Ludra* and *Bermo Benno*, are popular even today. He learned some of the songs from Aku Tongmi (now 95 years old), the first person in Bhutan to have trained in brass band music.

Gur (devotional songs), *Drunglu* (epic songs), *Tshoglu* (propitious songs), *Mani* (Buddhist mantras), *Tsangmo* (reciprocal songs), *Lozey* (ornaments of speech, only recited), and *Chham* (mask dances) make up Apa’s repertoire, musically classified as *Zhungdra* and *Boedra*.

Zhungdra

'*Zhungdra* is made up of two words, 'Zhung' and 'dra', (Zhung = main and dra = sound). Musically speaking, Zhungdra songs are characterised by the use of very long notes with no definite rhythm. Sung in a meditative style, *Zhungdra* is the classical music of Bhutan.

Ap Dawpel explains that the *Zhungdra* tradition had evolved locally under the patronage of the government, *Zhung*. "People from around the country regarded the capital as the seat of government and, therefore, the form of music it promoted developed into what is known today as the original music of the country," he explains. *Zhungdra* songs were generally composed by great lamas and scholars, and, therefore, had a religious theme.

Boedra

'*Boedra*' is also formed from two words, 'Boe', which means Court, and 'dra' which means sound or music. There are two different explanations for its etymology. The first is that Boedra music is influenced by Tibetan folk music. The second is that Boedra is music performed by 'Boegarps', court attendants in medieval Bhutan.

Ap Dawpel believes that *Boedra* music became popular only in the late 1950s with the arrival of more Tibetans in Bhutan after the Chinese annexation of their homeland.

Boedra music is now fully absorbed into local traditions with Dzongkha replacing the Tibetan words.

Regional Music

Ap Dawpel has also identified several songs in the local dialects, although he never learnt them. I refer to such songs as 'Yuedra', literally meaning 'local music'. Normally sung in Tshanglalo, Khengkha, Bumthangkha and other dialects, the songs are also classified as *Zhungdra* and *Boedra*.

BHUTAN'S 'FATHER OF BHUTANESE MUSIC' HAS HELPED KEEP THE ART OF DAMNYEN (LUTE) PLAYING ALIVE.

Regional celebration songs and dances like *Zhay* and *Zhaym* are traditions known by the area of their origin. Examples of some of the surviving traditions that Ap Dawpel loves include *Gasa Goenzhay*, *Trongsa Nub Zhay*, *Thimphu Wang Zhay*, and *Paro Wochupai Zhay*.

Apa's Musical Instruments

Apa plays an amazing variety of musical instruments. His favourite is his family's five

generations old *drammyen* which he learnt on his own. He also plays the *lim* (flute made of bamboo), *pivang* (two-stringed fiddle), *pili/pipi* (tiny reed flute), *dung* (long trumpet-like horns), *jali* (oboe-like reed instruments), *roelm* (cymbals), *nga* (double-sided drums), *drib tangti* (hand bells and hand drums), *dungkar* (conch shell), and *kangdu* (human thigh-bone trumpet).

New Influences

As a mentor to many musicians today, Ap Dawpel is concerned that the inevitable change and modernisation taking place in Bhutan is making an irreversible impact on the culture and lives of the people, particularly on music.

Apa feels the popularity of '*Rigsarlu*' (modern songs), with catchy tunes taking advantage of the electronic musical instruments, is already replacing traditional music and instruments. He points out the need for efforts to balance the development of traditional and modern music forms.

Activities have been initiated to preserve and promote Bhutanese folk music and musical instruments. The Royal Academy of Performing Arts is documenting traditional songs and the Institute of Language and Cultural Studies has begun an inventory on Bhutan's performing arts traditions. Formal music training and research have improved, and song and dance competitions keep the musical arts alive.

"I have been thinking and praying for the future of Bhutanese music," says Apa Dawpel as he takes his daily walk up and down the hill, his head and body bent as if listening to the music of bygone days. "I pray that it continues to bring greater harmony, joy and happiness in the lives of our people."

NOVEL

1. **The Giver:** Lois Lowry

The Giver is her most ambitious work to date and her acceptance speech for the Newbery Award it received tells of the many rivers of experience and inspiration that led her to write it. One of those rivers of inspiration came from her father who was, at that time, in a nursing home having lost most of his long-term memory. She realized one day while visiting her father that, without memory, there is no pain and began to imagine a society in which the past was deliberately forgotten. The flaws in that supposedly ideal society show the need for personal and societal memory and for making connections with the past and with each other. The ending of **The Giver**, which is deliberately ambiguous, has been the subject of much discussion by readers. All that Lois will say about it is that there will never be a sequel and that she is hopeful about its ending. With its varied interpretations, the book is a wonderful one for discussion groups for middle school students.

Lois has said that each reader reads his or her own book and that is certainly shown in the varied reactions to **The Giver**.

Recurrent themes for Lois Lowry seem to be saying goodbye, the importance of making connections with others and finding a place where we belong. *The Giver* deals with all of these and more. Lois Lowry's work is wide-ranging, richly varied and right on target for her intended audiences.

Rationale

The Giver is a novel that students of classes IX and X will enjoy immensely because the plot is original and fresh. The plot follows a logical series of events and is cleverly crafted. There is an identifiable climax, plenty of conflict and tension. On the whole it is a fascinating story with great examples of foreshadowing and flashbacks. Foreshadowing is a technique the writer uses to arouse the reader's curiosity, build suspense and help prepare the reader to accept events that occur later in the novel. Flashback is a device that shifts the narrative from the present to the past, usually to reveal a change in character or illustrate an important point.

There is a lot of intrigue. The protagonist is a young boy of twelve. He is himself unaware of what is in store for him in his assigned job as a receiver of memory. What are the memories? Why must the community be shielded from these memories? Why is it necessary to keep these memories alive? The reader is kept busy throughout the novel trying to unravel these questions.

The protagonist is Jonas, a regular 12-year-old boy, and the story begins shortly before the ceremony in which he and all the other twelve year olds receive their life work assignments.

Jonas receives the most responsible job in the community: that of Receiver of Memory. The character is strong. Jonas the protagonist is an evolving character. He takes his own decisions; he matures with the different experiences he undergoes. He tries to bring changes to his own life and the lives of the people in his community. Moreover, his experience as a teenager is identifiable and relevant to the experiences of Bhutanese teenagers. Therefore his character is convincing and credible.

The fantasy novel takes place in an isolated but modern village that tries to maintain utopia for its residents. The advantage with this setting is that it can be anywhere in Bhutan, Canada, India. The setting is designed appropriately and integrates well with the characters and the conflict created by the writer.

The themes are worth imparting to students. They are not obviously stated rather the students are allowed the freedom to discuss and let the themes emerge naturally. The novel has themes that are universally true: the ideas of wanting to be loved, the need for nuclear families, the ideas of personal happiness versus one's responsibility to society, the power that elders have over their children, the concept of punishment, the regard for rules, controlling one's biological urges and many others can be discussed. Besides these, controversial themes related to euthanasia for both old and young, treatment of people with different job assignments, the ideas of a utopian (ideal) society versus the real world and the use of euphemisms will allow students to have healthy discussions and understand their concepts more clearly.

The style is challenging. The writer is able to create images in the mind of the reader that suggests a bland organised utopian society balanced against a society that is painful and yet beautiful with the use of her diction. There is a good balance between narration and dialogue. The story can be set both in the future or the present and this brings a fresh use of terminology for example: nurturer instead of nurse, birthmother instead of biological mothers, sanitation labourer instead of wet sweeper, instructor of threes instead of teacher of foundation level, landscape workers instead of gardeners and so on. The language is appropriate to age and the writer makes the reader aware that precision in the use of language is important in order to express oneself well.

The writer uses words, phrases and sentences that suggest the protagonist is happy in the utopian society but also questions the utopian society. Towards the later half of the novel the tone created by the writer is one of rebellion: he rebels against many utopian ideas.



About the Author

Lois Lowry is a witty, clever, interesting woman with lots of facets to her life. She's a great conversationalist, an avid and eclectic reader and moviegoer; she likes to play bridge and garden. She's an excellent cook and her cookbook collection is enormous and varied. Her home is full of bookshelves which, of course, are full of books and, since she has a great need for order, her books are carefully arranged with her own rather eccentric system with no apologies to Dewey.

*Lois is an accomplished photographer (the cover of **The Giver** is her own work) and she has an artist's eye for composition. She sometimes compares the role of writer to that of photographer saying that the writer carefully chooses the best lens and settings for her work, deciding which things to focus on and which to blur.*

She writes novels, short stories and essays, mostly for young people, but she also writes because it's so much a part of her that she turns to it constantly, both personally and professionally.

Recently, her son, an air force pilot, was killed when his plane crashed on take-off in Germany. Soon after that tragedy, she wrote a sort of newsletter to those of us who knew Lois but not Grey because she needed us to know what a treasure the world had lost. She also put together a book about him with photographs and a brief text for his two-year-old daughter so that she would remember what her father was like.

Time Allocation for IX

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 5 periods of 40 minutes for teaching English. The total time allocated for English in a week is 200 minutes. Therefore, class IX will have 100 hours in a year which is 150 periods.

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

	Period	Time (minutes)
Reading & Literature	2	80
Writing	1	40
Listening & Speaking	1	40
Language and Grammar	1	40
Total	5	200

Modes of Assessment

Continuous (CA) and Examinations Weighting for Class IX

English Paper I (Writing and Grammar) – CA and Written Examination Weighting

Term One			Term Two			Grand Total (Total A + Total B)		
CA		Examination	Total A	CA			Examination	Total B
Listening and Speaking	15%	35%	50%	Listening and Speaking	15%	35%	50%	100%

Note:

1. In English Paper I, Writing and Language & Grammar strands form the written examination part, and the Listening and Speaking strand forms the CA part.
2. The Term One examination should be conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The 15% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.
3. Similarly, the Term Two examination should be also conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The 15% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.
4. Finally, the total marks of term one and term two should be added to make it 100%.
5. Listening and Speaking, activities such as debates, extempore speeches, presentations, book talks, reports, and discussions should be conducted regularly 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.
6. At the end of each Term, a formal test should be conducted to assess each learners' competencies in listening and speaking through oral test items and other listening and speaking exercises and the marks converted to 15%.

English Paper I (Writing and Grammar) - Written Examination Marks Break-up

Sl No	Genre	Weighting	Remarks
1	Essay writing	25 marks	Descriptive essay
2	Personal letter/leave application/invitation	15 marks	Any ONE can be asked
3	Report writing/summary	10 marks	Reporting event/incident/occasion etc.
4	Information transfer	10 marks	Non-continuous to continuous or vice versa.
5	Grammar	40 marks	Items to be derived from the competencies and objectives. Questions can be asked from the lower classes as well.
Total		100	

Note:

The questions types and patterns for written examinations shall remain dynamic.

English Paper I - Listening and Speaking CA (30%)

Sl No	Listening and Speaking activities	Remarks
1	Listening and Speaking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can design additional activities as per the lesson plans. Conduct oral test and other listening and speaking activities regularly. A formal test to be conducted at the end of each term. For class X the cumulative marks (30%) to be sent to BCSEA.
2	Oral report	
3	Debates	
4	Extempore speeches	
5	Presentations	
6	Book talk	

English Paper II (Reading & Literature) - CA and Written Examination Weighting

Term One				Term Two				Grand Total (Total A + Total B)
CA		Examination	Total A	CA		Examination	Total B	
Reading Portfolio	7.5%	35%	50%	Reading Portfolio	7.5%	35%	50%	100%
Writing Portfolio	7.5%			Writing Portfolio	7.5%			

Note:

1. In the English Paper II, the Reading and Literature strand forms the written examination part, and the Reading Portfolio and the Writing Portfolio form the CA part.
2. Term One examination should be conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The CA marks from the Reading Portfolio and the Writing Portfolio (7.5 each) should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.
3. Similarly, the Term Two examination should be conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The CA marks from the Reading Portfolio and Writing Portfolio (7.5) should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.
4. Finally, the total marks of Term One and Term Two should be added up to make it 100%.
5. The Reading Portfolio should consist of record of reading, book reviews, and critical response to books read. The Writing Portfolio should consist of learner's best pieces of writing (essays, articles, short stories, poems etc.), journal writing for books read, process of work, variety in number and genre.
6. Teacher should ensure that all the learners maintain their portfolios for academic purposes only.
7. The Reading and the Writing Portfolios of all the learners should be monitored consistently to check their progress. Teachers should provide timely feedback, support and take necessary remedial measures so that the learners meet the expected objectives and competencies. At the end of each term, both the portfolios should be assessed and award marks accordingly.
8. The portfolios should be assessed consistently throughout the year.

English Paper II (Reading and Literature) - Written Examination Marks Break-up

Sl No	Genre	Weighting	Remarks
1	Short Story	25 marks	From the prescribed short stories, questions on more than ONE story can be asked
2	Essay	25 marks	From outside the prescribed textbook
3	Poetry	25 marks	From the prescribed or outside textbook.
4	Novel	25 marks	The prescribed novel – The Giver (till chapter 11 for class IX and the entire novel for class X)
Total		100	

Note:

The questions types and patterns for written examinations shall remain dynamic.

English Paper II CA (30%)

Reading Portfolio (15%)	Writing Portfolio (15%)	Remarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record of reading• Book reviews• Critical response to books read	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best pieces of writing selected by students• Best pieces selected by teacher• Journal writing for book review• Minutes of meetings.• memoirs• Personal, transactional and poetic writing• Short stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Assess the portfolios consistently throughout the year. For class X, send the cumulative marks (30%) to BCSEA at the end of the academic year.

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 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 synthesizes 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 holds 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’S 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-centered 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

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

2. Writer's Background and Value Assumptions

- i. What is the writer's background?
- ii. How might it affect the writer's approach to the topic and the selection and interpretation of the evidence presented?
- iii. What are the writer's value assumptions regarding this topic?

3. Writer's Argument, Conclusion, and Evidence

- i. What is the topic of the writer's argument?
- ii. What is the writer's conclusion?
- iii. 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

- i. Are there any logical fallacies?

- ii. What sort of evidence does the writer use to support the conclusion(s)?
- iii. Does the evidence offer adequate support for the writer's conclusion?
- iv. Are the sources creditable?
- v. 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

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

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 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 teacher. 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.

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.

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 are 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;
- 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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