

ENJOY LITERATURE

Proposition de corrigé

Vous trouverez ci-dessous une proposition de corrigé de la plupart des exercices du manuel Enjoy Literature (sauf certains exercices de « Pre-reading activities » faisant davantage appel à la créativité et à l'imagination de l'élève, ainsi que les exercices de travail personnel et de réécriture proposés dans « Branching out » ou dans « Task »)

Chapitre 1

Je de l'écrivain et jeu de l'écriture / The voice of the writer playing with words

TEXT
1

Songs of Innocence and of Experience (1789-1793) by William Blake

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

The span of green flowery pastures is meant for animals. By extension it stands for the simple life of a keeper and has come to be a commonplace image for the Paradise lost and the expectation of a better life for Christians.

The lamb is connected to the pasture and pastoral life. It is a usual symbol for innocence. This image is often used in the pastoral representation of Eden. It also happens to be a Christ figure, Jesus being the Lamb of God.

The feather is also a natural element, used for writing, a metonymy for writers and more widely for artists.

Cherubim and angel figures were used in sculpture and painting during the 17th and 18th centuries hinting at the religious visits of God's heralds and the visited people. Among these blessed people, you can find Biblical characters and artists.

FOCUS ON

1. Focus on the title of the book. What content might you expect in each poem? Are your answers in keeping with what you have read?

The title *Songs of Innocence* suggests the world of childhood and carelessness whereas *Songs of Experience* are expected to be about trials and hardships, maybe even complaints. The childlike simplicity of the words as well as the repetition of the same words in the "Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence* are coherent with what the reader could anticipate on. As for the "Introduction" to *Songs of Experience*, the gravity of the tone is that of a mature voice.

2. Read the Introduction to *Songs of Innocence* aloud. What does it sound like?

It sounds like a nursery rhyme or a lullaby with plain vocabulary and simple images.

3. What are the lexical fields observed in "Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence*? And in "Introduction" to *Songs of Experience*? Are the themes you have found in keeping with the Romantic Age?

"Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence* is dominated by sounds produced by a child (laughter) or by a musical instrument (piping) and by strong unreserved emotions such as "pleasant glee", "merry cheer", "he wept to hear", "thy happy pipe", "happy cheer", "While he wept with joy to hear". Arts are also appearing in the form of mere music then accompanied by lyrics that are finally jotted down to share with a larger audience. The impatience of the young child is conveyed through imperative forms.

Meanwhile, in "Introduction" to *Songs of Experience*, the stress is laid both on Nature and the call of the single speaker "The Bard" left to tackle with issues of the whole universe, natural ("among the ancient trees", "the

evening", "The starry pole", "Earth", "the dewy grass", "Night is worn", "the morn / Rises from the slumberous mass", "The starry floor", "The wat'ry shore") human ("the lapsed Soul", "And fallen, fallen light renew!") and divine ("The Holy Word"). The Earth is addressed directly in a partly religious call.

In short, the over-present and powerful Nature is a theme in keeping with the Romantic Age. The status of Man and the Artist are also questioned by the other Romantic artists.

4. Which one is easier to understand? Why?

"Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence* is probably easier to comprehend as the words are plain and the situation is depicted in a simple way. Moreover, the rhythm is inviting.

5. Identify the "I" in *Songs of Innocence*. What differences can you observe with the narrator of *Songs of Experience*?

The first-person narrator in *Songs of Innocence* is first of all an artist—it could be William Blake himself. The narrator of *Songs of Experience* is more mysterious as the first five lines portray him as "Hear the voice of the Bard! / Who Present, Past, & Future sees; / Whose ears have heard / The Holy Word That walk'd among the ancient trees". It creates a distance between the reader and this figure contrary to the "I" of "Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence* who shares with the readers his experience in Nature and his meeting with inspiration.

6. Could you draw a parallel between the contrasting ideas of innocence / experience and the Bible?

"Innocence" and "Experience" echo the Biblical situations of "Paradise" and the "Fall". Blake seems to establish a parallel between the natural evolution of every man—from childhood and its innocence to (wo) manhood and its experience—and the chronology of the Genesis from the perfection of life in the Garden of Eden to the dismal life on Earth after the Fall. Blake's poems are more often than not pervaded with Biblical imagery.

BRANCHING OUT

Among the themes to be found: crime and punishment (murder), women, slavery, ethics

Among the major characters to be met: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_major_biblical_figures

Songs: gospel music i.e. "Go down Moses", "I've heard it through the grape vine by Marvin Gaye" + http://www.songfacts.com/category-songs_with_biblical_references.php

Paintings: <http://www.bible-art.info/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Paintings_with_biblical_themes

<http://www.artbible.info/art/>

FOCUS ON

Stanzas 1-2 and 3

1. Draw a simple sketch of the scene keeping in mind all the elements surrounding the flowers. What sort of scene is it?

It describes a natural landscape, probably in the spring. It is a pastoral scene.

2. Description of the flowers:

- a. List the elements associated with the daffodils (colour / movement / number / emotion / other natural elements).

The flowers are bright yellow (“golden”), they are very luminous (“twinkle”, “shine”, “sparkling”). They move with the wind as if they were dancing (“fluttering”, “dancing”, “tossing their heads”). There are many flowers (“a crowd”, “a host”, “ten thousand”) and they seem to be joyful (“glee”, “jocund”).

- b. Describe how the poet links them (simile / metaphor). What effect does it create?

The poet uses metaphors when he writes “a crowd / a host of golden daffodils”. The words “crowd” and “host” usually refer to people. The personification in the last line of the first stanza (“fluttering and dancing”) underlines the association to a human behaviour.

There are also many similes in the second stanza, but here Wordsworth compares the daffodils with stars. The verbs “shine” and “twinkle” and the noun “milky way” lead to the association of stars and the universe. The personification in the last line “tossing their heads in sprightly dance,” is also a comparison to human behaviour.

Moreover, this personification is underlined by the association to a human feeling of happiness, as the flower dance “in glee”.

So the result is the impression that the flowers are alive, dancing happily in the wind.

3. Compare the description of the daffodils with the description of the “I” (verses 1-2). Are they similar?

No, they are in contradiction. The image of the numerous flowers dancing conveys a feeling of joy whereas the “I” is “lonely” and is compared to a cloud, which symbolises a darker, more brooding mood.

4. List all the words belonging to the lexical field of vision. Why is it important?

“saw / shine / twinkle / glance / sparkling / gazed / flash / eye”: they are important because they underline the fact that the scenery is seen through the eyes of the “I”, the poet, and it is precisely how the poet feels and interprets the scene which creates the emotion and makes it special.

5. Verses 15-16: describe the impact of the scene on the poet and explain why he feels this way.

The flowers seem so joyful “dancing” in the wind that the poet cannot help but feel the same emotion (“a poet could not but be gay, / in such a jocund company”).

Stanza 4

6. Find echoes of stanza 1-2 (words / images / emotions...).

“flash” echoes “sparkling” and “twinkle”. “eye” echoes all the references to sight. “bliss” and “pleasure” echo “glee” and “gay”, and the image of daffodils dancing is repeated.

7. In your opinion, what does the “inward eye” stand for?

The “inward eye” is the memory of the poet.

Conclude

8. Keeping in mind what you know about Romanticism*, prove that this poem is representative of this literary movement.

“(The) Daffodils” is representative of the Romantic Movement because all the characteristics are present: strong feelings or emotions, delight in the observation of Nature which is inspiring and powerful, importance of the senses and of memory and of the “eye” and the “I”.

FOCUS ON

1. Find basic information about the characters / the place / the time of the day.

The characters are a man travelling with his valet. The man seems to be wounded. They have decided to stop for the night in an abandoned mansion so it's the end of the day (“dusk”).

2. §1: Focus on the description of the bedroom: what is special about this room?

It is situated apart from the main rooms (“in a remote turret”), heavily decorated and dark. The room is not square and there are many recesses in which paintings are hung.

3. “But the action produced an effect altogether unanticipated”: explain what “the action” is and “the effect” it produced.

The action: the narrator moves the candelabrum to cast more light on the book he is reading.

The effect: the light falls on a nook in the wall which was up to then in the dark and it reveals a painting that the narrator had not noticed before.

4. What lexical field is used in §3? Why does the narrator insist on this point?

The lexical field of sight / vision is used in the paragraph to underline the narrator's perception of the painting and the strange reaction that he had when seeing it for the first time. At the same time, it enables the narrator to consider the fact that vision can be deceiving while stating that it was not the case for him: he is sure of what he saw (“I could not and would not doubt”).

5. §4 and §5: How does the narrator react? Explain why by focusing on the description of the painting.

He is at first startled, surprised because he thought that the girl represented in the painting was alive and when he inspects the painting more closely, he realises that it is such a great work of art that he is literally awe-struck by its “life-likeness”.

6. a. Last paragraph: compare and contrast the description of the painter and his wife.

The wife is described as a very beautiful, lively and joyful woman as opposed to the painter who is pictured as austere and moody, yet proud and passionate, but only about his art.

- b. Show how art and death are associated in this passage.

Art and death are clearly associated in the description of the portrait in the book that the narrator is reading: the painter seems to be literally painting the life out of his bride (“the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sate beside him”). The deterioration of the young woman's health is depicted in details, each time associated with dimming or dim light (“dark”, “pale”, “ghastly” and “flickered up”).

[Inversely, the sight of the painting seems to bring the narrator back to life (“to startle me at once into waking life”).]

Conclude

7. Show the importance of the “I” / eye of the narrator throughout the story. With a third-person narrative, would it have the same effect on the reader?

The whole scene is seen through the eyes of the narrator - the “I” - who insists upon that fact. Thanks to the first-person narrative, the reader has access to the narrator's point of view on the setting and the events. It is through his eyes and his perception that the story is told. It would not have the same effect with a third-person narrative because an external point of view cannot convey the impressions and feelings of the characters, except in a very descriptive and neutral way. Therefore the identification with the “I” cannot take place and the story cannot have the same effect on the reader.

"The Canary" (1923) in *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories* by Katherine Mansfield

FOCUS ON

1. Gather elements from the short story to portray the "I" (gender, love stories, job, age group).

"I can scarcely look at it even now and yet I could not bear to take it out. I should like to think it was there always even after my time." → She is moved by the recollection, and she is very sensitive to absence.

"And that isn't just my fancy. Often, from the window I used to see people stop at the gate to listen, or they would lean over the fence by the mock-orange for quite a long time—carried away"

"... I loved him. How I loved him! Perhaps it does not matter so very much what it is one loves in this world." → She has a love story, a strong attachment to her pet.

"Flowers respond wonderfully, but they don't sympathise. Then I loved the evening star." → She used to have a close relationship with the evening star.

"... It surprises even me now to remember how he and I shared each other's lives." → She speaks of her bird as if it had been a human being,—it is a personification of her singing companion.

"... Company, you see, that was what he was. Perfect company. If you have lived alone you will realise how precious that is." → These surprising relationships are accounted for by her loneliness.

"It doesn't matter. Not in the least. I quite understand. They are young." → As the young men are described, you can suppose that she is much older than them. She is a householder.

2. "... You cannot imagine how wonderfully he sang": who is the narrator talking to? Does it sound like a dialogue?

The narrator seems to be addressing a passer-by or a neighbour ("... You see that big nail to the right of the front door?", "I suppose it sounds absurd to you—", "Then I loved the evening star. Does that sound ridiculous?", "... Have you kept birds? If you haven't, all this must sound, perhaps, exaggerated. People have the idea that birds are heartless, cold little creatures, not like dogs or cats."). However, despite the questions, the dialogue is incomplete and the reader can only read one part of this dialogue, it sounds sometimes as if she were talking to herself aloud ("It was not like the singing of other canaries. And that isn't just my fancy.", "... It surprises even me now to remember how he and I shared each other's lives.", "I often wonder if everybody feels the same.").

3. What sort of narrative is it? What is put forward?

She uses the preterite for this one-voice dialogue. The thread of her story is based on her recollections and her feelings or impressions ("... something which is like longing, and yet it is not longing. Or regret—it is more like regret. And yet regret for what? I have much to be thankful for!", "... It surprises even me now to remember", "—Oh, I can hardly bear to recall it.", "But I remember feeling", "Untrue! Dreadfully untrue! I remember one night.", "... All the same, without being morbid, or giving way to—to memories and so on, I must confess").

4. Focus on the description of the winged pet's actions, what does the story sound like?

As far as the actions of the winged pet are concerned, the descriptions are very musical: "he used to **hop, hop, hop** from one perch to the other, **tap** against the bars as if to attract my attention, sip a little water, **just as a professional singer might**", "When the Chinaman who came to the door with birds to sell held him up in his tiny cage, and instead of **fluttering, fluttering**, like the poor little goldfinches, he gave a faint, small **chirp**", "Finally he gave a **shake, a flick, a twitter** and he lifted his throat", "And then there came a little '**Sweet! Sweet!**'". The words employed are onomatopoeias, the sounds of the actions are contained in the words and sometimes this musical effect is reinforced by the repetition of the word so that the narrative sounds like a film sound recording.

5. The collection of short stories from which "The Canary" is taken from was gathered by her husband the year after her death. This very short story is known to have been the last she wrote before she died of

tuberculosis. How autobiographical is it? What could the canary, the cage and its death stand for?

Obviously the canary is some sort of performer, an artist ("it was **quite a little entertainment**. I spread a newspaper over a corner of the table and when I put the cage on it he used to beat with his wings, despairingly, as if he didn't know what was coming. 'You're **a regular little actor**,' I used to scold him.", "You cannot imagine how wonderfully he sang."). Although the canary is a singer and K. Mansfield a writer, they have arts in common. The reader can even interpret "I feel he is not quite forgotten." and "I should like to think it was there always even after my time." as a form of pride from K. Mansfield wishing to be admired for her work after her death. Similarly, the nail can stand for her situation. Because of tuberculosis she cannot move as she would like to, she is nailed, which can explain how hard for her it is to look at this situation "You see that big nail to the right of the front door? I can scarcely look at it even now and yet I could not bear to take it out." The very end of the story is more poignant: "**I must confess that there does seem to me something sad in life. It is hard to say what it is.**" K. Mansfield is running out of time while writing this short story. Tuberculosis was affecting her lungs: "**It is there, deep down, deep down, part of one, like one's breathing.**" She is entrapped, she is caged in her own failing body: "**My breast felt hollow, as if it was his cage.**" Her ailment can push the reader to reinterpret otherwise the not so remarkable words: "**I can't describe it; I wish I could.**"

TASK

* WRITING

Some examples of onomatopoeias: babble, bang, bark, beep, belch, bing, blare, blast, bleat, brush, bubble, bump, buzz, chatter, chirp, chug, clack, clang, clap, clash, clatter, click, clink, cough, crack, crackle, crash, creak, crisp, croak, crunch, ding, dingdong, drip, drop, drum, echo, fizz, flash, flick, flip, flop, flush, flutter, gasp, giggle, grind, groan, growl, grind, groan, growl, grumble, grunt, gulp, gurgle, hiccup, hiss, hum, hush, itch, jingle, knock, mew, moan, mumble, murmur, ooze, ouch, patter, peep, pop, quack, quiver, ratatat, ratchet, rattle, ribbit, ring, rip, roar, rumble, rustle, scream, screech, slam, slap, slurp, smack, smash, smooch, smooth, snap, sniff, sob, spark, splash, splat, splatter, stomp, sweep, thud, thump, tinkle, tiptoe, tweet, whine, whirl, whisper, whirl, whisper, zip

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1969) by Maya Angelou

FOCUS ON

1. "I" is a black-skinned fifteen-year-old girl intending to apply for a job. Who is she talking to? (occupation, status, skin colour, age).

"I" is addressing the receptionist of the Market Street Railway Company also called "that silly clerk" & "The secretary" & just "the clerk" who must be white-skinned and one can suppose that she is middle-aged.

2. What is the narrator's first reaction to "the interior dingy and the décor drab"? Why does she change her mind?

Her first reaction to "the interior dingy and the décor drab" is disappointment. She is on the verge of deciding not to work for the streetcar company. Yet, after being rudely denied an interview for the job she is applying for, she is determined to get it.

3. How does the secretary refuse her the job? Is the refusal subtle or gross?

The white-skinned clerk refuses Maya the job by pretending that the person in charge of applicants is away and that she cannot give her an appointment. This trick does not work as it is very obvious and gross.

4. What does Maya label "the miserable little encounter" or "the incident"?

What Maya labels "the miserable little encounter" or "the incident" is that she is denied a job on the ground that she is black-skinned, which is discrimination / racism.

5. Why does Maya refer to *Hamlet*, one of Shakespeare's most quoted plays?

Maya refers to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* because she establishes a parallel between the character and her people who are both forced to fight because of their ancestors. At the same time, she makes it clear that she is not illiterate, she is well-read and educated; in other words, she is not going to be fooled around.

6. Where is the play metaphor repeated? Why?

The play metaphor echoed in "actors" and "puppeteer" stresses the idea that their respective attitudes do not fully depend on them but that is a sort of tragedy with well-known parts to be played.

TEXT
6

"An Unauthorized Autobiography of Me" (2000) by Sherman Alexie

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. These two self-portraits represent the painter at two different ages. Describe them and explain what they reveal about their author.

First portrait: the artist is young and represented as a painter caught in the act of painting what probably is his self-portrait, since he seems to be shading his eyes to observe something (a mirror?). Another interpretation could be that he is looking at the viewer and he seems to be wondering / puzzled / anxious, maybe about the reception of his art.

Second portrait: the atmosphere is completely different. Here the artist is posing for his portrait in a traditional way, next to a bust. He is once again looking directly at the viewer, yet, this time, he seems much more self-assured / confident even proud of himself.

These two self-portraits reveal a lot about the painter, not only his physical appearance (as seen through his eyes) but also his rank in the society (through his clothes and pose) as well as his inner feelings. The eyes are central in both paintings since they create a link with the viewer.

2. From self-portrait to autobiography: what do these two styles have in common? In what way do they differ?

In both self-portrait and autobiography, the author / narrator gives the viewer / reader his / her point of view on his / her physical appearance, his / her feelings and even his / her nature and in both, the question of truth is at the core (is the author telling us the truth about himself / herself? / could we be manipulated? Is it even possible to be really truthful?).

Yet they also differ. In an autobiography, the author can tell the readers about his / her whole life, can give much more details, on purpose or innocently. Most of the time, a self-portrait represents the artist at one point in his / her life, in one given context.

3. In your opinion, why does someone write his or her autobiography? Give at least three relevant reasons.

Because they think people might be interested in their life / because they want to testify about something (a personal experience / a special time in history...) / because they need to confess something / because they want to be famous / because they want people to remember them after they die...

FOCUS ON

1. Focus on the shape of these two extracts:

a. What sort of texts are usually organised this way?

A diary with various entries organised by date / a personal notebook in which people write about their memories, feelings... as they remember them.

b. Find an echo between the shape of the text and the main topic of both extracts.

They are memories / anecdotes and both deal with expressing oneself (writing / singing / poetry).

Focus on the first extract

2. Why did the critic ask such a question?

The critic is probably prejudiced: he focuses on the fact that Sherman Alexie is a Native American writer and to him / her, it necessarily implies that some of the Native American traditions (such as orality) can be found in his work.

3. Comment upon the tone of the author's answer. What does it reveal?

Sherman Alexie's reply is very witty. He gently makes fun of the critic by taking his / her question literally, thereby suggesting that it is a stupid question. It reveals that the author is capable of derision, even self-derision with his own identity.

Focus on the second extract

4. Sum up the anecdote told by the author. Is this an unusual teenager's dream?

The story deals with how the author and his friends decided to form a music group in order to become famous and seduce girls. It is a very common teenage dream.

5. List all the elements associated with Native Americans. Why does the author seem to insist on them?

The references to Native American culture pervade the extract: first, the story takes place in a "tribal" school, they want to form a "reservation doowop group", they choose to be called "the Warriors" because the boys "have watched a lot of Westerns" (= cowboys versus Indians), the narrator specifies that they are "Indian boys and girls" and "Indian fighters".

There are also more subtle references, such as "Tracks of my tears", which may refer to the Trail of Tears (a name given to the forced relocation and movement of Native American nations from south-eastern parts of the United States following the Indian Removal Act of 1830).

He probably insists on them to show the context in which he spent his childhood but also because it is a part of his identity, of his culture, and it has an influence on who he is, which is central to the autobiographical genre.

6. How do the boys pick out the song they will sing? What does it reveal?

The boys choose to sing "Monster Mash" because they all know all the lyrics to that song. They do not remember any other songs, particularly not "Tracks of my Tears". That part of the anecdote may symbolise the fact that the Native culture is gradually fading, being forgotten by the younger generations, who are much more influenced by famous American singers.

However, it is also interesting to notice that fact that they choose a song about monsters, which could be how they feel they are perceived.

Conclude

7. What do these two extracts from Sherman Alexie's autobiography reveal about their author? (Focus on his tone / his feelings / his opinion of himself).

These two short extracts reveal a lot about their author: they tell the reader about the author's culture and identity (Native American), which seem to be very important for him; but the reader also notices that Sherman Alexie is able to detach himself from this aspect of his identity. The two anecdotes are told in a light humorous tone ("dubious skill" "I sing with (...) happiness, anger (...) small intestine") that lighten the gravity of the context. Finally, we also learn why the author decided to write: he wants to experience the intensity of self-expression and the reward of an audience. That is why the last sentence ("That is why I am a poet") is set apart from the previous paragraph.

8. The "I" takes on several identities in these extracts: list them and explain why.

A famous writer (interviewed by a critic) / an Indian boy / a teenager / an American teenager / a poet.

All these identities define who Sherman Alexie is, which is one of the purposes of an autobiography. The author wants to show who (s)he is, to define him / herself.

9. Why is this text entitled "*the unauthorized autobiography of me*"?

There are several possible explanations: first, it can mock the scandalous titles given to some biographies of celebrities, which suggest to the reader that (s)he will learn things that the famous people wish were kept a secret ("unauthorized"). It can also reveal that the author is playing a game with the reader by implying that the "I" (author of the autobiography) could be different from the "me" (main topic of the autobiography), showing some sort of split personality / identity.

TEXT
7

Any Human Heart (2002)
by William Boyd

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Look at the following picture:

1. What does it represent?
It's the traditional representation of the evolution of Man.
2. Describe the changes in each stage (physically and intellectually).
He gradually stands up to finally walk erect on his hind legs and is considered to be more and more "intelligent", more and more "evolved".
3. Brainstorm five things that you expect to find in a journal / diary.
dates / special events / secrets / feelings / self-analysis etc.

FOCUS ON

1. According to the narrator, what do all journals, including his, start with?
They all start with the writer swearing to tell the truth about himself / herself.

2. Are his own journals a good example of his theory? Justify your answers with quotes from the text.

They seem to be a good example of that theory because the narrator insists on this point, quite heavily even, since he repeats this idea several times in different ways ("I have resisted all attempts to present myself in a better might. There are no excisions designed to conceal errors of judgement (...)").

3. In his Preamble, the narrator uses the famous illustration of the evolution of man that you worked on in the "Pre-reading activities". Explain why he uses it.

He compares the image of the writer given by his / her journals to the well-ordered traditional image of evolution to contrast them. In his opinion, although both this picture and a journal retrace the evolution of a human being, in a journal, this evolution is not well-organised and clear. The different aspects of the writer's personality do not appear chronologically, or even, logically in a journal.

Conclude

4. Finally, what is the definition of "*a true journal*"?

"A true journal", according to the narrator, simply illustrates the various selves of its author, without any preconceived organisation. As the last sentence and its mirror-like construction suggests ("I am all these different people—all these different people are me"), the reader is given a global view of the author of the journal, like various pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

BRANCHING OUT

2. Sum up why "*many readers believed Mountstuart to be real*".

Thanks to the writing techniques used by William Boyd which gave Logan Mountstuart a real voice and, eventually, a real life.

3. Brainstorm what an author needs to do to give verisimilitude* (= the sense that what one reads is "real", or at least realistic and believable) to his or her character.

Spontaneity / no hindsight / no prolepses / real characters (Hitler, Hemingway) / a real historical context...

Chapitre 2

La rencontre avec l'autre, l'amour, l'amitié / Meeting people, love and friendship

TEXT
8

As You Like It (1599)
by William Shakespeare

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Work out WHAT is happening: observe this poster and try to find out clues about this extract from *As You Like It*.
 - a. Where does the scene take place?
The tree trunk suggests that the scene takes place in a forest.
 - b. What can you associate the sheep and the puppet with? Why are they appearing on each side of the tree trunk?
You can associate the sheep with pastures and open door life but also with simple-mindedness. The puppet is used to symbolize the king's fool (as well as life at court with all its codes and courtiers). This is not by chance if both elements are represented on each side of the tree trunk as they are not supposed to meet and should stand in opposition: refined court life with educated or well-bred courtiers are not meant to live side by side with gross illiterate peasants living according to the seasons.
 - c. The sheep and the puppet seem to be hiding. Imagine who could be playing hide-and-seek in the play?
Both seem to be playing hide-and-seek in the forest. You can imagine that a courtier and a peasant are meeting

in this forest far away from the court and its social conventions and its hierarchy. You can suppose the traditional rules are to be twisted or that, as in the case of a carnival, they are changing roles, which could lead to misunderstandings.

FOCUS ON

Love

1. Why does Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede, point out the difference between a clock and time? How does a lover experience time?

Rosalind points the difference between the clock (which is an instrument to measure time) and time itself which can be perceived in various subjective ways according to people's feelings. A lover for instance being impatient to meet his or her beloved again finds that time is stretching—therefore the clock stands for objective time, whereas the way one can experience time can be very subjective.

2. With the sentence "I will not cast away my physic but on those that are sick", what common metaphor does Rosalind use to evoke love?

Rosalind uses the common metaphor of sickness to depict love and its effects on the lovers who are said to be love-sick and need to be cured.

3. In the text, find a second commonly used metaphor for love.

Madness is another hackneyed metaphor when talking about love, that is the reason why you are said to be "madly in love" or you are a "love fool".

4. According to Rosalind, what are the typical signs to identify a lover? What is he supposed to be?

According to Rosalind, the symptoms to identify a lover are a weakened physical condition ("A lean cheek", "a blue eye and sunken") as the lovers are known to forget eating properly, and a lack of interest for the appearance as lovers are only concerned by the one they love ("a beard neglected", "your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied and every thing about you demonstrating a careless desolation").

Conclude

5. What vision of love does each character represent?

Obviously, Orlando represents a naïve, romantic lover in the manner of the 14th-century poet Petrarch, whereas Rosalind as Ganymede depicts a more critical vision of love and lovers, which is verging on pessimism and even misanthropy.

Disguise: Rosalind as Ganymede

During the Elizabethan period, female roles were played by boy actors, which inevitably results in many layers of disguise in terms of theatricality.

6. What remark suggests that Orlando finds a flaw in the Duke's daughter's disguise as a country man? Why is it ironic?

"Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling" suggests that Orlando finds a flaw in the Duke's daughter's disguise as a country man. Her educated way of speaking betrays her disguise. It is ironic as they are both hiding in the same forest and he is himself dressed like a hunter.

7. Why does Rosalind as Ganymede compare "the skirts of the forest" to "fringe upon a petticoat"?

Rosalind as Ganymede compares "the skirts of the forest" to "fringe upon a petticoat" probably to hint at her real gender but also to tease her lover with references to women's underwear and register his reactions.

8. Why does Ganymede exclaim "I thank God I am not a woman" although in reality the character is a woman?

Ganymede exclaims "I thank God I am not a woman" although in reality the character is a woman to secure her male role in the eye of Orlando. One can also suppose that Shakespeare means to highlight all the innuendoes of the situation.

9. Analyse the four layers of disguise through the character of Rosalind.

Considering that during the Elizabethan period, female roles were played by boy actors, the role of Rosalind is played by a boy dressed and made up like a girl (1st level of disguise). Rosalind then disguises as a boy named Ganymede (2nd level of disguise). Ganymede claims he is going to help Orlando and will endorse the role of his love namely Rosalind (3rd level of disguise). However, Ganymede is a name taken from the Greek mythology referring to one of the numerous lovers Zeus chose so that Shakespeare may be suggesting that the boy actor is not what he seems to be (4th level of disguise).

Conclude

10. What or who must we believe? Now can you interpret the meaning of the title of the play? Two characters are present on stage, but considering the different levels of disguise mentioned above, how many possible couples are there in this scene?

It is tricky to tell one reality from another. You do not know who you should trust or what speech you should take at face value. In other words, the title of the play tells it all, take what you like and set aside what you do not. There are two characters present **on stage**, but considering the different levels of disguise mentioned above, there is more than one possible couple in this scene

- Rosalind, daughter and heiress of Duke Senior and Orlando, the son of one of the duke's friends
- Ganymede, "a saucy lackey" and a hunter (homoerotic exchange)
- Ganymede as Rosalind and Orlando (homoerotic exchange)
- the boy actor playing Rosalind-Ganymede-Rosalind and the actor playing Orlando

TEXT
9

Pamela (1740) by Samuel Richardson

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. a.

I would like	Pick out one medium above	Justify your choice
To write about personal feelings	a letter	The letter is inserted into a sealed envelope and only the addressee can read it
To send a quick and short message to my friend	a mobile phone	It comes in handy and it is informal to keep in touch with friends
To let my friends know that I am on a holiday	a postcard	It is quick to write and usually shows a view of the place or a funny message
To hear my parents' voice because I feel homesick	a telephone	The best medium to speak to someone immediately.
Send a message to some friends and relatives with an attached document	an e-mail	This is compromise between the letter and the immediacy of a phone call.

- b. People write letters less and less these days because there are other media to communicate - the telephone or mobile to start with - and more frequently the Internet through e-mails or even chat rooms and social media. As a consequence, letter-writing has become more formal and people write letters on particular occasions, for instance when they are in love or feel lonely. Letters enable you to express your feelings to the addressee more deeply because you are faced with a sheet of paper and you can pour your emotions out as they come without being interrupted, which is the case on the telephone or on the Internet.

2. The plot of *Pamela* is likely to deal with an exchange of letters between "a beautiful young damsel" named Pamela and "her parents" about "the principles of virtue and religion" she should stick to despite the thoughts that will inevitably pop up "in the minds of the Youth of Both Sexes". She could be seduced by a young man and put her virtue in danger and compromise her honour and her family's, which may prevent her from securing a fiancé and making a good match.

FOCUS ON

1. After reading the text, find out what passage in the text matches the picture in question 3 of your pre-reading.

The picture of the pre-reading refers to the postscript, namely the last eight lines of Pamela's letter.

2. "I have great Trouble, and some Comfort": the text can actually be divided into 3 parts:

1. Trouble 2. Comfort 3. After writing the letter
Identify these three parts in the structure of the letter and sum them up.

1. **Trouble:** from "I have great Trouble" to "Well, God's Will must be done!"

Lady B., Pamela's employer, has just died—just before dying, however, she recommends to her son, Squire B. that he should keep all the servants in the estate.

2. **Comfort:** from "and so comes the Comfort" to "who will ever be."

Pamela is not forced to go back to her parents' place because Squire B. is going to keep all the servants.

3. **After writing the letter:** from "I have been scared" to "forgive me!"

This postscript tells the reader that Squire B. has discovered the letter Pamela has just written to her parents—he reads the letter and gives it back to Pamela.

4. What expression of duty and virtue do we find in the passage? Pick out all the elements.

- Pamela is sobbing upon her employer's death-bed, which shows great respect and grief for her employer, Lady B.
- Then, she is writing the letter to her parents as a dutiful daughter, informing them about her current situation.
- she sends the four golden guineas she has just received to her poor parents
- she wants to help her parents and to reassure them at the same time.

5. What does the letter tell us about the position of young girls in 18th-century England? Quote a sentence in the text that is quite revealing.

"that I shall not be obliged to return back to be a Clog upon my dear parents."

18th-century girls did not have many options, being considered as inferior to their male counterparts. Either they stayed at their parents' and had to do all the chores at home, or they were sent as servants to work at a rich person's place (as in *Pamela*). In the case of Pamela, this opportunity of working as a servant at Lady B.'s has enabled her to escape destitution but more importantly, it has made it possible to get "qualifications above (her) degree": not only is she an expert at her "needle", but she has also been taught how to "write" and "cast accounts".

6. What does the reader learn about Pamela's young master?

Squire B. is going to consider Pamela in a different way—He makes a distinction between Pamela and the other servants. He takes Pamela "by the Hand" and asks her to "take care of (his) linen." He is also very inquisitive, as evidenced by the fact that he reads the letter Pamela has written to her parents.

TASK

* WRITING

Letter-writing: Building up your imagination!

Text: *Pamela*

This is the second letter of *Pamela*.

LETTER II

DEAR PAMELA,

Your letter was indeed a great trouble, and some comfort, to me and your poor mother. We are troubled, to be sure, for your good lady's death, who took such care of you, and gave you learning, and, for three or four years past, has always been giving you clothes and linen, and every thing that a gentlewoman need not be ashamed to appear in. But our chief trouble is, and indeed a very great one, for fear you should be brought to anything dishonest or wicked, by being set so above yourself. Every body talks how you have come on, and what a genteel girl you are; and some say you are very pretty; and, indeed, six months since, when I saw you last, I should have thought so myself, if you was not our child. But what avails all this, if you are to be ruined and undone!—Indeed, my dear Pamela, we begin to be in great fear for you; for what signify all the riches in the world, with a bad conscience, and to be dishonest! We are, 'tis true, very poor, and find it hard enough to live; though once, as you know, it was better with us. But we would sooner live upon the water, and, if possible, the clay of the ditches I contentedly dig, than live better at the price of our child's ruin.

I hope the good 'squire has no design: but when he has given you so much money, and speaks so kindly to you, and praises your coming on; and, oh, that fatal word! that he would be kind to you, if you would do as you should do, almost kills us with fears.

I have spoken to good old widow Mumford about it, who, you know, has formerly lived in good families; and she puts us in some comfort; for she says it is not unusual, when a lady dies, to give what she has about her person to her waiting-maid, and to such as sit up with her in her illness. But, then, why should he smile so kindly upon you? Why should he take such a poor girl as you by the hand, as your letter says he has done twice? Why should he stoop to read your letter to us; and commend your writing and spelling? And why should he give you leave to read his mother's books?—Indeed, indeed, my dearest child, our hearts ache for you; and then you seem so full of joy at his goodness, so taken with his

kind expressions, (which, truly, are very great favours, if he means well) that we fear—yes, my dear child, we fear—you should be too grateful,—and reward him with that jewel, your virtue, which no riches, nor favour, nor any thing in this life, can make up to you.

I, too, have written a long letter, but will say one thing more; and that is, that, in the midst of our poverty and misfortunes, we have trusted in God's goodness, and been honest, and doubt not to be happy hereafter, if we continue to be good, though our lot is hard here; but the loss of our dear child's virtue would be a grief that we could not bear, and would bring our grey hairs to the grave at once.

If, then, you love us, if you wish for God's blessing, and your own future happiness, we both charge you to stand upon your guard: and, if you find the least attempt made upon your virtue, be sure you leave every thing behind you, and come away to us; for we had rather see you all covered with rags, and even follow you to the churchyard, than have it said, a child of ours preferred any worldly conveniences to her virtue.

We accept kindly your dutiful present; but, till we are out of pain, cannot make use of it, for fear we should partake of the price of our poor daughter's shame: so have laid it up in a rag among the thatch, over the window, for a while, lest we should be robbed. With our blessings, and our hearty prayers for you, we remain,

Your careful, but loving Father and Mother,
JOHN AND ELIZABETH ANDREWS.

TEXT
10

Pride and Prejudice (1813)
by Jane Austen

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. What was Mr. Andrews's activity before posing?
Before posing, Mr. Andrews was certainly hunting as he is carrying a rifle and a hound is at his feet.
2. What was Mrs. Andrews's activity before posing?
As for Mrs. Andrews, she has a book in her lap so she must have been reading.
3. In the 18th century, people had to pay to have their portrait done (there were no cameras!). Guess what social status they probably enjoyed.
As there were no cameras in the 18th century, people had to pay an artist to have their portraits done—which means they had to enjoy a comfortable social status to afford it.
4. Find three adjectives to describe the landscape (colour, room in the painting, atmosphere).
The landscape is green, open / broad, peaceful / restful.

FOCUS ON

1. Identify the event. Spot elements in the text to support your answer.
The event is a ball (line 3) as the verb "dance" is repeated on several occasions.
2. Read the first lines: what information can you gather about Mr. Bingley?
On reading the first lines, you can gather that Mr. Bingley is easy-going / sociable ("soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room"), "lively", "unreserved" ("danced every dance") and generally "amiable".
3. Portray Mr. Darcy briefly with three characteristics. What pair of gentlemen do Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy form?
Mr. Darcy's portrait shows him as "the proudest" ("declined being introduced to any other lady"), "the most disagreeable man in the world" ("speaking occasionally to one of his party"), rather cold, distant and unsociable

Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy form a pair of contrasting gentlemen as the narrator underlines: "What a contrast between him [Mr. Bingley] and his friend [Mr. Darcy]!"

4. Who is the narrator? What point of view is presented to the reader?

The narrator seems to side with the inhabitants of Longbourn. It looks as if the newcomers were scrutinized, and exclamatory sentences are used as if the narrator were personally involved. But, as you read on, the narrator seems to be not only a witness of the scene, but also, to be able to read people's minds ("sharpened into a particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters" or "Elizabeth remained with no cordial feelings toward him").

5. How many couples are already formed and how many couples could be formed with the characters present?

Mrs. Bennet is married to Mr. Bennet, and Bingley's sister is called Mrs. Hurst. These are the couples already formed. It seems that Mr. Bingley is sensitive to the charm of the eldest Bennet daughter, Jane, Miss Bingley belonging to Mr. Darcy's party could become his wife, although Mr. Bingley himself suggests to his friend to dance with Jane's sister, Elizabeth.

6. Focus on Elizabeth Bennet: what is her situation at this event?

Elizabeth Bennet is put in an awkward situation at the ball. Indeed, first of all, the number of women is greater than the number of men, so she "had been obliged, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances". Secondly, when Mr. Bingley suggests to Mr. Darcy to dance with her, she overhears their conversation and learns that "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me; I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men." He tells her to her face that she is below his beauty standards which is excruciating whatever the circumstances and even more at that period when women's fates depended on their securing a man's attention to marry him.

7. How can you account for the final sentence: "He had rather hoped that his wife's views on the stranger would be disappointed; but he soon found out that he had a different story to hear."?

"He had rather hoped that his wife's views on the stranger would be disappointed; but he soon found out that he had a different story to hear." Mr. Bennet seems almost delighted to anticipate on the story of his wife's disappointment. He is convinced that his wife's hope to marry one of their daughters to their wealthy, young, new neighbour will never come true. Yet, it is not just a whim of his wife since the young man has a soft spot for his eldest daughter, which comes as a surprise considering the difference of social status and wealth.

TEXT
11

**"O Captain, my Captain!" (1865)
by Walt Whitman**

FOCUS ON

1. Taking the date of the poem into account, who does the word "Captain" refer to?

"Captain" refers to Abraham Lincoln, who was assassinated shortly after the end of the American Civil War (1861-1865) on April 14th 1865 as he was watching a play entitled *Our American Cousin* by Tom Taylor at the Ford Theatre in Washington. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th US President.

2. Study the metaphor in the first stanza and explain what these words stand for:

Captain = Abraham Lincoln

our fearful trip is done (The captain has led his ship through difficult conditions) = the American Civil War

the prize we sought is won = the preservation of the Union, which both Abraham Lincoln and Whitman wanted to keep at all costs

The poem is therefore written as an extended metaphor. The reader understands that the "ship" stands for the United States.

3. The poem is an elegy*. How does Whitman refer to the character present in the poem and what does this show?

Whitman refers to the captain as "father," which underlines the fact that thanks to Lincoln's choice to preserve the Union rather than to earn a victory at all costs, the end of the Civil War is said to be a rebirth of the

nation of the United States of America. Lincoln is therefore seen as the "father" of the newborn reunited Nation, which is why Whitman pays him a tribute and shows great respect for him.

4. Study the end of each stanza: what do the ending lines have in common?

Each stanza ends with the same words, "fallen cold and dead."—the image of the dead captain is referred to systematically in the ending lines of each stanza, his death haunting the entire poem and expressing the poet's grief, even if he also mentions images of victory, as shown by "Exult O shores, and ring O bells!" (the victory of the North), but the poet is not in the mood to celebrate the victory of the Union precisely because the father of the Union is dead.

5. Would you say that this elegy conveys an expression of sadness, happiness or both? Justify your answer.

Both, yet the expression of sadness prevails: the poet does refer to the celebrations of victory (the war has been won!) through "Exult O shores, ring O bells!" but the fact that the "captain" has died prevents him from taking part in these celebrations. He is sad at the idea that the captain has just died, overwhelmed with grief as he is.

TEXT
12

**Of Mice and Men (1937)
by John Steinbeck**

FOCUS ON

1. Are the elements of the setting given in the first paragraph coherent with your vision of Salinas Valley? What is the atmosphere like?

The elements of the setting given in the first paragraph are coherent with our vision of Salinas Valley as in the countryside you can meet wild animals such as "rabbits" or a "heron". The surroundings are rather green with "the leaves" and "sycamore". Moreover, in the valley, there must be a mountainous part with the "hills". Finally you can picture "a hot day" in California. On the whole, the atmosphere is pastoral, bathed in innocence and simplicity.

2. What is Lennie compared to? Who does he behave like?

Lennie is compared to large, bulky, strong animals "the way a bear drags his paws" and "drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse". Indeed, he behaves like an animal "flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool" satisfying his needs without thinking beforehand and making sure that the water is drinkable and would not make him sick.

3. Compare George to Lennie. Are they similar or different?

They are first introduced as a team ("They had walked in **single** file down the path"). On top of that, they are wearing the same kind of clothes, like a uniform making it possible to identify them as partners and this similarity is stressed at the beginning of each sentence with "both" ("**Both** were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. **Both** wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders.").

Nonetheless, their physical appearances rather highlight their opposition which is stated "Behind him walked his opposite" and their complementary nature too ("The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose." and "a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, and wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely.")

4. What can you infer about their relationship by the fact that "one stayed behind the other"?

The fact that "one stayed behind the other" suggests that one is the leader and the other his follower.

5. Pay attention to their way of speaking. What can you conclude about their origins and education?

Judging by their way of speaking ("for God' sakes", "You gonna be sick like you was last night", "Looks kinda scummy", "Look what I done"), you can guess that they do not master English grammar and that they come from a poor uneducated American background.

Conclude

6. How are the characters presented to the reader in this incipit?

They are presented like a complementary pair, one being the opposite of the other but helping each other out. They seem to be close and to care about each other. George watches Lennie as if he were his child ("Lennie, for God's sakes don't drink so much.", "Lennie. You gonna be sick like you was last night.", "You never oughta drink water when it ain't running, Lennie," he said hopelessly."). At the same time, Lennie is willing to please George and takes him as an example ("Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly.", "looked over to George to see whether he had it just right.").

BRANCHING OUT

Titles and intertextuality

Novel / play / poem title (date)	Author	Literary reference
<i>Far From the Madding Crowd</i> (1874)	Thomas Hardy	Elegy written in a Country Churchyard, Thomas Gray
<i>A Passage to India</i> (1924)	E. M. Forster	<i>Leaves of Grass</i> by Walt Whitman
<i>Brave New World</i> (1931)	Aldous Huxley	<i>The Tempest</i> , Act V, Scene I by William Shakespeare
<i>Tender Is the Night</i> (1934)	F. Scott Fitzgerald	"Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats
<i>Gone with the Wind</i> (1936)	Margaret Mitchell	"Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae" by Ernest Dowson
<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> (1936)	William Faulkner	<i>Bible</i> 2 Samuel
<i>Of Mice and Men</i> (1937)	John Steinbeck	"To a Mouse" by Robert Burns
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> (1939)	John Steinbeck	"The Battle Hymn of the Republic" by Julia Ward Howe
<i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i> (1940)	Ernest Hemingway	"Meditation XVII" by John Donne
<i>East of Eden</i> (1952)	John Steinbeck	<i>Bible</i> Genesis

TEXT
13

"Funeral Blues" (1938) by W.H. Auden

FOCUS ON

1. Does the first reading of the poem convey an expression of simplicity or complexity? Justify your point of view by quoting the text.

The first reading of the poem conveys an expression of simplicity because the vocabulary is plain: "dogs", "policemen", "stars".

2. Is the poem suitable to the expression of grief? Why?

The poem is suitable to the expression of grief as it puts forward the elements present at a funeral ("muffled drum", "coffin", "mourners", "crepe bows", "black cotton doves") and death is unequivocally invoked ("He Is Dead"). Moreover, the imperative forms used all along the poem convey a feeling of urgency of somebody suffering who wants to put an end to lingering feelings: there is but pain to express and communicate ("Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone", "Silence the pianos", "Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead / Scribbling on the sky the message 'He is Dead'"). The poet intends to put an end to any signs of life ("Stop all the clocks", "Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun, / Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood"). The poet is hopeless / despairing ("I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.", "For nothing now can ever come to any good.") and is left voiceless / speechless ("cut off the telephone", "He was (...) my talk, my song").

3. At least four sounds are present in the poem. Pick them out. Why does the poet want to escape any sound?

– the clocks, the telephone, the dog, the piano

The poet is so sad that he does not want to be disturbed by these noises or drawn back into the routine of life.

4. Is death present in the text explicitly, implicitly, or both? Justify.

Death is present explicitly as death is clearly mentioned ("He Is Dead") and implicitly with the elements present at a funeral ("muffled drum", "coffin", "mourners", "crepe bows", "black cotton doves").

5. There is an evolution in the structure of the poem ranging from basic objects from daily life (clocks, telephone, and dogs) to a more spiritual sphere with the words, stars, moon and sun. What does this evolution represent?

This evolution represents the scope of the suffering of the poet, who first expresses his need for calm and mourning, then goes on to proclaim to the world the news of his beloved's death, then returns into himself with what his beloved represented in his life and finally transmits his pain not only to the rest of the planet but to the universe.

Chapitre 3

Le personnage, ses figures et ses avatars / Characters—from evolution to metamorphosis

TEXT
14

Ivanhoe (1819) by Sir Walter Scott

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Which of the following characters do you know?

- Ivanhoe
- Robin Hood¹
- Richard the Lion-Heart.

2. What are the stories associated with those heroes?

Ivanhoe is the son of a Saxon lord who followed Richard the Lion-Heart to fight in the crusades. When he comes back anonymously, he finds that he has been disinherited by his father for following a Norman king to the crusades. So he decides to win a tournament in order to prove his

worth. He wins it but is wounded. When he needs it most, he receives the help of Richard the Lion-Heart.

Robin Hood is a heroic outlaw who is traditionally known for 'robbing from the rich to give to the poor.' He is known for resisting Prince John who usurped the throne while Richard the Lion-Heart was held prisoner and assisting the latter in the recovery of his throne upon his return.

Richard the Lion-Heart: King of England from 1189 to 1199, he is mainly known for the Third Crusade he led to the Holy Land (1189-1192). He was revered for his knightly manners and his prowess on the battlefield. (cf. Background for more details.)

3. Now observe the painting on the right.

a. What do you call the man on the horse?

The man on the horse is a knight.

b. Whom is he facing?

He is facing spectators who have come to see knights compete in a tournament.

1. Typo in the book, please read *Hood*, not *Wood*.

c. What is he doing according to you?

He seems to be bowing to spectators. He could be doing this in order to introduce himself and show that he is courteous and honourable. On the other hand, he could be bowing to a particular lady, maybe the one woman he intends to fight and win this tournament for.

d. What is he about to do?

He is probably about to meet one of the other knights in combat in order to prove his worth.

e. Try to list the characteristics that he should embody.

A knight must show loyalty to his superiors and to his church. He must seek glory through battle. He should also value his honour above all things and defend it whenever he has to.

FOCUS ON

1. Focus on the description of the Black Knight in paragraphs 4 and 5, then choose which of the following expressions best correspond to the description of the Hero. Make sure you can justify your choices.

- a. Shy, cautious
- b. Fearless, intrepid
- c. Eager, impatient
- d. Temperate, calm
- e. Determined, unstoppable
- f. Selfish, egocentric
- g. Selfless, altruistic

The Black Knight can be described as 'fearless and intrepid' since he "rushes to the fray as if he were summoned to a banquet." Furthermore, he can also be considered 'determined and unstoppable' for there seems to be no-one who could stop him: "There is more than mere strength." The Black Knight inspires awe. He vanquishes many enemies on his own: "it is fearful, yet magnificent, to behold how the arm and heart of one man can triumph over hundreds." Finally, although it is less obvious in this passage, the Black Knight can be considered 'selfless and altruistic' since his purpose is "a gallant emprise" and he is called a "good knight" by Ivanhoe.

2. According to Ivanhoe, what must a hero seek above all?

According to Ivanhoe, a hero must seek "deeds of honour around him" to prove his worth as often as possible. He explains that a knight is never as comfortable as on a battlefield: "The love of battle is the food upon which we live" and that one ought to die rather than lose his honour: "We live not—we wish not to live—longer than while we are victorious and renowned" According to Ivanhoe, a knight's ultimate purpose is to find glory, as it: "gilds [his] sepulchre and embalms [his] name."

3. In the following paragraphs, Ivanhoe and Rebecca start a discussion on chivalry. Summarize what chivalry is for Ivanhoe and what Rebecca criticizes.

While Ivanhoe believes that life is not worth living for a knight if he is not victorious, Rebecca maintains that constantly seeking battle is not only foolish but also extremely vain: "what is it, valiant knight, save an offering of sacrifice to a demon of vain glory." She openly questions the true purpose of a knight by reminding Ivanhoe that whenever he spills blood there are people who lose a friend or a lover: "of all the tears which your deeds have caused."

Finally, she believes that such a life might be considered honourable but is in fact rather miserable: "a life spent miserably that ye may make others miserable." (Note the polyptoton (i.e. a stylistic device repeating words derived from the same root) "miserably"/"miserable" which underlines the term and seem to draw a parallel between the glorious knight and his enemy as their fate are intertwined.) She believes that "domestic love, kindly affection, peace and happiness" are just as worthy of respect.

As for Ivanhoe, the very notion of chivalry, the "pure light of chivalry" is the difference. It makes knights courageous as they worry less about their lives than about their honour: "[Chivalry] rates our life far, far beneath the pitch of our honour; raises us victorious over pain, toil, and suffering, and teaches us to fear no evil but disgrace" For him, chivalry is the essence of nobility: "Nobility were but an empty name without her, and liberty finds the best protection in her lance and her sword".

4. Taking the whole text into account, say how Ivanhoe considers women.

From the onset, Ivanhoe takes for granted that women are as weak as knights are strong and courageous: "this is no time to faint at bloodshed." What's more, the eponymous character seems to divide the world into two categories: those who act and those who do not: "thou knowest

not how impossible it is for one trained to actions of chivalry to remain passive as a priest, or a woman." Finally, he settles the dispute over the meaning of chivalry by discarding the lady's arguments altogether: "thou speakest, maiden, of thou knowest not what" which reveals that women do not have a say when it comes to chivalry.

5. What conclusion does Rebecca draw? How does she see herself?

Rebecca disagrees strongly with Ivanhoe. She does not wish to be reduced to the role of a poor weak woman. She considers herself courageous even though she is a woman and not a Christian. What's more, by tending to the health of Ivanhoe, she has proven that she did not deserve the protagonist's rebuke: "How little he knows this bosom [...] to imagine that cowardice or meanness of soul must needs be its guests, because I have censured the fantastic chivalry of the Nazarenes!"

TEXT
15

**The Hobbit (1937)
by J.R.R. Tolkien**

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Match the races of Tolkien's Middle Earth to their definitions.

Humans → They are mortal, not necessarily well educated, and very different from one another. While some are courageous, strong and honourable, others can be arrogant or cowards.

Wizards → They are of average height, or slightly taller, extremely powerful both physically and mentally. They use magic.

Dwarves → In Tolkien's books, they are short people who like living in caves deep inside mountains. They are courageous, defend their honour and like gold above all.

Elves → They are beautiful, extremely educated, strong and courageous. They are immortal unless killed in combat. They live in communion with nature.

Hobbits → They are rather short, usually keep to themselves and like living quietly in their homes, enjoying the day-to-day routine of an uneventful life.

FOCUS ON

1. Understand the extract:

a. What kind of enemy is Bilbo facing in this extract?

Bilbo is facing a giant spider, a dangerous "creature" which is "abominable." The spider is such a massive foe for a short hobbit that he can only be extremely proud of himself after killing it. His pride is underlined by the use of the tautology: "all alone by himself without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or anyone else."

b. What does he intend to do after killing his first enemy? Choose between the following options, and justify.

- Rescue his friends.
- Escape to save his life.
- Find help.
- Go on another adventure.
 - "He had first to look for his friends,"
 - "He should go first to look for the dwarves."

c. What device allows him to go unnoticed among these enemies?

The device that helps him go unnoticed is the ring that he found in Gollum's cave: "Bilbo had slipped on his ring before he started."

2. Focus on the protagonist:

a. List the characteristics of Bilbo, placing them in two columns: "Qualities" and "Faults."

QUALITIES	FAULTS
He is courageous	He complains a lot, and wishes he were back in his hobbit-hole.
He feels fiercer and bolder	He is still not as fierce as he will be as he faints after killing the spider.
He is lucky: "(He was born with a good share of [luck].)"	He is scared of the spiders: "he trembled with fear."
He is a fair shot.	
He can do many things: "indeed he could do lots of things"	

b. Focus on his major faults. Is he a real hero at this point? Justify.

Bilbo is terrified to be alone, he keeps complaining about everything and he appears rather weak since he faints after killing the spider: "and then he fell down and remembered nothing more for a long while," therefore, Bilbo does not fit the typical image of the hero at this point.

c. Paying closer attention to his qualities, explain how Bilbo is gradually presented as a hero.

However, Bilbo has some qualities. First, he wants to help his friends. Even terrified, he has defeated a giant spider and faces many more. Moreover, he is described gradually as a hero. While at the beginning of the excerpt, Bilbo is complaining, at the end of the excerpt, there's an accumulation of qualities, so many positive traits that the narrator cannot even name them all: "indeed he could do lots of things, [...] that I haven't had time to tell you about." Even if in the first part of the text he faints after killing the spider, in the end, he wins as a hero, and doesn't fall down anymore. Besides, his main qualities: luck, being good with weapons, being a faithful friend and being courageous are the typical qualities of the hero.

3. Pay attention to what helps him.

a. List the things that constitute his equipment.

As for his equipment, Bilbo has a sword that he found in the beginning of the story and he has the ring of power, a ring which gives him a magical power, the power of invisibility.

b. Which ones are typical of a hero?

Both the sword and the magical device are typical of a hero. It is all the more significant that Bilbo should collect these items gradually in the course of his adventures.

Conclude

4. List the elements which help turn a character into a hero.

At the beginning of this excerpt, Bilbo is not the typical hero. He decides to stay where he is because he is too scared to try to find his friends during the night: "no good trying to do anything," "quite useless to go blundering about." What's more, he keeps complaining that he will not have breakfast and that seems to be a huge problem for a hobbit.

However, in the course of this excerpt, Bilbo faces a giant spider and kills it "all alone by himself, without the help" of any of his friends. This changes him as he feels more self-confident: "fiercer and bolder" and he even gives a name to his sword, as if he were a knight: "I will give you a name," he said to it, "and I shall call you Sting."

TEXT 16 **Richard III (1597)**
by William Shakespeare

FOCUS ON

1. Focus on the first eight lines. What kind of atmosphere is described in these lines? What change has occurred?

The first eight lines are about the aftermath of a war signaled by the words "victorious", "Our bruised arms", "Our stern alarums" and "Our dreadful marches". Yet, the lexical field of battle is counterbalanced by signs of peace and happiness with "merry meetings" and "delightful measures." The weather metaphor is also illustrating this antagonistic duality with "all the clouds that lour'd upon our house" representing the threat of the House of Lancaster claiming the throne of England over the House of York, the latter is victorious and benefits from the "glorious summer by this sun of York," the pun on sun / son pointing at Richard's brother Edward IV. The first line makes it clear that the sun / son of York is not keeping everybody satisfied as the speaker claims "Now is the winter of our discontent." Richard III reveals from the start his dissatisfaction at his brother sitting on the throne, hinting at jealousy, rivalry and even treachery.

2. Find other oppositions in the monologue.

Richard stands in the shadow of his brother because the latter is the reigning king: "Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace, / Have no delight to pass away the time, / Unless to spy my shadow in the sun". Richard

draws opposing portraits of his brother and himself: while he describes the king as being all about love and peace: "He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber / To the lascivious pleasing of a lute," Richard describes himself as being all about hatred and ugliness: "But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks, / Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass; / I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty / To strut before a wanton ambling nymph; / I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion, / Cheated of feature by dissembling nature, / Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time / Into this breathing world, scarce half made up, / And that so lamely and unfashionable." His physical deformity may account for his anger towards his brother and the rest of the world and it is also the symptom of his internal darkness. Richard clearly states the correspondence between their physical appearances and their personalities: Edward is good-looking and good-tempered whereas Richard is crippled on all levels: "And if King Edward be as true and just / As I am subtle, false and treacherous." As a conclusion, Richard announces: "And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover, / To entertain these fair well-spoken days, / I am determined to prove a villain."

3. Who is "He" (l.12)?

"He" (l.12) refers to Richard's elder brother Edward IV, first heir to the House of York, King of England.

4. Focus on lines 14 to 31. How does Richard describe himself?

a. Find an anaphora*; what effect does it have?

The anaphora puts the emphasis on the person of Richard:

"But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,"

"I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty"

"I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,"

"I am determined to prove a villain"

The first lines of the anaphora stress his weak position "I, that am" because he is a cripple (i.e. a person who is partially disabled) but it is not the verb "be" that defines him in the end. "I am determined to prove" changes the way he defines himself, the will puts him in the position of the strong one.

b. Focus on the enumeration of physical characteristics. What can you say about it?

The enumeration of physical characteristics is rather repetitive and emphasizes the physical disability of the man as well as his unpleasant general aspect. What's more, it helps him to stand out, be different, more conspicuous.

5. Focus on lines 32 to the end. What scheme has Richard made? What is he trying to achieve?

Richard talked to the king about a prophesy "which says that 'G' / Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be." He intended to allude to a possible betrayal of their other brother, George, Duke of Clarence in order to have the king execute George. Ironically, while saying that, Richard's prophecy is true since it is Richard, Duke of Gloucester who is plotting against the king.

Conclude

6. Does Richard correspond to the idea you have of a hero? Why or why not?

Richard does not correspond to the idea you have of a hero. A hero would be somebody who dedicates his / her life to save others and comfort them. On the contrary, Richard plots against his own house, his own family, and intends to betray people who trust him. A hero would carry positive values and show a benevolent attitude unlike Richard who casts a shadow of evil-doing and wishes the worst to others.

7. How could you characterize such a character?

Such a character could be qualified as an anti-hero or a "villain" as Richard labels himself.

Lord Jim (1900)
by Joseph Conrad**PRE-READING ACTIVITIES**

1. **Incipit: what do you expect to learn from the first pages of a novel?**
The characters (especially the main character) / the context / the place / the plot (or some elements from the plot).
2. **Describe the painting and imagine what prompted this young man to become a sailor.**
It represents a young man asleep on the mast of a ship. He is probably a sailor. The sea is calm and the weather sunny.
3. **What could he be dreaming about?**
He might be dreaming about home and all the people he left behind but he could also be dreaming about what could happen to him on the sea.

FOCUS ON

1. **Focus on the first paragraph.**
 - a. **What does the reader learn about the main character and the context of the story?**
The reader learns about the main character's physical appearance, the way he walks, behaves, speaks, dresses and also about his job.
 - b. **What is missing?**
We do not know his name.
2. **Focus on the second paragraph.**
 - a. **Why is the character's name an issue?**
Because it is associated to "a fact", i.e. something that happened which is linked to his name.
 - b. **What consequences does it have on his life?**
As soon as people know who he really is, he has to leave, to flee so he does not have a very stable life, he is always on the run.
 - c. **Where does he end up and what is his name there? What does this name suggest?**
He finally ends up in a little village deep in the Malaysian jungle. There, he is called "Tuan Jim", which the narrator translates as "Lord Jim". This name, given to him by the inhabitants of the jungle, suggests that he holds a special place - maybe he has become their leader.
3. **Focus on the rest of the extract.**
 - a. **What is the narrator telling the reader about?**
Jim's childhood and upbringing, his background and how and why he became a sailor.
 - b. **Describe Jim's dreams. What influenced them?**
He dreamt about being a hero and was influenced by the books he read. "When after a course of light holiday literature his vocation for the sea had declared itself".
 - c. **What sort of literature is "light holiday literature" in your opinion?**
Probably little boys' literature such as adventure novels.
 - d. **Focus on the last line: what does it suggest?**
Something is going to happen and it could be the opportunity that Jim was waiting for to prove himself a hero.

Conclude

4. **Keeping in mind what you worked on in the pre-reading activities, sum up what the reader learns from this incipit* and what (s)he still does not know.**
The reader learns a lot about the main character (name / appearance / behavior / past / dreams etc.) but (s)he still does not know what happened that could account for Jim's reaction.

5. **Imagine what the book will be about and what literary genre it could belong to**

The book will probably focus on Jim's "hidden" story and it might be a nautical adventure story.

Jane Eyre (1847)
by Charlotte Brontë**PRE-READING ACTIVITIES**

1. **a. Describe the scene represented in the engraving focusing on how the two characters look.**
The scene takes place in the living room of a house, next to the fireplace. A woman is sitting in an armchair and she looks quite surprised or even outraged. The little girl, who is holding a piece of paper in her hand seems to be talking back at the woman and she looks angry and defiant because she is standing up very straight and looking in the woman's eyes.
- b. In your opinion, what is happening?**
They are probably having an argument or disagreeing on something.

FOCUS ON

1. **Who is telling the story in this extract? What does it imply for the reader?**
Jane is telling the story and, since she is also one of the characters, the reader only has her point of view on things. This might mean that the reader does not get a balanced perspective on the story.
2. **Focus on the description of Mrs. Reed: what general impression does she give?**
She seems to be a physically strong woman (Jane insists on that fact with the words "robust" "square-shouldered and strong-limbed", "stout", "large", "solid", "prominent", "sound as a bell") who is also very much in control of everything (from her tenants to her children). She appears as a powerful, intimidating figure.
3. **What does Mrs. Reed order Jane to do? What does it trigger?**
She orders Jane to leave the room as the little girl is staring at her. At these words, Jane seems to explode. "I gathered my energies and launched them in this blunt sentence..."
4. **Jane's speech:**
 - a. **What does she reproach Mrs. Reed with?**
She reproaches Mrs. Reed with having said that she was deceitful, with having punished her unfairly, with not noticing that she was bullied by Mrs. Reed's son and with not showing tenderness or gentleness toward her.
 - b. **What does she threaten to do?**
She threatens to reveal and denounce Mrs. Reed's behavior to people in her future school.
 - c. **Give your opinion on her accusations and threats.**
They seem to be very childish accusations but at the same time, the reader can really feel how much Jane is suffering through her speech.
5. **Describe Mrs. Reed's reactions to Jane's accusations. Can she measure up to the girl?**
At first, Mrs. Reed reacts very coldly to Jane's accusations ("her eye of ice continued to dwell freezingly on mine") and she seems to be quite angrily scolding the little girl ("how dare you affirm that, Jane Eyre?") but, as Jane continues to shout her recriminations at her, she loses her self-assurance and is afraid of the power of Jane's anger ("Mrs. Reed looked frightened (...) as if she would cry.") so she changes her tone and sounds more comforting ("why do you tremble so violently? Would you like to drink some water?") and even nicer with Jane ("... return to the nursery—there's a dear—and lie down a little.")

6. *"I was left there alone—winner of the field. It was the hardest battle I had fought, and the first victory I had gained."* What lexical field is used here? Find other examples in the extract and say what effect it has on the whole scene.

The lexical field of war ("retaliation", "antagonist", "opponent" and "conqueror"). Jane appears as a heroine, first sizing up the opponent that she will have to face ("I perused her features"), then launching into the battle fiercely ("I gathered my energies and launched them in this blunt sentence...") and ceaselessly ("... thrilled with ungovernable excitement.") until the fearless adversary is begging for mercy ("... she was rocking herself to and fro, and even twisting her face as if she would cry:").

7. Focus on the descriptions of Jane's feelings throughout the extract. What do they reveal about her?

Throughout the extract, Jane experiences powerful feelings and emotions. Most of the time, she seems to be overwhelmed by what she feels ("ungovernable excitement" / "to expand, to exult" / "burst" / "uncontrolled" + the metaphor of the fire "lighted heath"). She is therefore a very passionate child, sometimes unable to control her feelings or to repress her emotions.

Conclude

8. The narrator tells this anecdote several years after it took place. Can you find any suggestion that it had an impact on little Jane's subsequent behavior and evolution?

The last paragraph seems to point to the fact that Jane reflected upon what she did and how she reacted and that she noticed both the pleasure of venting her anger and the feeling of guilt after having done so.

TEXT
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The Scarlet Letter (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

2. What type of portrait does it remind you of?

It reminds the viewer of the traditional portrait of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus in her lap.

3. List their similarities and differences. Focus on the colours, the clothes, the attitude, the face, the feelings...

Both Mary and the woman in that portrait are wearing a veil and they are holding their child close. Yet, contrary to the traditional portrait of the Virgin Mary, whose face usually reflects joy and peace, here the woman seems tormented, gloomy. She is not smiling and looks rather tired, almost haunted. Moreover, the colours are different: blue and white are usually associated with Mary whereas here, the woman is wearing dark colours and her hair is very dark and loosely combed. Moreover, the face of the infant remains half hidden, while the infant Jesus is most of the time painted as watching the viewer.

4. Imagine the relationship between the woman and the child she is holding in her arms.

They seem very close. She is holding him with both hands, pressing his face against her bosom as if either to protect him or to hide something.

5. Have you noticed the letter A she is wearing on her bosom? What do you think this letter A stands for?

Adultery.

FOCUS ON

1. Find out basic information about the passage (where / who).

The scene takes place at the door of a prison. A woman, Hester Prynne is stepping out, holding a child in her arms and guided by the town-beadle. A crowd of people have come to watch her.

2. Focus on the town-beadle: how is he described and what does he represent / symbolise?

The town-beadle is described as a figure associated with darkness ("like a black shadow" / "grim and grisly" / "dismal") and severity. He represents, as the narrator says, the "Puritanic code of law", i.e. the severe code of conduct that the Puritans advocated. (See BACKGROUND).

3. Focus on the young woman:

→ Her behaviour:

- a. Fill in the following grid with what she does and how she does it.

What she does	How she does it
"She repelled him" (l. 7)	"By an action marked with natural dignity and force of character" (l. 7-8)
She "stepped into the open air"	"as if by her own free will"
"It seemed to be her first impulse was to clasp the infant closely to her bosom"	"not so much by an impulse of motherly affection, as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened into her dress."
"she took the baby on her arm and looked around at her townspeople and neighbors"	"with a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile, and a glance that would not be abashed,"

- b. What does it reveal about her?

She is strong-minded and not afraid to stand and walk alone, since she pushes the beadle away. Moreover, although at first she seems to be ashamed of the red letter A embroidered on her dress and tries to hide it, it is not the case at all since she faces the crowd smiling, without even showing the slightest sign of embarrassment.

→ Her physical aspect:

- c. What does the narrator focus on in his description?

He focuses first on her figure and height, then on her hair, face and eyes and then on the general impression that she gives to people who see her.

She is a tall and beautiful woman, with long glossy hair and a striking face. She moves with grace and dignity.

- d. Describe the reaction of the crowd (what they expected versus what they see).

The people who watch her coming out from the prison seem to be quite surprised and even amazed. The narrator points out that some people expected Hester to look much grimmer and darker after having spent some time in prison, however, on the contrary, she is associated with light throughout the whole description (with words such as "glossy", "threw off the sunshine with a gleam", "shone out" and "a halo").

→ Her dress

- e. §3: what does her dress reveal about her and her position within the Puritan society?

Her dress, which she has modelled and embroidered herself in prison, reflects her character: it is uncommon and daring and does not fit the standards of the time ("modelled after her own fancy", "its wild and picturesque peculiarity")

- f. "The letter A" / "the SCARLET LETTER": what does the letter stand for? Could you find another word more in accordance with Hester's description?

The letter stands for "Adultery", which is the sin committed by Hester. She has been condemned to wear this letter to shame her but the whole description is in complete opposition to this idea. Indeed, the letter is so finely and elaborately embroidered that it looks more like a decoration, or even a medal of honour ("It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore;").

Finally, the narrator's description could suggest that a more fitting word to describe that woman would be "Angel", as she is not ashamed but proud and is relentlessly associated with light, her beauty even giving her a "halo".

Conclude

4. Sum up the elements in this passage which point to the fact that Hester Prynne is indeed the heroine of *The Scarlet Letter*.

Throughout this passage in which Hester appears for the first time in the novel, she is constantly depicted as different from the others. First, her appearance is startling: as she emerges from the shadow of the prison, she does not hesitate or back down but she bravely faces the crowd. She is a beautiful and dignified woman. Even though she should wear the scarlet letter shamefully, she has decided to wear it proudly, as a decoration. Finally, it is this very letter which seems to set her apart, turning her, almost as if by some magic power, into an angel ("taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity") or, at least, a heroine above all other people.

BRANCHING OUT

1. In the chapter that you have just studied, Hester's "first impulse" (was) "to clasp the infant closely to her bosom".

- a. Compare the role of "the infant" (etymology: the one who does not speak) in this first chapter to her role in the following extract, taken from chapter 16:

Here, Pearl is a little girl who can voice her concern and questions. She is wondering about the red letter that her mother is wearing on her dress. She is therefore the one who points out her mother's difference.

- b. How does Pearl interpret the letter A?

Although she feels confusedly that the letter does not represent something positive, since it causes the sun to be "afraid" and "run away", she thinks that it is something she herself will be wearing too when she has become a woman. So she interprets the letter as a sign of maturity.

TEXT
20

A Lesson Before Dying (1993) by Ernest J. Gaines

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Look at the following cartoon:

1. Describe it in details and say what each element stands for.

This cartoon represents a blindfolded woman carrying a sword in her right hand and scales in her left hand. On the left plate of the scales, there is a white man, and on the other plate, a black man who seems to be a prisoner. The plate on which the black man is is lower than the other.

The blindfolded woman represents Justice, who is supposed to be blind to be fair. She is weighing the pros and cons, hence the scales. The sword represents the handing down of justice: the sentence which may be applied after she has weighed up the case.

2. What is the message of the cartoon?

This cartoon suggests that Justice is not completely fair and that, although she is blindfolded, she is not blind to people's skin colour since the black man, representing all black people, seems to have been found guilty because he is already imprisoned, even if he is just supposed to be judged at this point.

FOCUS ON

1. Choose adjectives from the list which depict the characteristics of a hero according to Grant and justify by quoting from the text:

A hero is supposed to be selfless ("A hero is someone who does something for other people"), generous ("He would do anything for people he loves, because he knows it would make their lives better.") and brave ("He does something that other men don't and can't do.")

2. Explain how he tries to convince Jefferson by focusing on the following questions:

- a. What is the aim of Grant's speech?

He wants Jefferson to be a hero, to stand up and prove the white people wrong.

- b. How does he define himself?

He defines himself as a selfish coward, who does not have the courage to be a hero ("I teach because it is the only thing that an educated black man can do in the South today. I don't like it; I hate it. I don't even like living here. I want to run away. I want to live for myself and my woman and for nobody else.").

- c. What does he denounce?

He denounces injustice and the white men's prejudice against black people. ("They are always looking for a scapegoat, someone else to blame." / "To them, you're nothing but another nigger - no dignity, no heart, no love for your people." / "White people believe that they're better than anyone else on earth").

- d. What rhetorical tools does he use (stylistic devices)?

First, he uses rhetorical questions ("that jury? You call them men?") and he repeats Jefferson's name to catch his attention ("Do you know what a hero is, Jefferson?"). He also gives himself as an example of what a hero is not; to underline Jefferson's ability to be one. Then, he repeats the word "You" to convince Jefferson to act ("I want you to" / "you could" / "You have the potential" / "you can") and he contrasts the pronouns "we" (the black people) with "they" (the white people) to show the difference between their points of view, stressing the fact that the white men consider the black man as inferior ("What can a hog do with a pencil and paper?"). Finally, he uses anaphora and repetitions, such as "you could", "I teach", "nothing about", "they're safe" etc. to emphasise his demonstration.

3. Focus on the last few lines and comment upon Jefferson's reaction. Do you think Grant has convinced him?

In the last few lines, Jefferson cries and wipes his eyes, which means that Grant's speech has moved him deeply yet the reader does not know whether he will follow Grant's advice or not even if we can guess that he probably will.

Conclude

4. Keeping in mind your answers to questions 1 and 2, explain what type of hero Jefferson could be?

Jefferson could be an example for his people. He has indeed the ability to do so given that he is about to be executed for a murder that he did not commit. His attitude before his death would therefore have much more weight and impact. He could symbolise rebellion by standing up and not behaving submissively and give hope to his people as well as inspiring them to rebel against the white people's domination.

5. Bearing in mind your answers to questions 3 and 4, say in what way this passage illustrates the title of the book.

This passage can give two meanings to the title of the book. It could indeed be understood as a lesson that Grant teaches Jefferson before his execution, a lesson about heroes and how he could be one. But it could also mean the lesson that Jefferson himself might teach the white men by standing up and behaving like a hero.

BRANCHING OUT

1. Find the poem entitled "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou on the Internet (see chapter 1, text 5 for biography) and say in what way it illustrates the text that you have just studied.

The voice telling the poem is a personification of "the dream and hope of the slave" ("I'm a black ocean"). The repetition of the verb "rise" suggests rebellion and strength. The voice addresses the white people and denounces oppression ("you may write me down in history" / "bowed head and lowered eyes"). It illustrates pride and power as opposed to submission and weakness. Finally, it refers to slavery and oppression as a thing of the past.

Chapitre 4

L'écrivain dans son siècle / The writer in his or her time

TEXT
21

Oliver Twist (1837) by Charles Dickens

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. a. Who do you think these children are?

They must be motherless or fatherless children. They must be orphans as we do not see any parents, just a gathering of children.

b. What are they doing?

They are making ropes. The idea behind it is that they are actually working at such an early age: it is the very portrait of child labour, which is criticized here in this picture.

c. Imagine their family background.

They must have a poor family background as their families cannot support them. They live in such a difficult situation that they have no choice but to work to earn a living.

d. Why do you think the buildings are separated in the picture of a typical Victorian Workhouse?

They are separated, which clearly stresses the idea of separation—not union! So it seems that the workhouse was considered more as a work-place than a house—a place where poor people had a very difficult life implying the separation of the family unit. Indeed, husbands and wives were separated in the Victorian workhouses, and they hardly saw their own children. The picture therefore lays the emphasis on separation at many levels—a separation bringing out dis-union, un-happiness, dis-content, dis-harmony and dis-array.

e. What does it show about the social context?

The social context was detrimental to poor people in Victorian England, even if some laws in their favour were passed at the time—the famous POOR LAWS. Ironically enough, Dickens precisely denounced these laws as inadequate to sort out the problem of poverty in 19th-century Britain or in the Victorian society.

2. Write R if you think the sentence is right or W if you think it is wrong in the following grid

The desperately poor were compelled to go to a workhouse.	R	W	There was always a family gathering in the workhouse.
The poor who did not want to go to a workhouse would receive a monthly "relief stipend."	W	R	The general rule was that no poor people should receive any relief money outside the workhouse.
Conditions in the workhouse should be as nice as possible to help the poor recover from their hardship.	W	R	Conditions in workhouses should be as harsh as possible so as to discourage the people from seeking relief in there.
Each family was given its own bedroom in the workhouse.	W	R	Families were split up. Even couples could not stay together.
Families could work half time in order to find a new job outside the workhouse.	W	R	Everybody had to work extremely hard in order to make sure they tried to leave the place.

3. To sum up, write a little paragraph about life in the 1834 Poor Law using the following words:

poor and destitute – workhouses – working conditions – living conditions – dreadful – starve – separate – children – husband – wife – discourage s.o. from + V-ing

Answer: During the Victorian period the poor and the destitute were forced to go to workhouses where they met with appalling working conditions and harsh living conditions. It was such a dreadful life that

people were starving even in workhouses. The situation was all the more unbearable as husbands, wives and children were separated, probably to discourage them from joining a workhouse!

FOCUS ON

1. There are two main parts in the text. Find them and give a title to each part.

Part 1 (from beginning to "undo the wicket of the garden"): Oliver's hard life at the branch-workhouse under the supervision of Mrs. Mann.

Part 2 (from "Goodness gracious!" to the end of the text): Mr. Bumble's arrival and decision to take Oliver back to the workhouse.

2. To what extent can this extract be regarded as a theatrical scene, as if we were watching a play on a stage?

The first part, dealing with Oliver's hard life at the branch-workhouse under the supervision of Mrs. Mann, can be seen as an **expository scene** and is a kind of background for the first scene, in which the reader / audience witnesses Mr. Bumble's arrival—that's why the text shifts from narration to dialogue: the narrative part for the description of Oliver's appalling living conditions at the branch-workhouses, and the dialogue between Mrs. Mann and Mr. Bumble.

3. Pick out elements in the text showing that the whole scene with Mr. Bumble is stage-managed by Mrs. Mann.

There is no denying that Mrs. Mann's role is that of the stage director as if she were stage-managing the whole scene, as evidenced by the following facts:

She is very authoritarian, overbearing, giving orders ("Susan, take Oliver and them two brats upstairs, and wash 'em directly", "Make a bow to the gentleman"). She gives orders, and Oliver is very submissive and obeys immediately "Oliver made a bow" just after "Make a bow to the gentleman").

Oliver's reactions are therefore entirely controlled by Mrs. Mann: "he made a bow" because she asked him to do so, and similarly, Oliver plays a role—that of the submissive child obeying Mrs. Mann, that's why he has to playact and pretend that he is sad to leave Mrs. Mann and the branch-workhouse ("he had sense enough to make a **feint** of feeling great regret at going away").

Oliver is definitely playing a role:

Indeed, Oliver turns out to be quite a good player here, as if he were on a stage playing a role: he is looking forward to leaving the branch-workhouse but "*when, glancing upward, he caught sight of Mrs. Mann,*" ironically enough, he pretends he is sad at the idea of leaving Mrs. Mann and asks "Will she go with me?" inquired poor Oliver."

4. Meaning in context - the system of *farming*: what is the definition given to someone who is "farmed" at the beginning of the text and what conclusions does the narrator draw at the end of the extract about this system?

At the beginning of the text, someone who is "farmed" is someone who is "dispatched to a branch-workhouse". More precisely, the purpose is to improve his everyday life by providing him with "the consolation and nourishment of which he stood in need." Hence, "Upon this, the parish authorities magnanimously and humanely resolved"—that Oliver should be "farmed," which means that Oliver has to leave the main workhouse controlled by the parish authorities to go to a "branch-workhouse" where life would be more bearable for him.

At the end of the text, the narrator underlines the fact that life has not been better (and even worse!) in the branch-workhouse than in the main workhouse. There is a vicious circle—from the workhouse to the workhouse—Oliver is trapped in this vicious circle, the branch-house episode is in no way a success, insofar as it does not bring him "the consolation and nourishment of which he stood in need." The message is clear—the branch-house episode is a failure because it does not bring any solution to Oliver's miserable life.

5. What do you learn about the workhouse? The branch-workhouse? The parish?

There is a hierarchical relationship between the workhouse, the branch-workhouse and the parish: the workhouse authorities have to report to the parish authorities. The parish authorities act as a kind of watchdog committee. They inquire about Oliver's situation at the main workhouse, and as "there was no female then domiciled in 'the house' who was in a situation to impart to Oliver Twist" (Oliver is an orphan—his mother died just after his birth), the parish authorities decide to send him to a branch-workhouse.

6. What do you think about the fact that Oliver is sent back to the workhouse at the end of this extract?

It demonstrates that Oliver cannot escape the vicious circle brought about by the workhouse system: from the workhouse to the workhouse. There has been no improvement at all!

7. What adjectives would you associate with Mrs. Mann? With Mr. Bumble? Justify.

Nice, hypocritical, trustworthy, overbearing, nasty, selfish, lenient, inquisitive

Mrs. Mann: hypocritical, overbearing, nasty, selfish...

Mr. Bumble: hypocritical...

Use context to justify each adjective—you will find it hard to use "nice," "lenient" and "trustworthy."

8. Show how the whole chapter is a criticism of the Poor Laws of 1834 and the system of workhouses.

The system of workhouses is highly criticized here—they did not improve the living conditions of the poor and the orphans who were sent to live within their walls. The living conditions within these institutions were appalling and did not bring any support and comfort to anyone.

Some more information about workhouses and the Poor Laws of 1834

What are Poor laws? Poor laws were voted in order to try and cope with the situation of the poor in Victorian England and the Poor Laws of 1834 voted by the Parliament of the United Kingdom actually replaced all the former legislation dating back to the Poor Laws of 1601. The aim was to alleviate the burden of the poor and destitute living in extreme poverty, unable to support themselves. The Poor Laws of 1834 consisted in:

- establishing a Poor Law Commission that set up small parishes which were themselves divided into Poor Law Unions.
- building workhouses in each Poor Law Union to help the poor.

Indeed many people suffered from mass unemployment after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, all the more so as the development of intense mechanization increased the plight of those working in agriculture. Many of them lost their jobs and were reduced to extreme poverty, and the numerous bad harvests of the time made things worse for those who still worked in the fields. Poverty was rampant. A new rule was established by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, as follows: if someone destitute needed relief (help), s/he had to enter a workhouse.

Workhouses: Workhouses were established by the Poor Laws of 1834. They were places for anyone who was in dire straits (the needy and the destitute) to be looked after to prevent them roaming the streets. Yet, it must be borne in mind that life in workhouses was extremely difficult—the poor received accommodation in exchange for employment and families were separated when they entered the workhouse. Here are some examples of jobs the poor in workhouses had to do: breaking stones, picking oakum, making ropes, crushing bones to make fertilizer.

TEXT
22

**The Great Gatsby (1925)
by Scott Fitzgerald**

FOCUS ON

1. Whose point of view do you have in this text?

The excerpt, describing one of Gatsby's parties, adopts the point of view of Nick Carraway, the narrator and one of Gatsby's neighbours in West Egg, as shown by "There was music from my neighbor's house."

2. List all the elements you can connect with the elements from the pre-reading activities.

MUSIC AND DANCE: obviously they must be listening to the type of music which was popular in the 1920s (*jazz*), and dancing the Charleston. This picture portrays the Roaring Twenties, associated with a period of optimism.

PEOPLE: the women guests must be flappers (as seen in the picture next to the text).

ATMOSPHERE: a very laid-back, joyful atmosphere as usually found at parties, where people are happy to make the most of their time drinking, chatting, dancing... etc

PROHIBITION: Bearing in mind that the Volstead Act banning any type of alcohol was in force during the 1920s, it is clear that all the guests at Gatsby's party are breaking the law, drinking cocktails and champagne.

3. The structure of the scene: what are the different steps in the organization of Gatsby's parties?

During the summer:

- **Once a fortnight (or every two weeks):** caterers come to Gatsby's place to arrange and decorate the place with canvas and lights
- **On Fridays:** delivery of five crates of oranges and lemons which will be used to make the various cocktails for the party
- In the afternoon: guests already present, diving from the tower of Gatsby's raft or sunbathing on the beach
- **By seven o'clock on Fridays:** arrival of the orchestra, with all the musical instruments (oboes, trombones, saxophones, viols, cornets and piccolos... and drums!)
- **The Party, with dancing, chatting and drinking**
- **On Monday:** all the leftovers of the party, with oranges and lemons at Gatsby's back door

4. Study all the elements underlining the notion of excess in this extract.

The whole text is permeated by the notion of excess—everything is done in an exaggerated, hyperbolic way, as shown by:

- the repetition of "and" which insists on the enumeration of all the elements partaking of excess (see, "In his blue gardens men **and** girls came **and** went like moths among the whisperings **and** the champagne **and** the stars.")
- the very repetition of the numerous parties taking place "every Friday"—and not once a month!
- a "pyramid" of pulpless halves (of oranges and lemons)
- a machine "which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour"
- a little button "pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb"
- "several hundred feet of canvas"
- the transformation of Gatsby's into an "enormous garden" with lights—it looks like "a Christmas tree"—the scene takes place in the summer, but the festive mood reminds us of the festivity period over Christmas time.
- the numerous musical instruments—the orchestra is made up of seven instruments: "oboes, trombones, saxophones, viols, cornets and piccolos... and drums!"
- many people at these parties (see, "swirls and eddies of people")
- numerous cocktails and glasses of champagne, with people getting drunk
- the two-hundred and sixty-five dollar dress

5. What do you notice about Gatsby, the host throwing this party?

There is a paradoxical situation: although Gatsby is the one who is throwing the party, he stands aloof, at a distance from what is going on—in fact, he watches what is going on at his parties, like an observer, but does not really take part in them: "As soon as I arrived I made an attempt to find my host, but the two or three people of whom I asked his whereabouts stared at me in such an amazed way, and denied so vehemently any knowledge of his movements." Nobody seems to know his whereabouts, which is a strange situation for someone organizing a party.

6. Study all the elements of superficiality.

The numerous lights to decorate the tree in the garden, making it look like a Christmas tree

All the conversations, which are futile and uninteresting, as shown by "You've dyed your hair since then"

A party where the guests are not interested in meeting the host

A party where the guests are telling “rumors” about the host
It is just a question of showing off—one of the guests wanted to wear her “two-hundred and sixty-five dollar dress.”

7. List all the rumours you learn about Gatsby.

“Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.”

“It’s more that he was a German spy during the war.”

8. Show that the description of the scene is a portrayal of opulence in the context of the Prohibition.

Refer back to all the descriptions where excessive elements are used (question 4) as well as the superficial elements (question 6).

TEXT
23

The Grapes of Wrath (1939) by John Steinbeck

FOCUS ON

1. The extract can be divided into two parts. Identify these two parts and give a title to each one.

From the beginning to “let’s go on till she blows”: “Hardships on the road”, or “Worries about their vehicles”.

From “We got to get a tire” to the end of the excerpt: “Encounters on the road”.

2. Whose point of view do you have?

The excerpt introduces a third-person narration (see, “The people”, “they”, “the men”), with the presence of a narrator (similar to the omniscient narrator); however, the text includes internal focalization as the narrator imagines the voices of all the typical farmers who are on their way to California, with the presence of “we” (see, “if something breaks we camp right here while Jim walks to town and gets a part”). Through this device—by resorting to free direct speech within the narrative framework—the narrator enables the reader to discover what goes on in the minds of these typical farmers, expressing their worries about the hardships of the journey (worries about their vehicles, about being cheated...etc).

3. How is Route 66 described? Pick up all the elements describing it. Drawing from the text, why did Steinbeck call it “The Mother Road”?

Route 66: the text refers to “the road” several times and to 66

- “in flight...on 66”
- “All day they rolled slowly along the road”
- “Cars pulled up beside the road”
- “Cars limping along 66”
- “People in flight along 66”
- “the concrete road”
- “people over the road,” “wrecks along the road,” “to the side of 66”

Steinbeck must have called it “The Mother Road” because it is the road towards which everyone in flight is heading—a road similar to a mother welcoming all her children in difficulties. They cling to Route 66, in the hope that this road will bring them comfort in their journey westwards towards California. And they were quite numerous on Route 66, on “The Mother Road”, as mentioned in the text, “Two hundred and fifty thousand people over the road” (250,000).

4. In the second part, study all the tension and hostility the migrants are faced with.

- they are anxious all the time as they fear that they may break down on Route 66.
- more importantly, it seems that the people they meet on their way to California are also responsible for their tension—indeed, they show hostility towards the migrants, as shown by the attitude of the service station attendant who says that California is not large enough to welcome them, “It ain’t that big. ...There ain’t room enough for you an’ me,” which is at odds with the migrant’s great expectations, “Well, California’s a big State.”

5. Is the general atmosphere rather optimistic or pessimistic? Both? Justify your point of view using the text.

Both: see all the tension and hostility the migrants meet on their way towards California, which stands for **division, greed and pessimism** (question 4)

Yet, the end of the excerpt, telling the story of the family of twelve who did not have a car and who built a trailer, stands for **unity, generosity and optimism**—there is a glimmer of hope in that a sedan picked them up on Route 66.

6. What is California compared to?

California is compared to a kind of “Promised Land” and is viewed in a very positive way. It stands for the land of plenty, as shown by “California where the oranges grow”, “California’s a big State,” “This is a free country,” and “In California they got high wages.”

7. Sum up the episode happening at the very end of the text—what does it bring to the whole text?

At the very end of the text the reader is told the story of a family of twelve who were forced to leave their land behind them as they decided to go to California. Yet, they did not have a car, so they made up their minds to build a trailer, which they pulled to the side of Route 66. Then a sedan picked them up and drove them to California—five riding in the sedan and the other seven on the trailer. In addition to that, the driver of the sedan fed the whole family. This story brings the notion of “faith” and good fortune into the narrative: it is permeated by optimism and the hope of a better tomorrow in the quest of the migrants and in their great expectations on their way westwards. Even though they are bound to face hardships of all kinds on their way to California, this story underlines the fact that they are right to trust their lucky stars because no-one knows what the future has in store for them.

8. Do you think the narrator sides with the working class or does he show more sympathy to the bankers who repossessed all the land? Justify.

The narrator sides with the working class, with all the farmers who were forced to leave their land behind.

TEXT
24

The Red Badge of Courage (1895) by Stephen Crane

FOCUS ON

1. There are three main parts in the extract. Identify them and give a title to each of them.

The first part starting with “The youth was in a little trance of astonishment” and ending with “large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds” is about Henry Fleming’s dreams of Homeric deeds in a “Greeklike struggle.” Suggested titles: Dream of Homeric struggles, Battlefield and Homer’s Poetry.

Part two deals with the enlistment of Henry Fleming against his mother’s will, the part comes to an end with “then continued to milk the brindle cow”. Suggested titles: Cow-ards stay on their farms, Bye Mum and Milk.

The third and last part refers to Henry’s departure at the doorstep of the farm “When he had stood in the doorway with his soldier’s clothes on his back,” which is quite different from what he had expected. Suggested titles: Mum is sore, Henry is soaring, Disappointing goodbye, Defeated by his mum.

2. Henry Fleming is an inexperienced private. Pick out all the elements showing that most of the narrative is a product of his imagination.

Since Henry Fleming is an inexperienced private, most of the narrative is a product of his imagination as evidenced by: “He had, of course, **dreamed** of battles all his life” or with “In **visions** he had **seen** himself in many struggles” or again with “He had **imagined**”. Most of the verbs refer to imagination or dream. In the end, he makes up his own representation of war: “His **busy mind** had **drawn** for him **large pictures** extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds.” further described as “his own picturings”.

3. What does he compare a soldier's enrolment in war to?

He compares a soldier's enrolment in war to "one of those great affairs of the earth". He cannot believe that he is going to be part of it ("For a time he was obliged to labor to make himself believe"), he is thrilled and excited ("in a little trance of astonishment"), he cannot wait to take part in such an event and is impatient ("So they were at last going to fight", "On the morrow, perhaps, there would be a battle, and he would be in it").

4. What do you think of Henry Fleming's vision of war and battle?

Henry Fleming's vision of war and battle is rather romantic because he refers mainly to Homer's epic poem, the *Iliad* ("He had long despaired of witnessing a **Greeklike struggle**. Such would be no more, he had said—"Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly **Homeric**."—"He had read of **marches, sieges, conflicts**, and he had longed to see it all"). In other words, his enthusiasm is more literary than practical—Henry has no idea what he is talking about. Even if he uses words such as "struggles" or "battles" and "wars", he does not link them with blood, suffering and loss but on the contrary with "passions", "glory" and "ambitions".

5. Pick out elements of Romantic naiveté in the text.

His Romantic naiveté traces back to his blurry dreams ("He had, of course, dreamed of battles all his life—of **vague** and bloody conflicts that had thrilled him with their sweep and fire.") which are contrasted with his dissatisfaction at today's mild conflicts ("But awake he had regarded battles as **crimson blotches on the pages of the past**. He had put them as **things of the bygone** with his thought-images of heavy crowns and high castles. **There was a portion of the world's history** which he had regarded as the **time of wars**, but it, he thought, had been **long gone over the horizon and had disappeared forever**."). He is looking down onto his period's war as a minor conflict compared to Homer's battlefields ("From his home his youthful eyes had looked upon the war in his own country with distrust. It must be **some sort of a play affair**."). He attempts to account for this difference in times regarding war ("Men were better, or more timid. Secular and religious education had **effaced the throat-grappling instinct**, or else firm finance **held in check the passions**."). Finally, even the mild energy thrown onto today's battlefields is sufficient to make Henry shiver ("One night, as he lay in bed, the winds had carried to him the **clanging of the church bell** as some **enthusiast** jerked the rope **frantically** to tell the **twisted news of a great battle**. This voice of the people **rejoicing** in the night had made him **shiver in a prolonged ecstasy of excitement**."). He feels proud and struts about like a peacock showing his feathers because he has not been confronted with the horror of war yet ("He had felt the gulf now between them and had **swelled with calm pride**. He and some of his fellows who had donned blue were quite **overwhelmed** with privileges for all of one afternoon, and it had been a very delicious thing. They had **strutted**.", "On the way to Washington his **spirit had soared**. The regiment was fed and **caressed** at station after station **until the youth had believed that he must be a hero**."). He feels like a hero although he is still inexperienced.

6. Compare Henry Fleming's and his mother's vision of war. What do you notice?

Henry Fleming's vision of war is romantic and naïve whereas his mother's vision of war is empirical, Henry guesses that she must have experienced war ("She had had certain ways of expression that told him that her statements on the subject came from a deep conviction"). Indeed, she warns him against his pride ("**Don't go a-thinkin' you can lick the hull rebel army at the start, because yeh can't. Yer jest one little feller amongst a hull lot of others, 'I know how you are, Henry. (...) and the reality of the army hierarchy ('and yeh've got to keep quiet an' do what they tell yeh**."). She gets very practical and refers directly to the impact of war on women, meaning that mothers lose their sons in battle ("I don't know what else to tell yeh, Henry, excepting that yeh must never do no shirking, child, on my account. If so be a time comes when yeh have to be kilt of do a mean thing, why, Henry, **don't think of anything 'cept what's right, because there's many a woman has to bear up 'ginst such things these times**, and the Lord'll take keer of us all.") or to the contents of his bundle and the clothing ("Don't forgit about the socks and the shirts, child") as well as the food ("and I've put a cup of blackberry jam with yer bundle, because I know yeh like it above all things"). That's the reason why "She could calmly seat herself and with no apparent difficulty give him many hundreds of reasons why he was of vastly more importance on the farm than on the field of battle."

To put it in a nutshell, Henry embodies the inexperienced / untried, innocent, naïve youth, while his mother incarnates the experienced, "scarred", seasoned, mature mother. They form a pair of opposites. She tries and warns him against the dangers of war but he is blinded by his ambition.

7. According to Henry Fleming, what is the definition of heroism?

According to Henry Fleming, the definition of heroism depends on how much attention a hero gets. This is not totally untrue, as a hero accomplishing some amazing deeds and "prowess" appeals to people and concentrates the witnesses' attention so that the most impressive actions attract a larger audience. Except that Henry Fleming puts it the other way round, mistaking attention as evidence of heroism "On the way to Washington his spirit had soared. The regiment was fed and caressed at station after station until the youth had believed that he must be a hero." Yet, he has not stepped foot on a battlefield yet, he has not faced the grey army, he has not accomplished anything except in his dreams.

TEXT
25

First World War poems by Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen

* DOC. A. "THE SOLDIER" (1914)

FOCUS ON

1. The themes of the poem are death and love. Why do you think these themes are appropriate here? What conclusions can you draw, if you take into account the first stanza?

Death and love are the two main themes in the poem, which is quite appropriate if we take into account the date of the poem—1914—right at the beginning of World War I. It portrays a soldier who is going to fight at the front, so inevitably he is likely to die at the front in a battle (theme of **death**). At the same time, the poem expresses the motive why he is ready to die for his country—it is his **love** for his country, England, in a very patriotic manner. The soldier's awareness that his patriotic feelings towards his country can lead to his death is glorifying the theme of war as an opportunity for a soldier to demonstrate how dearly he loves his mother country. The soldier therefore evokes an optimistic viewpoint about the war, analyzing it in a positive way—the poem itself can be considered as one of the many patriotic poems used at the onset of the war to urge young men to join the army and fight for their mother country.

2. About the "I" in the first stanza (i.e. the soldier in fact)—once he is dead, what will people remember about him?

Once he is dead, the soldier wants people to remember **that he was English**, as a representative of British citizens, as evidenced by the first three lines of the octave¹ (i.e. an eight-line stanza).

"If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England.

3. Study the notion of strong patriotism in the first stanza. What does he think of England?

He thinks that England is the best nation, a nation whose soil is superior to that of the other nations, that is the reason why he contends that the soil of a foreign nation will be made better if he dies abroad—he will add "a richer dust" to the earth. England is viewed as a kind of fertilizer which would improve the quality of the foreign land—quite a patriotic viewpoint expressed by the soldier in this poem.

4. What does the image of the "flowers to love" evoke for you?

A bunch of flowers conjures up the idea of a beautiful woman to whom you can give flowers. He loves England just like any woman he cherishes. This image of the woman concealed through the image of the "flowers to love" reinforces his love for his mother country.

5. Where in the poem can you find an image of harmony with nature? An image of happiness?

Harmony with nature: "Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home."

He evokes the image of a "body" which is "breathing English air" and "Washed by the rivers" and "blest by suns of home"—laying the emphasis on the harmony and unity with the natural environment (air / rivers / sun).

Happiness: "Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day; / And laughter, learnt of friends;". These two lines evoke a feeling of happiness through the words "happy" and "laughter."

1. This poem, written in the first person, is a sonnet, including an octave (an eight-line stanza) and a sestet (a six-line stanza).

6. Does he insist on the sinister aspect of death or does he just evoke death? Why?

He does not insist on the sinister aspect of death, but just evokes the idea of death. There is no physical description of the appalling details of dying at war with all the suffering—nothing about wounds, bloodshed, shootings, sufferings or death throes. We only find the idea that he is ready to die in combat because the idea here in this poem is to view the war in a positive light—the poem was written at the beginning of the war (1914), so soldiers were still enthusiastic about going to fight the enemy, with “great expectations” so to speak. They had not lost all their illusions yet.

* DOC. B. “DULCE AND DECORUM EST” (1918)
BY WILFRED OWEN

FOCUS ON

1. DULCE ET DECORUM EST—the Latin phrase comes from an ode by Horace and is in fact the beginning of the full phrase which reads, “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori”, which means “it is sweet and right to die for your country”. This Latin phrase was often heard at the beginning of the war and clearly means that “it is a glory to die for one’s country”. Once you have read the entire poem, decide if the title seems appropriate to the poem. What literary device does the author use here?

Once the reader has read the poem and discovered the horrors of trench warfare during World War I, it is obvious that the title of the poem is quite ironic. Owen uses **irony** here to depict the horrors of the trenches and to demonstrate that those who said that “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” are “liars” as evidenced by the last-but-one line of the poem, “The old Lie.” What Owen therefore criticizes vehemently here in his poem is all the Victorian and Romantic ideals about wartime, as well as all the traditional ideals dating back to the Ancient Greeks, a past period during which war had been considered in epic, heroic and Romantic terms. At the time of Horace (65 BC-8 BC), war was glorified and warriors were looked up to and admired for their deeds and considered as war heroes. This traditional ideal was found again at the Romantic and Victorian periods, in which war was the opportunity for man to turn into heroes, war being often described as a necessary evil to fight against any imperialistic danger on the part of the enemy. Even though wars led to tragic consequences through the deaths of many soldiers, war had been depicted in glorious and enthusiastic terms for the matter. Ironically enough, from the status of “heroes”, soldiers have now become “victims” in Owen’s poem. As a result, the use of irony brings the reader back to the reality of warfare—it is a complete reversal of situation and war is now viewed as highly destructive, hence all the gruesome, horrible details in the poem.

2. What is the war compared to? What images of war can you find?

The war is compared to a kind of highly destructive weapon killing the soldiers taking part in it. They all become victims—not heroes. We can find images of destruction, illnesses, handicap and ultimate death, the inevitable consequence of the war in the trenches. Men are trapped in the war, which will eventually lead to their own destruction and to their death.

3. The trenches are associated with horror. Pick out elements in the poem suggesting horror.

HORROR:

1. Physical suffering: soldiers are “bent double”
2. Illnesses: “coughing like hags”
3. Disillusionment: “cursed through sludge”
4. Exhaustion and hardships: “men marched asleep”
5. Hard times in the trenches: “many had lost their boots”
6. Handicap: they “limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;”
7. Loss of self-control: “drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots”
8. Gas attack: new chemical weapon, “Gas! Gas!”
9. Attack by surprise, without any preparation, “Quick, boys!... Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;”
10. Atrocious feeling, “was yelling out and stumbling... like a man in fire or lime” description as if witnessing the scene → trauma
11. Image of death: “I saw him drowning”
12. Gruesome, horrible details “He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning” and “white eyes writhing in his face” and “his hanging face... the blood / Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs / obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud”

TEXT
26

A Farewell to Arms (1929)
by Hemingway

FOCUS ON

1. What is the weather like during the retreat of the Italian army? To what extent is this relevant here?

It is **raining**, as repeated several times in the narrative. The literary device—pathetic fallacy—is relevant here because the rain creates a sad atmosphere full of pessimism, disillusion and depression. Bad weather makes people feel down (depressed)—they are low-spirited. On top of that the rain brings about mud, which is going to make things worse during the retreat—the soldiers are having trouble moving about in the mud and Aymo’s car is stuck in the mud, unable to move forward anymore.

2. Whose point of view do you have?

It is Frederic Henry’s point of view. First the text uses the inclusive “we” when describing the retreat, then it switches to “I”, meaning Frederic Henry.

3. What can be seen in the main street? What is the column composed of?

In the main street:

- “Columns of troops and guns”
- “Many trucks too and some carts”
- “Motor trucks, the horse-drawn carts and the guns in **one** wide slow-moving column”
- “The radiator cap of our car almost against the tailboard of a truck that was loaded high, the load covered with wet canvas”

4. What is your opinion on the description of this column in this war context?

There is **one** column, so it brings the idea of unity in that organization is needed to be able to retreat as quickly as possible. Yet, ironically enough, as they are like dominoes in **one** column, “the whole column stopped”, just because “the truck stopped”, which means that the apparent unity (one column) which is supposed to help the retreating army and the troops move more quickly without any confusion during the retreat does not make sense in the context of war - in the end it does not help them at all.

5. Study the rhythm of the retreat which is underlined in the narrative.

The narrative text mimics the motion of the retreating army, as evidenced by the slow-moving column which keeps stopping all the time. These stops are proven in the narrative, whose sentences also stop, the word “stop” being the last word in the sentence, “Then the truck **stopped**. The whole column **stopped**. It started again we went a little farther, then **stopped**.”

6. As the retreat gets under way, the nerves of the ambulance drivers (Aymo, Bonello, Piani and Henry) are also collapsing. What element in the text justifies this statement? What has happened?

– after Aymo’s car is stuck in the mud:

Frederic Henry orders the two engineering sergeants to help get the car out of the mud, but they refuse and decide to leave immediately as they fear they may be overtaken by the enemy.

They keep refusing to help, despite Frederic Henry’s several orders:

‘Come on,’ I said. ‘Cut some brush.’ (once)

‘Get busy,’ I said, ‘and cut brush.’ (twice)

‘I order you to come back to the car and cut brush’ (three times)

‘I order you to cut brush,’ I said (four times)

‘Halt,’ I said. (five times)

‘I order you to halt,’ I called. (six times)

After that, Frederic Henry shoots one of the engineering sergeants. The other sergeant is wounded and tries to escape, but Bonello shoots the wounded soldier with Henry’s pistol.

7. Why can Frederic Henry's act be considered as a shocking fact even in the context of war?

His act can be considered as shocking even in the context of war because it shows that war can lead to wanton violence, to unjustified acts of aggression within your own troop—if anything, the soldiers have become their own enemies. They are shot by the members of their own troops, and not necessarily by the enemy.

8. This act raises a moral, ethical issue about death and war—can it be justified? What does it show about wartime?

The reader is provided with the facts only (the shooting of the two sergeants) in a detached way, without any moral judgment on Frederic Henry's or Bonello's acts. These two shootings show that war results in an amoral atmosphere, devoid of any meaning and reason. The killing of the engineers is given the same weight in the narrative as the ambulance which is stuck in the mud—both events are written in a matter-of-fact, detached tone, as if they were on the same equal footing, which conveys the idea that war leads to meaningless acts.

9. Study the image of war that Hemingway wants to convey in these two short extracts.

War as highly destructive, leading to wanton violence and the loss of reason. A period in which human beings can lose their humanity, behaving in an irrational way.

TEXT
27

The Moonstone (1868) by Wilkie Collins

* DOC.A

FOCUS ON

1. Franklin Blake, Rachel Verinder's cousin, plays the role of the editor in the novel, as he wants everyone to write a narrative about what they have witnessed in relation to the Moonstone, the diamond which has been stolen.

Give the precise reason why he asks everyone to write their narrative.

Franklin Blake wants everyone to write their narrative to protect "innocent people" who may suffer "under suspicion," for the sake of truth. He wants the truth to be discovered, so that innocent people are not accused of having stolen the moonstone and being held responsible for something they did not do. He wants to rely on eye-witness accounts only—and not on hearsay!—that is the reason why he insists on the fact that this family story should be told "as far as our own personal experience extends, and no farther." He hopes that the truth will come out from the different narratives as it will be easy to compare the different versions of the same story... to find out who is telling the truth and who is telling lies.

2. Why does Gabriel, the house steward, read *Robinson Crusoe*?

Gabriel is reading *Robinson Crusoe* to muster up all the courage needed to start writing his narrative about the Moonstone. Writing the story of the Moonstone is quite an adventure—just like that of Robinson Crusoe on his desert island—he is bound to face hardships and difficult periods as well—memory lapses for instance, bearing in mind that Gabriel is 70 (see, "Though turned seventy, I possess an active memory") and is about to retell the story he has witnessed in retrospect. He finds inspiration and advice in the book by Defoe, and sheds light on the "folly" of beginning the story of the Moonstone, as shown by the following quotation from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*:

"Now I saw, though too late, the Folly of beginning a Work before we count the Cost, and before we judge rightly of our own Strength to go through with it."

3. In terms of style, what kind of novel is *The Moonstone*, knowing that they will write their narratives "in turn"?

The novel is made up of different first-person narratives—the type of narration you can find in **epistolary novels** in 18th-century literature (see, TEXT 9 *Pamela* by Richardson)

4. To what extent can you say that this specific narrative structure is suitable to detective fiction?

This specific narrative structure is suitable to detective fiction insofar as it enables the reader to find out the truth through the different versions of the same story. In a nutshell the reader can play the role of the detective, by comparing the various elements told in the numerous narratives (or letters). There will inevitably be contradictions in the various narratives, and it is up to the reader to compare the stories and find out the truth at the end of the novel.

* DOC.B

FOCUS ON

5. The report by Sergeant Cuff is well-structured—pick out the headings again and write the main piece of information in one sentence.

For example: Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite (Franklin Blake's cousin)'s death: he was... / explain what happened to him in one sentence.

- "As to your cousin's death, then, first": Godfrey Ablewhite was killed by being smothered with a pillow from his bed by the three Indians who wanted to recollect the Moonstone.
- "Next, as to the motive for the crime": the stealing of the Moonstone was the motive for the crime.
- "Next, as to the manner in which the crime was committed": the three Indians managed to enter Godfrey Ablewhite's room through a trap-door.
- "Lastly, as to the person, or persons, by whom the crime was committed": the murder was committed by the three Indians, one of whom was disguised as a mechanic to spy on Godfrey Ablewhite who had the Diamond they wanted to recollect.

6. What do you think of the structure Sergeant Cuff uses and what does it remind you of?

The report written by Sergeant Cuff is well-structured, falling into four parts with a specific heading each time. It is reminiscent of the structure of a **demonstration** (first / second / third / conclusion), using convincing arguments to support his case. In fact, it reminds us of any narrative structure in any detective fiction, just like Sherlock Holmes's "Elementary, my Dear Watson" before he explains to him how he has discovered the truth.

7. To what extent can we say that the structure of the plot is cyclical (as if there were a vicious circle in the novel's structure)?

The structure of the plot is cyclical because the **end** of the story is reached only when the reader (*via* the stories told by the various narrators) discovers what happened at the **beginning** of the story—the loss of the Moonstone took place right at the very beginning of the novel, which leaves a kind of gap in the narrative: Who has done it? Once we have found out the culprit, the story ends in a cyclical manner—the information gap has been filled in and the problem of the identity of the offender / murderer has been sorted out at the very end of the book. This is typical of good, thrilling detective stories because you are back to square one with all the minute clues, to all the twitching details that made the starting crime scene a complete mystery.

BRANCHING OUT

Play the role of the detective and find out who is the fictional detective described in the grid below.

Characteristics or / and eccentricities	WHO'S WHO?
A detective who has a penchant for roses	Sergeant Cuff
A detective who likes chess and poetry and listens to Bartok (Hungarian pianist)'s concerts	Marlowe
A Belgian with an egg-shaped face and a mustache, obsessed with order, always perching his head on one side	Hercule Poirot
A detective who likes night time	Dupin
A detective who is famous for "Elementary, my dear Watson!"	Sherlock Holmes
A detective who always insists on the negative side of human nature "Human nature is the same everywhere".	Miss Marple

Chapitre 5

Voyage, parcours initiatique, exil / Travelling, initiatory journey, exile

TEXT
28

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885) by Mark Twain

FOCUS ON

1. Describe the atmosphere of the night.

The atmosphere of the night could be considered frightening. Indeed, the protagonists go through a "big storm with a power of thunder and lightning." Moreover, it is pouring down. The repetition of the words "storm" and "lightning" emphasize the dramatic scenery. The protagonists could be scared, yet they do not seem to be. On the contrary, they use the lightning to see what surrounds them and make their way down the river.

2. What does this atmosphere lead you to expect?

The atmosphere leads the reader to expect that something will happen, that Huck and his friend Jim will face danger of some sort.

3. Focus on paragraph 2: How does Huck describe his urge to discover the broken steamboat?

In the second paragraph, Huck says that his urge to discover the steamboat is characteristic of a young boy in his situation: "I felt just the way any other boy would a felt." He underlines that young boys seek adventures all the time, and the setting seems to make it all the more exciting. Indeed, far from quenching his thirst for adventure, the night and the storm only make the steamboat more "mysterious-like." What's more, Huck's burning desire to go on board the boat is made even more obvious with the use of the personification of the wreck as: "so mournful and lonesome."

4. List the arguments Huck uses to convince Jim to go on an expedition to discover the treasures which might have been left in this steamboat. Are they all effective?

First of all, Huck tells Jim there cannot be a watchman on such a wreck, because it might break further and start going down the river again. Moreover, he lists all the elements that they could find on such a wreck, cigars and other things that would be worth having. Finally, he asks Jim what Tom Sawyer would do if he were here, and answers that: "he would call it an adventure" and go on that wreck. He appeals to Jim's feelings by alluding to the fact that if Tom Sawyer was with them, he would not hesitate.

5. How does Huck portray Tom Sawyer? How do you think he considers Tom?

For Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer seems to be the epitome of the adventurer. Huck describes him as a boy who is ready to face any kind of danger - a daredevil: "he'd land on that wreck if it was his last act." For Huck, Tom is a role-model when it comes to adventures. He embodies the perfect hero: "you'd think it was Christopher Columbus discovering Kingdom-Come."

6. What do they find on the steamboat?

On the steamboat, they hear the voices of people, and especially the voice of one man pleading for his life.

7. Choose the adjective(s) which best describe Jim in this excerpt.

b. cowardly

8. What does the contrast between Huck's and Jim's attitudes underline?

The contrast between the two characters underlines Huck's courage above all. Jim is not devoid of courage himself as he decided to escape from the village and risk his life to find his freedom. However, in this very excerpt, his will to avoid any sort of trouble if possible overcomes his courage. All this reveals to what extent Huck is adventurous. He does not flinch at the sight of danger.

Conclude

9. How is the atmosphere of adventure conveyed in this excerpt?

In this excerpt, the atmosphere of adventure is first conveyed by the setting - a stormy night. However, from the beginning of the extract, it seems that the characters are in control of the situation. Instead of being scared of the situation Huck feels all the more excited to go on an adventure. He seems to be looking for adventures that he will be proud to recount to his friend Tom in order to impress him. Moreover, the rhythm is also an element which participates in the creation of this atmosphere. Action is paramount in this novel. Finally the contrast between the behaviour of Huck and Jim only makes Huck seem even more adventurous.

TEXT
29

Lord Jim (1900) by Joseph Conrad

FOCUS ON

1. Read the description of Patusan in the first paragraph: how would you define it?

The coast of Patusan is depicted as extremely wild and unwelcoming. The ocean is "misty" which makes it difficult to see the coast from afar, the trails are compared to "cataracts of rust," and even the plains are described as "swampy" which gives the impression that they might be insalubrious. Added to that, the mountains are compared to a wall which would have been destroyed by the waves, the wall of a castle in ruins: "crumbling shapes [...] like the remnants of a wall breached by the sea."

2. In the second paragraph, Marlow—the narrator—mentions a recent change in the people's lives in that fishing village. What sort of change has it been?

In the second paragraph, Marlow describes the village and insists on the fact that law and order have been re-established in the area by stating that he does not feel threatened on the river. This used to be different as people who went up the river used to be: "exposed to a fusillade from 'irresponsive parties.'" The narrator emphasizes the fact that the situation has improved recently by adding: "such a state of affairs belonged already to ancient history." It seems that Jim, or Tuan Jim as they call him has taken it upon himself to protect them: "They, in the village, were under that lord's special protection."

3. What status has Jim achieved among this community? Find several elements to justify your answer in paragraphs 2 and 3.

In this community, Jim has already achieved an iconic status. Indeed, he made quite an impression on the villagers since even the elderly headman of the village cannot stop talking about Jim: "most of his talk was about the first white man he had ever seen. He called him Tuan Jim, and the tone of his references was made remarkable by a strange mixture of familiarity and awe." Not only does the headman respect him—he calls him Tuan Jim—but he inspires 'awe' which implies that they fear Jim's might. This element of awe is the first hint that Jim is gradually compared to a sort of deity. As a matter of fact, the villagers have turned his arrival into a legend, in which: "the tide had turned two hours before its time to help him on his journey up the river." This metaphor is complete in the third paragraph when Marlow alludes to "the appearance of the being that descended upon them."

4. In paragraph 3, what do we learn about the initial reaction of the people of the village?

In paragraph 3, we learn that the villagers were initially terrified when they first saw Jim: "the blessing came heralded by terrors." Jim's behaviour was extremely puzzling to them. The use of the adjectives: "discomposing," "alarming," "suspicious" to refer to Jim's requests is significant because they add to the idea that Jim's behaviour was new to them.

5. Focus on the last paragraph.

a. How does Marlow describe Jim's journey up the river in the first place?

At first, Marlow's description of Jim's journey up the river seems to follow that of the fishermen, especially when he points out how Jim "entered the land he was destined to fill with the fame of his virtues." Furthermore, we can notice the contrast between the way the coast was depicted at the beginning of the extract and the way it is painted in this paragraph: "the immovable forests rooted deep in the soil, soaring towards the sunshine, everlasting in the shadowy might of their tradition, like life itself." As Jim goes up the river, his surroundings mirror the character's destiny—see the use of adjectives: "immovable," "everlasting" and the use of nouns like "might" clearly paralleled with Jim's fate as Marlow refers to him as the heir of a "mighty tradition."

b. How did Jim describe it to him afterwards?

However, Jim is not depicted only as the heir of a mighty tradition, but rather as "the heir of a **shadowy** and mighty tradition". Jim is not only this godlike figure depicted by the villagers, he is also painted as a character who does not fit in. Indeed, Marlow mentions that Jim told Marlow how he had felt during his journey up the river. He says that "he had never in his life felt so depressed and tired as in that canoe." What's more, not only was the brave, powerful white lord uncomfortable in the canoe, but he was scared to move for fear that he might capsize the canoe: "all the movement he dared to allow himself," and "bale some of the water out with a **carefully restrained action**." Once again the use of vocabulary is significant: "dared," "as if by stealth," "carefully restrained action." Far from being the hero alluded to at the beginning of the paragraph, Marlow explains how innocent Jim was as he "discovered how hard the lid of a block-tin case was to sit upon" and "experienced fits of giddiness."

c. Compare and contrast these two depictions.

Each of those images depicts one aspect of the personality of Jim. He is both the hero of Patusan, the one who saved the fishermen's village, who accomplished great feats of strength and the character who can never fit in, who is not aware of the codes and remains naïve. On the one hand, he is the fearful white man for whom the tide came early and on the other hand he is the flawed man who remains ignorant. Similarly, his deeds in Patusan can be seen as daring or reckless as he has become Patusan's hero almost in spite of himself.

Conclude

6. Taking the whole text into account, decide to what genre it belongs and make sure you can justify your answer.

Lord Jim can undoubtedly be considered "travel literature" as it deals with the wanderings of a former sailor in British colonies in Asia. In this excerpt, *Lord Jim* can be connected to adventure tales since it depicts the heroic arrival of Jim in a remote and largely uncivilized trading post: "Such was the way in which he was approaching greatness as genuine as any man ever achieved." What's more, the last sentence keeps the reader in suspense: "meantime his three paddlers were preparing to put into execution their plan of delivering him up to the Rajah" which suggests that Marlow will recount the other adventures of Jim in Patusan in the rest of the novel. In its underlying theme of colonisation, it can also be linked to the late Victorian Era, but its composition with the character-narrator Marlow who tells the story as he pleases to shape the reader's opinion is the hint of a more modern style of writing. Indeed, at the beginning of the passage, Marlow does not hesitate to jump forward in time in order to present a new aspect of the story: "I saw it nearly two years after."

TEXT
30

Great Expectations (1841) by Charles Dickens

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Describe the scene in detail (light / atmosphere / place).

The photograph represents a graveyard at night with an old church in the background and a tombstone in the foreground. It is very dark and gloomy.

2. How would you feel if you found yourself in such a place at night?

I would probably be very scared / frightened and listen to all the noises in case someone comes.

3. Focus on the title of the novel—*Great Expectations*—and try to guess what it will deal with.

Great Expectations suggests that the novel will deal with this story of a character's life. This character might be young at the beginning and expect many things from his life.

FOCUS ON

1. First two paragraphs: what can you learn about the main character and his family?

We learn that he is called Philip Pirrip and that his nickname is Pip and that he is very young. He is probably an orphan and maybe even alone in the world since his parents and siblings are dead.

First paragraph

2. How does Pip describe his father, mother and brothers? What influences his imagination?

He describes them according to their graves and deduces what they probably looked like based on the shape and look of their tombstones.

3. Can you guess the approximate age of the narrator when it happened? Justify your answer.

He was probably very young (maybe 2 or 3) because he does not remember any of the members of his family. In fact, he even claims that he never saw his parents.

4. In retrospect, how does he consider his behaviour at the time?

He insists on the childishness and foolishness of his reflections ("fancies" / "unreasonably" / "odd idea" / "a childish conclusion").

Second paragraph

5. "My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things..."

a. Fill in the following grid with information from the text:

descriptions	"identity of things"
"Philip Pirrip, late of this parish"	"dead and buried"
"Georgiana, wife of the above"	"dead and buried"
"Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid"	"dead and buried"
"the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it"	"the marshes"
"the low leaden line beyond"	"the river"
"the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing"	"the sea"
"the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry"	"Pip"

b. From that description, guess how the narrator feels.

Since he is a small boy, alone in a cemetery at night, in front of the graves of his whole family and he is shivering and beginning to cry, he must feel very afraid and probably lonely too.

Last part of the text

6. Focus on the description of the man:

a. Can you guess who he is?

He is probably a tramp, judging from the description of his clothes ("no hat", "broken shoes", "an old rag tied around his head").

b. What impression does the reader get about this man's life? Explain why. (Focus on the stylistic devices used to describe him).

The reader feels that this man has not had an easy life. He has probably been through a lot, as suggested by the use of the passive verbs associated with aggressive natural elements ("Soaked", "smothered", "lamed", "cut", "stung", "torn"). His body seems to be broken ("limped" and "shivered") but he is very much alive, since he "glare[s]" and "growl[s]", as if he were angry or just like an animal.

7. Focus on the dialogue between Pip and the man:

a. How does Pip feel?

Pip is terrified, he is afraid that the man might attack him or beat him up.

b. Judging from the man's behavior towards Pip, can you guess what their relationship will be?

In fact, the man could become a sort of mentor or guide for the child because, contrary to what Pip feared, he forces him to speak clearly, almost as if he wanted him to be proud of his name and to behave like a brave boy ("Give it mouth!"). The man will probably help Pip or at least, he might be a benevolent figure.

Conclude

8. Sum up what Pip's characteristics are at the beginning of this novel.

At the beginning of this novel, Pip seems to be all alone in the world, at night, in a graveyard. He has lost his whole family and seems never to have had any contact with them. Yet, in spite of his loneliness, the child has managed to invent his family, to imagine what they looked like, which proves that he has a creative mind. Moreover, the orphan will probably not remain on his own for a long time, since he meets a tramp at the end of the excerpt.

9. Decide whether *Great Expectations* might be considered a good illustration of a Bildungsroman*, and justify your answer.

Judging from this passage, *Great Expectations* seems to illustrate the basic elements of a Bildungsroman as it focuses on a very young boy whose psychology is examined and revealed by the narrative voice. Being very young, innocent and an orphan, Pip is bound to evolve and to live many adventures which will certainly change him and his point of view.

TEXT
31

On the Road (1957) by Jack Kerouac

FOCUS ON

1. Who are the characters present in this excerpt? What are they doing?

Sal and his friends Marylou and Dean are driving from New Jersey to New Orleans then across the country to San Francisco. They are on a road trip.

2. What is the atmosphere in the car? How is this departure seen by the group?

The characters are excited: "We were all delighted." They need to "move" in order to forget their problems, their daily lives in New York. One might say that the atmosphere is hysterical because the characters seem too enthusiastic: "New Orleans! It burned in our brains." The group sees this as a new adventure. They yearn to discover new places.

3. (ll.8-10) "From the ...west." How are the places described? Is one better than the other? Justify.

The characters do not find New York exciting. In fact they find it too cold and boring: "Frosty fagtown New York." New Orleans seems more intriguing, but we can already feel that they are probably going to find it boring too after a short while: "the greeneries and river smells of old New Orleans at the washed-out bottom of America" as they hint that they will not spend a long time there: "then west."

4. Describe what the characters worship above all. Find at least one sentence to justify your point.

The characters worship the fact of going from one place to another. They love travelling. They are not even really concerned with their destination: "We were all delighted, we all realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, move."

5. Focusing on punctuation, typography, syntax and the choice of words, show how exaggeration is conveyed throughout the text.

Throughout the text, exaggeration is conveyed by a number of stylistic devices:

- an extensive use of exclamation points.

- the use of capital letters: "SOUTH" "WEST" "UNDERSTAND" "REALLY" "ANYTHING"
- repetitions: "all"
- the rhythm: commas make the rhythm panting
- the use of powerful words and hyperbolic sentences: "gunned," "flashed past," "shot up" (the volume of the radio) "blasted"...

6. Focus on the last paragraph.

a. What is Dean explaining to Marylou? Is it what the narrator expected?

Dean explains to Marylou that they should remain together in San Francisco: "in San Francisco we must go on living together" even though he will live with another woman there. This is not at all what Sal expected: "The understanding had been that Marylou would switch to me in Frisco."

b. What is the narrator's reaction?

Sal does not really pay close attention to this. He seems to be willing to forget all his worries as long as they keep driving: "But why think about that when all the golden land's ahead of you and all kinds of unforeseen events wait lurking to surprise you and make you glad you're alive to see?"

Conclude

7. To what extent would you say that this excerpt is a good illustration of the Beat Generation?

In this excerpt, the characters undeniably try to flee the daily routine of conventional life by going on a road trip as soon as they feel trapped. Sal seems to be the embodiment of the writer of the Beat Generation. Whenever he stays in the same city for too long, he yearns to move to other places where he could enjoy his life more: "Now we're heading down to New Orleans to dig Old Bull Lee and ain't that going to be kicks." What's more, the style of writing is very peculiar. It conveys the excitement of the moment, and the exacerbation of the senses, (cf. the hyperbolic structures, the capital letters, and the repetitions.) The direct speech and the punctuation convey the idea of immediacy of experience. Thus, this excerpt is a good illustration of the Beat Generation.

TEXTS
32-33

Gulliver's Travels (1726 amended 1735) by Jonathan Swift

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Document 1

a. What is the nature of the document?

An engraving.

b. Describe the scene.

The scene represents a man and a horse. They are both sitting on the ground. In the background, there is another horse facing the viewer.

c. Comment upon the behaviour of the horse and the attitude of the man.

They seem to be talking to each other. The man has his head slightly bent as if he were listening to the horse, and the horse has one leg raised, as if using it to explain something and get the man's attention.

d. Focus on the horse in the background. What does its attitude betray about its feelings towards the man?

It is running but seems to be looking at the scene at the same time, as if it were surprised or intrigued.

Document 2

e. Describe and contrast both characters.

The man on the left is wearing a top hat and a frock coat and his long hair is tied back with a ribbon. On the contrary, the man on the right is half naked, he is unshaven, his hair is dishevelled and he has long nails. He looks dirty.

f. Imagine the feelings of the character on the left.

As he seems to be recoiling from the man on the right, he is probably surprised or even disgusted by the sight (and maybe the smell) of that man.

FOCUS ON

FIRST PART, CHAPTER 10

1. First paragraph: Fill in the grid with information from the text:

	Gulliver's opinion on...	Consequences on his behaviour
the yahoos	"horror and detestation"	"When I happened to behold the Reflection of my own Form in a Lake or Fountain, I turned away my Face (...); and could better endure the Sight of a common Yahoo, than of my own Person"
the Houyhnhnms	"delight"	"I fell to imitate their Gait and Gesture, which is now grown into a Habit; and my Friends often tell me in a blunt Way that I trot like a Horse; which, however, I take as a Compliment; (...) in speaking I am apt to fall into the Voice and Manner of the Houyhnhnms, and hear my self ridiculed on that Account without the least Mortification."

2. In paragraphs 2 and 3:

- a. What does the Assembly reproach Gulliver's Master with?

They reproach him with keeping Gulliver in his home, not like a "yahoo", a brute, but like other Houyhnhnms and with speaking with him very often.

- b. Why is this a problem? Explain how Gulliver is seen by the other Houyhnhnms.

It is a problem because, to the other Houyhnhnms, Gulliver is just another yahoo ("like the rest of my Species"), creatures that they despise and consider as inferior, like animals.

- c. What is their decision?

Gulliver's master must either employ Gulliver as any other yahoo or order him to swim back home.

- d. How does Gulliver take it?

He takes it very badly since he becomes so sad and pained that he faints ("I was struck by the utmost Grief and Despair at my Master's Discourse; and being unable to support the Agonies I was under, I fell into a Swoon at his Feet").

3. Sum up what you have learnt about the Houyhnhnms and about Gulliver.

The Houyhnhnms are very wise and elegant and their society seems to be very strictly organized, with an Assembly of Representatives who discuss current affairs and make decisions. Gulliver greatly admires them, so much so that he wants to imitate them although he appears to be closer to the yahoos, despicable and ugly people who look very much like men.

SECOND PART, CHAPTER 11

4. Describe Gulliver's reaction when he meets his family again. Why does he react this way?

When he meets his family again, Gulliver reacts very strongly. He is utterly disgusted and cannot bear their sight or their touch. He hates them and despises them, considering them as "yahoos". These feelings are intense, as seen in the accumulation of strongly negative words such as "Hatred, Disgust and Contempt;" or "(...) the utmost Shame, Confusion and Horror."

5. "At the Time I am writing, it is five Years since my Return to England..." Has Gulliver managed to get used to England and his family again?

Although Gulliver has managed to control his strongest feelings of disgust, he still cannot stand the presence, the smell or the touch of his wife and children. In contrast, the feeling that he has for his two horses ("I converse with them at least four Hours every Day. They are Strangers to Bridle or Saddle; they live in great Amity with me, and Friendship to each other.") or even the groom (...) next to them the Groom is my greatest Favourite; for I feel my Spirits revived by the Smell he contracts in the

Stable") are quite positive. In fact, they are what he should be feeling for his own family. So it seems impossible for Gulliver to really adapt again to his former life with his family in England.

BRANCHING OUT

Here is an extract from the final chapters of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe

1. Find out:

- a. How Robinson felt when he returned to England and why.

He feels completely lost and all alone because all his family members are dead, except two of his sisters and his nephews. Moreover, everybody thought that he was dead so he has no money and nowhere to stay.

- b. Why he settled in England for a while.

He settled in England for a while because he managed to get married and to have children.

- c. What he finally did and why.

Finally, after his wife died he decided to go travelling again, his nephew giving him the opportunity to do so. So in 1694 he left on a trip to "the East Indies".

2. Compare this extract with Gulliver's return and list the similarities and differences.

Although Gulliver's situation when he returns is completely different from Robinson's because his wife and children are still alive and very glad to see him back, they have the same feeling of isolation and of being a stranger because of their former life. As a result, it is difficult for them to adapt and they both have been inevitably changed by their long absence: by buying two horses and conversing with them every day, Gulliver wishes he were still living with the Houyhnhnms and Robinson finally ends up leaving England once again to travel abroad.

TEXT
34

"The Road Not Taken" (1920) by Robert Frost

FOCUS ON

1. Who is the narrator in this poem?

The narrator is probably the poet himself, or at least, it is a first-person narrative voice.

2. What situation does he describe? What does he try to do in order to find a solution?

He is alone walking in the woods when he comes to a crossroads so he has to choose one road to move on. Not knowing which one to choose, he tries to see further but he cannot because the road bends.

3. Focus on stanzas 2 and 3. How different are the two roads? Find elements to justify your answer.

The two roads are the same ("as just as fair", "the passing there / Had worn them really about the same" and "both equally lay"). However, the second road is "grassy and wanted wear".

4. Which road does the narrator take? How does he justify his decision?

He finally takes the road that he did not try to look further into, telling himself that he will come back to take the other road ("I marked the first for another day"). At the same time he knows perfectly well that he will not come back, since one road always leads to another road and therefore, he is unlikely to come back ("Yet knowing how way leads on to way, / I doubted I should ever come back.")

5. Focus on the last stanza. Will he justify his decision differently in retrospect? Why?

In the last stanza, the narrator pictures himself in the future, when he tells the story of that particular day. He imagines that he will justify his choice by saying that he took the road that not many people took ("the road less travelled by") and that this choice had an impact on his life ("that has made all the difference").

It is interesting to notice that the narrator is in fact planning to lie, maybe to show a different image of himself: that of a brave and adventurous character who has led a special life. Another interpretation could be that the narrator will want to emphasise the impact that choices can have on one's life: choosing one way rather than the other will change your life.

6. Justify the choice of the title.

The title is quite surprising since the whole poem focuses more on the road which has been taken by the narrator. Yet, taking into account the last stanza, it can be understood more broadly as a reflection on choices and on how, when looking back on one's past choices, the road not taken (= the one the character did not choose) always comes to mind.

Conclude

7. What is this poem a metaphor for?

The whole poem can be seen as a metaphor for life with the road symbolising the course of life during which people have to make choices, sometimes not knowing the outcome beforehand. Then, when the narrator pictures himself retelling his story differently, the reader sees how people can interpret their choices in a different light afterwards. Thus, the title of the poem represents the question commonly asked when thinking about the past: "what would have happened if I had made a different choice? If I had chosen another road?"

Chapitre 6

L'imaginaire / Imagination at work

TEXT 35 *Frankenstein (1818)* by Mary Shelley

FOCUS ON

1. The following are two possible definitions of the word "anxiety".

- a. the feeling of being very worried about something [= concern].
- b. feeling of wanting to do something very much.

→ Which one corresponds to the use made on line 1? How significant is this double meaning?

Both definitions of the word "anxiety" can fit the use made on line 1. Indeed, Victor Frankenstein is looking forward to seeing "the accomplishment of my toils," he is growing impatient to come to a result, which is stressed further in the text "I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation". At the same time, however, he is very worried about the result of his work and wishes it to be successful, that it "might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing". In other words, at this point of the story, this double meaning reveals that Victor Frankenstein is in doubt as to whether his discovery will be successful, and that he is strong-willed too.

2. What does Dr Frankenstein achieve in this extract? Who is he defying in doing so?

In this extract, Dr Frankenstein manages to "infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet". He succeeds in creating life not as human beings would—having a baby—but by the strength of his will like God. Dr Frankenstein is obviously defying God in creating his own creature.

3. What is his reaction to this? Find at least five distinct elements from the text to justify your answer.

Compared to the enthusiasm of the beginning, Dr Frankenstein's reaction is unexpected. Not only is he dissatisfied with the result of his work which took him "nearly two years", but he describes his state as "breathless horror and disgust", he is even "Unable to endure the aspect of the being" he had created. While "endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness", he cannot rest decently and is "disturbed by the wildest dreams" all night long. Finally, the man is overwhelmed by "the bitterness of disappointment" and "the load that weighed upon my mind" which can be but guilt at such a "catastrophe".

4. How intense are the emotions described? How is this shown in this extract? (Use the punctuation, comparisons...).

The second paragraph is particularly telling about the intensity of Dr Frankenstein's emotions. He is at a loss for words ("How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form?"). The exclamation marks show that he is truly upset ("Beautiful!—Great God!"), he is calling God to witness his testimony. The description is extremely accurate, almost clinical and is meant to emphasize the striking

appearance of the creature ("His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but this luxuriance only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips."). Later on, the creature is compared to a "mummy again endued with animation" that "even Dante could not have conceived"; the renowned Italian poet of the Middle Ages gave a vivid picture of his journey through *Inferno* / Hell and its monstrous occupants among other things in his *Divine Comedy*. Dr Frankenstein's feelings are so intense that he eventually questions his sanity, he verges on lunacy: "The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum".

5. "I beheld the wretch... but I escaped and ran down stairs." (Second half of paragraph 3). How is the creature transformed into a monster in these lines?

The creature is defined in the second paragraph with detailed body parts such as "skin", "muscles and arteries", "hair", "teeth", "eyes", "sockets", "lips". In the third paragraph, the very body parts are no longer identified as such "if eyes they may be called" and the actions do not produce the effects they should "His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds" or "He might have spoken, but I did not hear". The creature does not fit this world and is then considered as "the miserable monster".

Conclude

6. a. To what extent could you say that this extract belongs to the 'romantic' genre?

As the Romantic movement was a reaction to the progress in science, this extract belongs to the genre perfectly, science engenders unfitted creatures and monsters. The extreme emotions described by Dr Frankenstein are also characteristic of it and certainly make the readers react one way or another as Romanticism means to.

b. Gothic novels tend to draw on scenes of mystery, horror and wonder. How is this extract a good illustration of a Gothic novel?

The awakening of the dead body which terrifies its own creator partakes of horror. The attitude of Dr Frankenstein can be labelled excessive and melodramatic too. And even if the surroundings do not remind the reader of an abandoned castle, the monster is walking the streets. This extract gathers most of the elements fitting the Gothic genre as well.

FOCUS ON

1. List all the elements used in the text to describe the Count.

The Count is first characterized by his stature ("a **tall old man**"), his age ("a **tall old man**", "The old man", "a **man of his years**") and his black silhouette ("clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere").

His title of Count is coherent with his education as he speaks "in excellent English," his manners show how well-bred he is ("a courtly gesture," "He bowed in a courtly way," "the Count's courteous welcome," "[he] made a graceful wave of his hand to the table").

The reader may associate this sense of the protocol with the comparison to a still human-like adornment: "He made no motion of stepping to meet me, but stood **like a statue**, as though his gesture of welcome had fixed him into stone." The physical appearance of the Count makes the narrator use the lexical field of architecture: "His face was a strong, a very strong, aquiline, with high **bridge** of the thin nose and peculiarly **arched** nostrils, with lofty **domed** forehead, (...) "The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was **fixed**". These references to architecture are connected to strength: the Count is "holding out his hand grasped mine with a **strength** which made me wince," Harker mentions "The **strength** of the handshake" and finally the narrator notices that the aging Count "insisted on carrying my traps along the passage, and then up a great winding stair, and along another great passage" Moreover, architecture evokes stillness, mentioned previously, but also the coldness of some materials "his hand (...) seemed **cold as ice, more like the hand of a dead than a living man**."

Eventually, as the narrator underlines "I had now an opportunity of observing him, and found him of a very marked physiognomy.", the physical description of the Count happens to be very "hairy" and the reader cannot help thinking that it sounds more like an animal than a human picture: "hair growing scantily round the temples but **profusely elsewhere**," "His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with **bushy hair** that **seemed to curl in its own profusion**," "under the **heavy moustache**", "there were **hairs in the centre of the palm**". The animal-like impression the reader perceives is reinforced by the fang-like teeth ("**peculiarly sharp** white teeth. These **protuded over the lips**"), the wolf-like ears ("For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops **extremely pointed**") and the claw-like nails ("**long and fine, and cut to a sharp point**").

2. What makes Jonathan Harker a trustworthy witness? How does that contribute to the atmosphere of the text?

Jonathan Harker seems to be a trustworthy witness as he is a solicitor ("Solicitor, for just before leaving London I got word that my examination was successful, and I am now a full-blown solicitor!"). His description of the situation is based on facts and he uses logic and reasoning in a sensible way: "Of bell or knocker there was no sign. Through these frowning walls and dark window openings it was not likely that my voice could penetrate." When he "felt doubts and fears crowding upon" him, he adopted a very practical move ("I began to rub my eyes and pinch myself to see if I were awake.") and came to a conclusion ("But my flesh answered the pinching test, and my eyes were not to be deceived. I was indeed awake"). Any reader could stick to his way of thinking and his appropriate reactions so that the reader also adheres to his questioning and his worrying. If such a reasonable man thinks "It all seemed like a horrible nightmare", the reader trusts him, experiences the feeling of fear creeping over the place and the narrator and wonders what is going to happen.

3. Find at least five unusual things that Jonathan Harker notices.

Jonathan Harker is still in front of the massive building / residence when the Count himself opens the door and he spots "He held in his hand an antique silver lamp, in which **the flame burned without a chimney or globe of any kind**, throwing long quivering shadows as it **flickered in the draught of the open door**." Considering the wind blowing with the door open, the light should have been put out.

Although Jonathan Harker notices that the Count speaks "with a **strange intonation**", there is nothing surprising as the scene takes place in the Carpathians and English is certainly not the Count's mother tongue.

Jonathan Harker is also taken aback by his first contact with the Count: "He **made no motion of stepping to meet me**, but stood like a statue, as though his gesture of welcome had fixed him into stone. **The instant, however, that I had stepped over the threshold, he moved impulsively forward**, and holding out his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed cold as ice, more like the hand of a dead than a living man." He is struck first by the extreme stillness contrasting by the extreme velocity of the Count and then he is flabbergasted at the ice-like cold.

This first contact also reminds Jonathan Harker of one of his previous encounters which was weird and unsettling: "The strength of the handshake was **so much akin to that which I had noticed in the driver**, whose face I had not seen, that **for a moment I doubted if it were not the same person** to whom I was speaking. So to make sure, I said interrogatively, "Count Dracula?"". The similarity in both men is so remarkable that Jonathan Harker feels the need to check the identity of his speaker even if he cannot truly judge by himself as he stresses himself: "**the driver**, whose face I had not seen".

The "very marked physiognomy" held the attention of Jonathan Harker who lingers on the outstanding features of his guest. Although the Count is identified on several occasions as an old man, Jonathan Harker is mesmerized by "the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years". This blooming tint is totally contradicting the whiteness / paleness about him ("white teeth", "his ears were pale", "The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor", "rather white and fine". Despite the bizarre and even unique characteristics of the Count, Jonathan Harker underlines it only once clearly with "Strange to say" as if the rest of his odd description was tolerable enough and this was the last straw.

4. "As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal." What is the solicitor's reaction when he finds something strange?

Jonathan Harker's close study of the physical appearance of the Count was disturbing / unsettling enough so that when the Count came closer to him ("the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me"), he could not stand the situation. He might not be fully aware that he is upset as he uses the modal "may." Yet, his reaction is unmistakable, he becomes sick ("but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me") his very body reacts ("I could not repress a shudder") as if he was driven by some survival instinct. His body and soul—consciously or not—reject the presence of the Count.

Conclude

5. a. Knowing that *the fantastique mixes elements of realism with irrational elements*, decide whether this extract is a good example of the genre. Justify.

Knowing that *the fantastique mixes elements of realism with irrational elements*, this extract from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a good example of the genre. From Jonathan Harker, the reader collects descriptive information and facts, for example "I heard a heavy step approaching behind the great door, and saw through the chinks the gleam of a coming light. Then there was the sound of rattling chains and the clanking of massive bolts drawn back. A key was turned with the loud grating noise of long disuse, and the great door swung back."

However, the reader also receives contradictory details as Jonathan Harker perceives them, for instance "Hitherto I had noticed the backs of his hands as they lay on his knees in the firelight, and they had seemed rather white and fine. But seeing them now close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse, broad, with squat fingers."

One can make out that the man is struggling to put together the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle named *Dracula*, which is why he uses comparisons and gives a detailed account of the situation. The narrator cannot account for many unnatural minute things.

b. Finally, *the fantastique always involves doubt and fear*. How does this text demonstrate this aspect?

This text demonstrates that *the fantastique always involves doubt and fear*. From beginning to end, the extract is peppered with Jonathan Harker emphasizing both feelings. Before entering the mansion of the Count, Jonathan Harker wondered about his uncomfortable situation: "The time I waited seemed endless, and I **felt doubts and fears crowding upon me**. What sort of place had I come to, and among what kind of

people? What sort of **grim adventure** was it on which I had **embarked**? Was this a **customary** incident in the life of a solicitor's clerk sent out to explain the purchase of a London estate to a foreigner?" The solicitor can identify this situation as an uncommon experience fraught with danger. He wishes he were in a familiar place, in a familiar situation: "It all seemed like a horrible nightmare to me, and I expected that I should suddenly awake, and find myself at home, with the dawn struggling in through the windows," "But my flesh answered the pinching test, and my eyes were not to be deceived. I was indeed awake and among the Carpathians. All I could do now was to be patient, and to wait the coming of morning." In a new place everything is unknown and strange ("with a strange intonation"). Far from his geographical landmarks, the man whose job is to sell houses is lost and insecure: "for a moment I **doubted** if it were not the same person to whom I was speaking. **So to make sure**, I said **interrogatively**, 'Count Dracula?'" Even though "The light and warmth and the Count's courteous welcome seemed to have dissipated all my doubts and fears", the narrator carries on spotting apparently trifling remarks such as "I pray you, be seated and sup how you please. You will I trust, excuse me that I do not join you, but I have dined already, **and I do not sup.**" or "By this time I had finished my supper, and by my host's desire had drawn up a chair by the fire and begun to smoke a cigar which he offered me, **at the same time excusing himself that he did not smoke.**" The narrator also infuses his tale with verbs like "noticed" and "could not but notice that", the adverbs "peculiarly" repeated twice and "extremely" as well as the adjectives "remarkable", "astonishing" and "extraordinary" all pointing at his uneasiness.

TEXT
37

The Turn of the Screw (1898) by Henry James

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. What does it suggest?

What is intriguing is that you cannot see the mouth of Caesar's ghost which focuses all your attention on the expression of his eyes. Caesar's ghost is looking down on Brutus who is half turned towards it as if he was taken in full sway. Brutus seems to have been sitting at his desk

2. List the feelings of the four characters present in this scene.

	Behaviour	Feelings
The narrating governess	<p>She stands opposite the ghost with her companion by her side, Flora is close to them too, she addresses the various parties: "She was there for, but she was there most for Flora; and no moment of my monstrous time was perhaps so extraordinary as that in which I consciously threw out to her—with the sense that, pale and ravenous demon as she was, she would catch and understand it—an inarticulate message of gratitude"</p> <p>"and I could therefore, in the full despair of all I had to accept, but sadly shake my head at her"</p>	<p>First the narrator is joyful to witness the appearance of the ghost in the presence of the children "exactly as she had stood the other time, and I remember, strangely, as the first feeling now produced in me, my thrill of joy at having brought on a proof."</p> <p>Because it confirms what she suspected and clears her: "She was there, and I was justified; she was there, and I was neither cruel nor mad."</p> <p>Yet, the meeting just reveals how much the child is involved: "I was by this time—if I can put the whole thing at all together—more appalled at what I may properly call her manner than at anything else, though it was simultaneously with this that I became aware of having Mrs. Grose also, and very formidably, to reckon with."</p> <p>On top of that her companion is blind to the ghost leaving her alone to cope with the situation: "with this hard blow of the proof that her eyes were hopelessly sealed I felt my own situation horribly crumble"</p> <p>The narrator is defeated by the tight link between the ghost and the child: "«From me?» I panted."</p> <p>"«If I had ever doubted, all my doubt would at present have gone. I've been living with the miserable truth, and now it has only too much closed round me. Of course I've lost you: I've interfered, and you've seen—under her dictation»"</p>

reading. Both his hands are raised either in a defensive gesture or a move of surprise. His general body posture is tilted towards his desk maybe to find some balance as he is taken aback. However, Brutus's face does not betray a feeling of fear or surprise but rather passivity or scorn. The arms of Caesar's ghost are raised thus hiding the bottom of his face as it has already been mentioned and at the same time this sweeping move is suggestive of an action or a process as if the ghost was on his way to the right of the painting, as if he was carrying out a plan. The hanging toga and the laurels crowning the ghost's head, together with the standing position all convey an impression of majesty and power. In comparison, Brutus looks disarmed, which is why his dagger lays on the floor on the left of the engraving in the foreground opposite to his move. All these elements lead to the same conclusion: Brutus is no longer sitting on his seat, he is at the mercy of Caesar who has come back to haunt his adopted son who betrayed and stabbed him to death.

2. What is Brutus's reaction?

Except for his body move, Brutus does not react that much.

3. How would you react if you saw a ghost?

Personal individual answers.

FOCUS ON

1. Fill in the short summary of this text with the following words: accusingly – afraid – alone – aware – common – convinced – delighted – grief – hideously – lost – pleads – surprised – ugly – upset – apparition

Flora has gone out **alone** by the pool. When the governess and Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, join her, the storyteller becomes **aware** of the ghost of her predecessor, Miss Jessel, on the opposite bank. The governess is **delighted** at having "brought on a proof" but she is **surprised** by Flora's reaction. Indeed, instead of looking in the direction of Miss Jessel, she is **glaring accusingly** at the governess. As for Mrs. Grose, she cannot see the apparition and **pleads** with the governess to return to the house.

Flora, who looked "**hideously** hard" and "had turned **common** and almost **ugly**" claims she has never seen anything and pretends she is **afraid** of her present governess. **Convinced** that Miss Jessel is speaking through Flora, the governess declares Flora "**lost**" and tells Mrs. Grose to go back home with the little girl. The governess is **upset** and is left with her **grief**.

Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper	<p>During most of the scene Mrs. Grose is inarticulate: “the shriek of a creature scared, or rather wounded”, “This first vividness of vision and emotion were things of a few seconds, during which Mrs. Grose’s dazed blink across to where I pointed struck me as a sovereign sign that she too at last saw, just as it carried my own eyes precipitately to the child.”</p> <p>By the end of the extract, she interferes in favour of the child against her companion: “ «She isn’t there, little lady, and nobody’s there and you never see nothing, my sweet! How can poor Miss Jessel—when poor Miss Jessel’s dead and buried? We know, don’t we, love?»—and she appealed, blundering in, to the child. «It’s all a mere mistake and a worry and a joke—and we’ll go home as fast as we can!»”</p> <p>At the very end of the story, she reacts by going back home quickly taking the child with her: “mutely possessed of the little girl and clearly convinced, in spite of her blindness, that something awful had occurred and some collapse engulfed us, she retreated, by the way we had come, as fast as she could move.”</p>	<p>Above all Mrs. Grose is scared to death: “poor scared Mrs. Grose”</p> <p>She is relieved and cannot help trying to protect Flora from her governess: “My elder companion, the next moment, at any rate, blotted out everything but her own flushed face and her loud, shocked protest, a burst of high disapproval. «What a dreadful turn, to be sure, miss! Where on earth do you see anything?»”</p> <p>“She looked, even as I did, and gave me, with her deep groan of negation, repulsion, compassion—the mixture with her pity of her relief at her exemption”</p>
Flora	<p>Flora’s contact with the other world gives her access to a type of knowledge she should normally not have a human being, which makes her look older than she is: “She’s there, you little unhappy thing—there, there, there, and you see her as well as you see me!» I had said shortly before to Mrs. Grose that she was not at these times a child, but an old, old woman, and that description of her could not have been more strikingly confirmed than in the way in which, for all answer to this, she simply showed me, without a concession, an admission, of her eyes, a countenance of deeper and deeper, of indeed suddenly quite fixed, reprobation.”</p> <p>Even though she keeps this telling expression throughout the scene (““Flora continued to fix me with her small mask of reprobation”), she also keeps playing her role of an innocent little girl with the housekeeper: “with a strange, quick primness of propriety, and they were again, with Mrs. Grose on her feet, united, as it were, in pained opposition to me”, “as she stood there holding tight to our friend’s dress, her incomparable childish beauty had suddenly failed, had quite vanished. I’ve said it already—she was literally, she was hideously hard; she had turned common and almost ugly.”</p> <p>“«I don’t know what you mean. I see nobody. I see nothing. I never have. I think you’re cruel. I don’t like you!» Then, after this deliverance, which might have been that of a vulgarly pert little girl in the street, she hugged Mrs. Grose more closely and buried in her skirts the dreadful little face. In this position she produced an almost furious wail. «Take me away, take me away—oh, take me away from her!»”</p> <p>She twists the governess around her little finger and makes her help the ghost against the governess.</p>	<p>Flora does not flinch in the presence of her governess and keeps pretending she cannot see a ghost: “The revelation then of the manner in which Flora was affected startled me, in truth, far more than it would have done to find her also merely agitated, for direct dismay was of course not what I had expected. Prepared and on her guard as our pursuit had actually made her, she would repress every betrayal; and I was therefore shaken, on the spot, by my first glimpse of the particular one for which I had not allowed. To see her, without a convulsion of her small pink face, not even feign to glance in the direction of the prodigy I announced, but only, instead of that, turn at me an expression of hard, still gravity, an expression absolutely new and unprecedented and that appeared to read and accuse and judge me—this was a stroke that somehow converted the little girl herself into the very presence that could make me quail. I quailed even though my certitude that she thoroughly saw was never greater than at that instant, and in the immediate need to defend myself I called it passionately to witness.”</p> <p>She is in control and does not betray any sign of uneasiness or guilt: “The wretched child had spoken exactly as if she had got from some outside source each of her stabbing little words,”</p>
Miss Jessel	<p>She is a standing figure that it unabashed (i.e. not disconcerted, poised): “She rose erect on the spot my friend and I had lately quitted, and there was not, in all the long reach of her desire, an inch of her evil that fell short.”</p> <p>“I could only grasp her more quickly yet, for even while she spoke the hideous plain presence stood undimmed and undaunted.”</p> <p>“She’s as big as a blazing fire!”</p> <p>“I felt—I saw—my livid predecessor press, from her position, on my defeat, and I was conscious, more than all, of what I should have from this instant to deal with in the astounding little attitude of Flora.”</p> <p>“while I had nothing to do but communicate again with the figure that, on the opposite bank, without a movement, as rigidly still as if catching, beyond the interval, our voices, was as vividly there for my disaster as it was not there for my service.”</p> <p>“I faced, over the pool again, our infernal witness”</p>	<p>She looks like a hellish figure, but no feelings are transmitted but those of the child who is manipulated by the ghost.</p>

3. According to you, which elements in this text are typical of a ghost story?

Typically, in a ghost story some of the characters are able to see the apparition whereas others cannot. Among the living characters, this creates a tension which serves the interest of the ghost “I felt—I saw—my livid predecessor press, from her position, on my defeat” because the living characters instead of sharing the knowledge and presenting a united front to the evil apparition are torn. Those who know can try and explain what they witnessed (“It had already lasted a minute, and it lasted while I continued, seizing my colleague, quite thrusting her at it and presenting her to it, to insist with my pointing hand.”) while those

who cannot see are doubtful and can question the trustworthiness of their companions (“She looked, even as I did, and gave me, with her deep groan of negation, repulsion, compassion—the mixture with her pity of her relief at her exemption—a sense, touching to me even then, that she would have backed me up if she could. I might well have needed that, for with this hard blow of the proof that her eyes were hopelessly sealed I felt my own situation horribly crumble”).

Ghosts seem to appear when they want to, but unexpectedly for the living characters (“Just as in the churchyard with Miles, the whole thing was upon us.”, “I seized my colleague’s arm. “She’s there, she’s there!””) but with favourite spots (“exactly as she had stood the other time”).

4. Finally, this novel is also considered typical of the *fantastique*. Find elements in this text that are typical of the *fantastique*.*.

The description of the place is rather realistic ("before us on the opposite bank exactly as she had stood the other time", "on the opposite bank") although some supernatural elements including a ghost intervene ("pale and ravenous demon as she was", "she rose erect on the spot my friend and I had lately quitted, and there was not, in all the long reach of her desire, an inch of her evil that fell short."). The narrator herself stresses how much she doubted: "If I had ever doubted, all my doubt would at present have gone. I've been living with the miserable truth, and now it has only too much closed round me." She is even feeling grateful to the ghost for showing up and clearing her of any suspicion of madness: "my thrill of joy at having brought on a proof. She was there, and I was justified; she was there, and I was neither cruel nor mad." These reactions make her sound even more trustworthy for the reader. This is probably why the extract does not convey the feelings of the dead governess

TEXT
38

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) by Lewis Carroll

FOCUS ON

1. Understand what is going on: reorder the following sentences to recreate the chronology of the text:

A/J/D/G/I/H/E/C/B/F

2. List all the elements which are not realistic in this extract. What atmosphere do they create?

In this extract, quite a number of elements are not realistic. To name the major ones, Alice speaks to a cat, the cat appears and vanishes at will, and they talk about a baby who turned into a pig. They create an atmosphere of wonder. It seems that Alice is discovering a world in which there are no limits to one's imagination and she has become accustomed to it: "she was getting so used to queer things happening."

3. Find elements which show that Alice is trying to understand the logic of this world.

First of all, Alice might not understand all the conventions of this world, but from the start, it is obvious that she tries to adapt her behaviour to the people she meets, for instance with the Cat: "It looked good-natured, she thought: still it had VERY long claws and a great many teeth, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect".

Furthermore, when the Cat refuses to give her answers because it thinks that the question is not accurate enough, Alice only adapts: "Oh, you're sure to [get somewhere]," said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.' Alice felt that this could not be denied, so she tried another question."

4. Show that this attempt at using logic is only superficial.

When the Cat explains why she must be mad, she does not feel convinced but she moves on nonetheless: "Alice didn't think that proved it at all; however, she went on." What's more, when the Cat explains to her why he is mad, she does not question his logic, but barely changes a word which she thinks is not accurate: "'Y call it purring, not growling,' said Alice."

5. Is Alice afraid at any point in the extract? Can you compare this genre to another genre you have already studied?

Contrary to texts pertaining to the Gothic, in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the eponymous character is never afraid of strange things. Although the Cat has: "VERY long claws and a great many teeth" she barely concedes that she ought to treat it "with respect." Throughout the excerpt and the novel, Alice faces numerous situations which could be considered scary, but she never feels more than surprised and in this excerpt, it seems that nothing shocks her anymore: "Alice was not much surprised at this, she was getting so used to queer things happening."

TEXT
39

The Dumb Waiter (1957) by Harold Pinter

FOCUS ON

1. Focus on the stage directions at the very beginning of the play. What is striking?

First of all, the stage directions at the beginning of the play are extremely long. They are very precise as to what is happening and the position of everything. These stage directions imply that there is very little flexibility for the directors and actors. More importantly, they describe the beginning of the play which is silent: "Silence" (repeated three times) and they allow the reader to get a first impression of the play as Gus repeats the same surprising move to bring out first a "flattened matchbox" then a "flattened cigarette packet" from his shoes. Ben's reaction is also identical both times: "their eyes meet. BEN rattles his paper and reads."

2. Make a short description of each character.

Ben seems to be fairly quiet. He spends his time reading the paper and does not interact much with Gus. In fact, even when the latter speaks of the crockery, he keeps reading. The only thing he does to draw the attention on him is slamming his paper down then taking it up again. He seems to be the one in charge.

Gus seems to be less conventional and probably less skilled. From the very beginning, he is described as a character who is "tying his shoelaces, with difficulty." He seems to be slower than Ben in his reactions. Ben seems to give him orders constantly.

3. In this passage, find an example of *non-sequitur**—a statement which does not seem to be connected in a reasonable or sensible way with what was said before. What effect does it produce?

This passage is full of unrelated sentences as both characters seem to be focused on different topics altogether. The following sentences are an example of sentences that are not connected:

BEN: Well, make the tea then, will you? Time's getting on.

GUS brings out the flattened cigarette packet and examines it.

GUS: You got any cigarettes? I think I've run out.

He throws the packet high up and leans forward to catch it.

I hope it won't be a long job, this one.

These lines underline to what extent the conversation is futile and pointless. It is as though the communication were impossible between the two characters.

4. Compare the two newspaper stories that Ben relates.

a. What can you say about the stories?

Both newspaper stories are highly improbable newspaper stories. The first one features an elderly man who would have been run over by a lorry as he was crawling under it to cross the street, and the second one reports that a young child would have killed a cat. While the first story seems to be too unbelievable to be real, the second one seems to be too inconsequential to be displayed in a newspaper.

b. What do the characters have to say about those stories? What does it reveal?

The first noticeable thing is the repetition of a pattern in the way the characters deal with the story. Both stories are introduced by the interjection: "Kaw!" and they become the centre of attention for a second, emphasized by the use of extremely short cues in which the characters focus on absurd details. These stories and the way they are put forward by the characters reveal the lack of purpose of the characters who have been hired by an unknown character to kill someone that they do not even know yet. In this excerpt, the characters try to turn trivial situations into important questions as though they were the only issues worth debating and show therefore that they cannot really cope with the outside world as it seems to make no sense whatsoever to them.

FOCUS ON

1. Find a few basic elements to describe the two characters present in this passage.

The two characters who are present in this excerpt are a girl named Clarisse McClellan and a man named Guy Montag.

Clarisse is seventeen and describes herself as crazy. She says that her uncle told her that "the two always [went] together." She says that she enjoys paying attention to the nature and the people around her.

Guy Montag is a fireman. He is thirty and has been a fireman for ten years: "'Since I was twenty, ten years ago.' Besides, he seems to like his job: 'It's fine work' and he believes that it entitles him to the respect of the girl: 'Well, doesn't this mean anything to you?' He tapped the numerals 451 stitched on his char-coloured sleeve."

2. The man is a fireman. What makes his work different from today's fire-fighters?

Montag is a fireman. However, it does mean that his job is to extinguish fires. On the contrary, in this society, firemen start fires. They burn books because people are not allowed to read anymore:

"Do you ever read any of the books you burn?"

He laughed. 'That's against the law!'

Montag seems to be proud to enforce the law whereas Clarisse seems to disapprove of this. She reminds him that people fear firemen more than they respect them: "So many people are. Afraid of firemen, I mean."

3. Find at least two facts that the girl knows and the man does not. How does she explain her knowledge?

She knows that billboards used to be 40 feet long rather than 200 feet long. She also knows that there is dew on the grass in the morning. Finally, she knows that if one looks intently enough, one might see a man on the moon. To explain this, she only says that she does not watch the parlour walls: "I rarely watch the 'parlour walls' or go to races or Fun Parks. So I've lots of time for crazy thoughts, I guess."

Montag is puzzled. He is taken aback because no one has ever mentioned such things to him. No one has ever bothered about the things around him, and he senses for the first time that there is a world around him and that there are things to be discovered.

4. What kind of society do they live in? Is it an ideal society? Justify.

The society they live in seems to be very close to a dictatorship. It is a futuristic society in which books are not allowed anymore because they encourage people to have their own opinions. It is a society in which

very few freedoms remain and freedom of thought is controlled as they have squads of people who enforce the law, go to people's houses, and try to find the last remaining books.

On top of that, in this society, people do not take time to talk to one another, nor do they take time to enjoy the beauty of the nature around them since they drive so fast that they cannot recognize grass or flowers. Not only does the society discourage people from talking to one another, but it has come to the point when people find it odd when people do so.

5. Look up the definitions of utopia* and dystopia*. Which one of these would be appropriate to label this novel? Justify.

This novel is the opposite of a utopia. It is a novel in which the society which is presented has restricted freedoms and controls the population to prevent them from thinking freely. It can therefore be labelled a dystopia.

BRANCHING OUT

The following extract is taken from another classic of the genre.

1. Read the extract.

2. In the text, find the main characteristics of Newspeak.

The main characteristic of Newspeak is that its vocabulary "gets smaller every year." What's more, the purpose of this new language is to prevent people from thinking: "the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought."

3. Focus on the last paragraph: What is ironic?

In the last paragraph, Winston realizes that Syme will soon be killed by the party. He understands that Syme speaks too openly of the true purpose of Newspeak which should be kept hidden for fear that people might rebel against the party before the transformation is complete. Although Syme seems to be utterly faithful to the party, he will be killed because he is too clever: "He is too intelligent. He sees too clearly and speaks too plainly. The Party does not like such people."

4. Compare this society to that of *Fahrenheit 451*. Justify your ideas using both texts.

The two societies are very similar. In both novels the intention of the ruling power is to destroy language and books in order to control people's thoughts and to prevent them from being too intelligent.

While in *Fahrenheit 451*, firemen try to destroy books altogether: "Monday burn Millay, Wednesday Whitman, Friday Faulkner, burn 'em to ashes, then burn the ashes," in 1984, the ruling party is re-writing the classics to deprive them of any value: "the whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron—they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be."