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**CONTEMPORARY
BRITISH AND AMERICAN STORIES.
HOME READING AID**

Учебно-методическое пособие

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В пособии представлены комплексы заданий к 17 рассказам современных британских и американских авторов. Приведенные тексты дают возможность познакомиться с лучшими образцами современного литературного и разговорного английского языка. Комплекс заданий к каждому рассказу сопровождается краткой библиографической справкой. Подробно разработанная система послетекстовых заданий позволяет пополнить активный словарный запас студентов, обсудить содержание прочитанного, проанализировать основные художественные особенности произведений.

Учебно-методическое пособие предназначено для практических занятий по домашнему чтению со студентами старших курсов, обучающихся по направлению 45.03.01 (032700.62) Филология (профиль «Зарубежная филология (английский язык и литература)»), дисциплина «Практический курс английского языка», цикл Б3), очной формы обучения.

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Groundlings

Jane Gardam

Jane Gardam lives with her husband and three children in England. Her first book, 'Black Faces, White Faces' (1975), a collection of short stories, won both the David Higham Prize for Fiction and the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize. Subsequent collections of short stories include 'The Pangs of Love and Other Stories' (1983), winner of the Katherine Mansfield Award and 'Going into a Dark House' (1994), which was awarded the PEN Macmillan Silver Pen Award (1995). Gardam's first novel, 'God on the Rocks' (1978), was adapted for television in 1992. It won the Prix Baudelaire (France) in 1989 and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. Her other novels include 'The Queen of the Tambourine' (1991), which won the Whitbread Novel Award; and 'The Flight of the Maidens' (2000), which was adapted for BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour. In 1999 Jane Gardam was awarded the Heywood Hill Literary Prize in recognition of a distinguished literary career.

I. Read the note about the author and the story.

II. Comprehensive questions :

- 1) Where had Aggie Batt been seen for 35 years since 1940s?
- 2) What were the students standing down the side-aisle not allowed to do?
- 3) What made Aggie Batt look queer (and ridiculous)?
- 4) What did Aggie's presence or absence in the queue signal (suggest)?
- 5) Did the narrator really have to queue for her tickets now? Why did she do it?
- 6) How did Aggie's morning start?
- 7) What contrast does the narrator draw between the Great Procession and the theatre-queuers?
- 8) What sort of people would queue for Shakespeare's plays (...were Shakespeare-struck)?
- 9) How did Aggie look in the audience (in the theatre)?
- 10) Why didn't the groundlings buy programmes?

- 11) Aggie Batt wasn't utterly poor, was she?
- 12) What puzzled the narrator when she spoke to Aggie?
- 13) How did Aggie get along with other queuers?
- 14) What was on on the day Aggie died? Why did the narrator leave home so early?
- 15) Why did the lady take great care to slip out of the house unnoticed?
- 16) Why did she ask the walk-away boy to buy her a ticket?
- 17) What flowers and why did she pick in her garden? What did she do with the flowers?
- 18) Why did she feel young and happy again?
- 19) What would happen at 9.45 a.m.?
- 20) When did you realize that Aggie was dead?
- 21) Had Aggie been head of the queue that morning? Who was mistaken – the walkway boy or the narrator?

III. Transcribe the words: aisle, Cyrano, entity, eternity, Aquascutum, diptych, cogent, psychiatric, non-pareil, Messiah, Halleluiah, talisman, abysmal, plaid.

IV. Vocabulary study:

(a) Explain in English and give the Russian for:

- 1) to lie prone;
- 2) to sit on one's haunches;
- 3) to get bread on coupons;
- 4) to disdain time (flattery);
- 5) a medieval diptych of heaven and hell;
- 6) the mongrel English;
- 7) to stretch one's legs;
- 8) cogent (reason, argument);
- 9) stint; to do one's daily stint; a seven-hour stint;
- 10) non-pareil (pre-view notices);
- 11) frolic n., v., adj.;
- 12) garrulous (woman);
- 13) countenance v., n.;
- 14) obituary.

(b) Give English equivalents:

- 1) начало/конец очереди;

- 2) сидячие/стоячие места;
 - 3) из года в год, много лет подряд;
 - 4) of-phrases: букет цветов; стая гусей; стайка девочек; ожерелье огней.
- (c) Find in the text synonyms, near synonyms and related words to express:
- 1) защищаться, укрывать (3);
 - 2) смятые (3);
 - 3) болтать (3);
 - 4) сумасшедший, помешанный (3);
 - 5) ходить, идти (10).
- (d) Speech patterns:
1. **It was one of her answering days.**
Translate and give 2-3 sentences of your own.
 2. Find the instances of “**Oh, dear me!**”, “**Goodness sake**”, “**Good God**”, analyse their connotations and use in situations.
 3. **Never say die.**
Recollect the situation in your life when you acted according to this.
- (b) Language study: write out nouns with the agent-suffix **-er** (mugger, etc.) and analyse their meanings.
- (c) Write out sentences with phrasal verbs containing “on”, “off”, “up”, “out”.

V. Discussion points:

1) Speak about the plot structure. Does the plot comprise a variety of events and episodes? Do they involve physical or psychological movement, or both? Where is the climax of the story?

2) Comment on the title. Who do you think is the protagonist of the story: Aggie Batt or the narrator?

3) What means of characterization prevail, direct or indirect? Motivate your answer.

4) Describe the narrator (her age, appearance, social status, family, mode of life, character). In which tone does she tell the story?

5) Describe the theatre ticket queuers. Have they changed (to Jane’s mind)? What is Jane nostalgic about?

6) Describe Aggie Batt, her appearance, character. Study the words “queer, odd, weird, eccentric, freak, freakish, idiosyncratic”. What do you find normal and abnormal in her? Have you ever met people like Aggie, so strongly obsessed with anything?

7) How did other ticket queuers treat Aggie? Did she know she was so highly esteemed?

8) Comment on the contrast of the pleasure-seekers in the queue and the bread-winners in the Great Procession. Speak about the language of the passage.

9) Find in the story instances of imagery means (tropes): metaphor, metonymy, simile, epithet, periphrasis, allusion, and expressive means: parallel constructions, anadiplosis, anaphora, epiphora, reiteration, ellipsis. Comment on their effect. Note colloquial and slang words.

10) Formulate the theme and the message of the story. Show how all the details in the plot, in the description of the characters serve to convey the message.

Wee Horrors

James Kelman

***James Kelman** (born 9 June 1946, in Glasgow) is an influential writer of novels, short stories, plays and political essays. His novel ‘A Disaffection’ was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Fiction in 1989. Kelman won the 1994 Booker Prize with ‘How Late It Was, How Late’ and aroused something of a controversy in doing so: one of the judges, Rabbi Julia Neuberger, denounced the book as ‘a disgrace’ when Kelman was announced as the winner. Kelman has since said that his Booker prize win, specifically the negative publicity and attacks made as a result, made publishers more reluctant to handle his work. In 1998 Kelman was awarded the Scotland on Sunday/Glenfiddich Spirit of Scotland Award. In 2008 he won Scotland’s most prestigious literary award the Saltire Society’s Book of the Year award for ‘Kieron Smith, Boy’ (2008).*

I. Read the note about the author. While reading the story note the peculiarities of a distinctive Glaswegian dialect in which it is narrated.

II. Vocabulary study:

1) Active vocabulary:

- thick with rubbish
- wean
- jin
- wee
- demolition work
demolish v.
- flea
- to make a point of
- to get the knack of doing smth.
- crush v., n.
- master v., n.
- breed v., n.
- scratch v., n.
- while I was at it
- the coast was clear
- on this occasion
- squeak v., n.
- to nudge against smth.
nudge v., n.
- umpteen times
- squatter
- sizzle v., n.
- crackle v., n.
- spurt v., n.
- scuffle v., n.
scuffling feet
- winey (coll.)
- doss (coll.) v.
doss-house
- scared out of their wits
- contraption den

2) Write out and translate the sentences with phrasal verbs:
Poke out, flit out, drag off, go on, root out, spurt out, be off.

3) Note the dialectal, colloquial, slang vocabulary. Comment on its specific colouring in the story.

III. Grammar study:

1) Comment on the use of past continuous tense of the modal “have to”:

- a. We were having to root them out...
- b. I was having to start considering ...
- c. I was having to go carefully ...

2) Translate the sentences with the emphatic “did” (We did warn ...) and inversion (Down I went ...). Comment on the stylistic effect of these usages.

3) Analyse all “-ing -forms” in the extract from the beginning of the story to “I could never master that.”

IV. Answer the questions using active vocabulary:

1) How did the houses abandoned by the lodges look? What made the place messy?

2) What was the worst problem of the dwelling place?

3) Why did the parents have to keep their children (weans) inside?

4) Why was having visitors in the house an ordeal?

5) Why didn't the parents like their children to play in the old houses?

6) Where did the children like to play and hide themselves from the parents?

7) Did the father find those children in the den? What did the place look like?

8) Why did he decide to look for them in the dunnies? Why did he hate the dunnies?

9) What was Gregor's notorious for?

10) What smell was coming from the dunnies?

11) Who did the father see before he found the children? What was repelling about the couple of weans?

12) What was going on in the room?

13) What terrified the father?

14) Did he manage to escape?

V. Discussion points:

- 1) What do you think attracted the children to the abandoned houses?
- 2) What danger was lurking there?
- 3) What do you think should be done to abandoned houses to prevent them from being “visited” by vagrants and alcoholics?

VI. Questions for analysis and evaluation of the story:

- 1) The story takes place in Glasgow (Scotland). What are the indications of a Glaswegian dialect?
- 2) It is a short three-page story done in one long paragraph. However structurally it has a conventional plot structure. Speak on its exposition, incidents of complication, physical and emotional developments, climax, denouement.
- 3) The story covers a very short time-span and consists of several episodes? How are all the episodes relevant to the plot unity, to the total meaning of the story?
- 4) By what lexical and syntactic means is suspense created?
- 5) Who tells the story? Who is the protagonist? What emotions can the reader hear in his voice? How do a few little episodes tell the story of the family?
- 6) Pick out the vocabulary describing the father’s emotions (anxiety, worry, repulsion, exasperation, fear, horror, tenderness for his children).
- 7) What social and emotional conflict does the story involve? By what language means is it conveyed?
- 8) Speak about the theme and message of the story. What feelings does the story evoke in you? What aspects of human nature and social problems does it reveal? Is the message implicitly or explicitly rendered?

The Language of Water

D. S. Mackenzi

David Mackenzie was born in north-east Scotland, and was a social worker before teaching English abroad. He now works as a systems analyst. His first novel, 'The Truth of Stone' was published in 1991. 'The Language of Water' is taken from 'The Minerva Book of Short Stories 4' (1991).

I. Read the notes about the author, the story and the language.
Write the plot of page length.

II. Vocabulary study

(a) Explain in English and give Russian equivalents:

- 1 to feign enthusiasm
- 2 waders
- 3 condescending
- 4 scathe v., scathing(ly)
- 5 infer, inference
- 6 gear, fishing gear
- 7 imposition

(b) Find in the text phrasal verbs synonymic to the following:

- 1) to manage to do something in a way that appears satisfactory, to cover up a mistake;
- 2) to depart, to start;
- 3) to remove by kicking;
- 4) to remove by rubbing;
- 5) to remove;
- 6) to do;
- 7) to stop doing something;
- 8) to start hobby, work, etc.;
- 9) to regain one's composure.

(c) Name means of word-building: fore-and-aft, bedeviled, fish (v.), leaf (v.), tiptoe (v.), Sandy, squawk, wellington, five-bar, mirror-like.

(d) Attach adjectives from the story to the given nouns:

Surface (1), worry (2), water (3), bird (3), figure (2), tyres (1), wellingtons (1), man (2), type (1), roof (1), talker (1), stroll (2), baby pigeon (1).

III. Discussion and inferring questionspoints:

1) How long had the narrator (Alexander) and Mr. McLeod known each other?

2) Why do you think Garfield invite Sandy to go fishing with him? Do you think he had any covert (hidden) intentions? In what mood did each of them go fishing?

3) Why did the narrator find it difficult to like Garfield? What episode from his childhood did he remember clearly and vividly? Did Garfield understand he had injured the boy's soul?

4) Was fishing successful (literally and figuratively)?

5) Did you ever in your childhood experience a shock (like the one described in the story) that had a lasting and traumatic effect on you?

IV. Questions and tasks on analysis:

1) Speak about the plot of the story. What events does it comprise? What type of conflict does it contain? What key words and phrases reveal the conflict?

2) What is the role of flashbacks? How does the dramatic episode from the boy's childhood help to understand the narrator's attitude to Garfield?

3) How is the tense atmosphere of the story created? Comment on specific words, phrases, tropes.

4) Give brief character sketches of Mr. Garfield and the narrator.

5) What do you think the message of the story is? Is it rendered explicitly or implicitly?

The Great Profundo

Bernard Mac Laverty

***Bernard MacLaverty** was born in Belfast (14.9.42) and lived there until 1975 when he moved to Scotland with his wife, Madeline, and four children. He now lives in Glasgow. He is a member of Aosdana in Ireland and is Visiting Writer/Professor at the University of Strathclyde. He has published five collections of short stories and four novels. He has written versions of his fiction for other media –radio plays, television plays, screenplays. Recently he wrote and directed a short film ‘Bye-Child’.*

I. Transcribe the words and practice reading them:

bow, genuine, epee, sword, akimbo, palaver, coup, finale, pint, trapeze, epaulettes, lithe

II. Retell the story according to the plan and using words and word-combinations given below:

1) The first meeting of the narrator with Frankie Taylor and Jimmy, street performers (“... round to the ring of people ...”):

high-pitched and sentimental, my curiosity was roused, to stand on tiptoe, spinning on his heel, to take in, undivided attention, a violist’s bow, the teeth of the saw, a holdall, a hollow shearing sound, epee, scissor v., genuine, to-do n., his arms akimbo, to goad on to do smth., goad n., cavort v., to keep an eye out for smth./smb., to turn a blind eye, palaver n., v., extract v., extraction, extract n., herald the finale, flex v. (flexibility, flexible), to the hilt.

2) The invitation to perform at the Eccentrics Genuine Club (“This time I was impressed ... his book on the ground.”):

a saw-player, to rate through, to get praise, treasurer, live entertainment, Eccentrics Genuine Club, female strippers.

3) Visiting the Great Profundo in his dwelling (“The committee ... See Appendix“):

saw-player and sword-swallower, coup, daubed with slogans, broadcaster, knacker v. (coll.), decline a chair, cans of larger, to work for a newspaper, tepid beer (tepid voice), strident voice.

4) Before the performance (“The bar in the Students’ Union ... to enjoy ourselves”):

a splendid turnout, to cover expenses, door money, pandemonium, a full house.

5) The students’ rude outrageous behaviour. The tragedy (“I slopped ... in a hurry to leave”):

Parkinson’s disease, apart from all that, the floor awash with beer, to give smb. a build up, lithe, patter n., v., juvenile, to tailor a talk, drum-roll, throbbed with noise, fanfare of trumpets, echoed round the bar, imbedded, quieten, stepped off the edge of the platform, a kind of deep groan or retch, made straight for the bar, to apologize for, a bunch of shit, on the house, specks of red.

6) The Great Profundo’s finale (“When I rang ... before the week’s out”):

the door was ajar, to rummage through, to bleed inside, the women’s stuff, in the next issue, to hold on to it.

7) Appendix. The Interview:

to feel justified, the subject, sparseness, nervous and animated, fiddled with his toes, to become involved, speed-drinking contest, wary of the drink, down like a funnel, to take smb. under one’s wing, to join the circus, he got me at the sword-swallowing, freak, take smb. on, a roustabout, a one-armed horizontal handstand, to bring to mind, hard graft, not good with the audience, in the pawn, to bugger off, appreciate, a signed drawing by Matisse, a dog-eared folder, to gather a crowd, to split the proceeds, rummagings, ladies’ underwear, to bring about, a kind of tribute, trade secrets, to keep the blades clean, craft.

III. Translate in writing the following passages:

- 1) “It is not for nothing ... not a well-looking man.”
- 2) “After much to do ... even more daring.”
- 3) “he spread his arms ... the ring of people”
- 4) “On my first encounter ... by taking out the Claymore.”
- 5) “The crowd could see ... to take up the collection.”
- 6) “At this point ... See Illustration.”

IV. Grammar revision:

1. Note the agreement between the subject and the predicate in the following sentences:

a) "... the man shouted ... glancing over his shoulder to check that the law, as he called them, were not to be seen."

b) "I gave him such a buildup ... that the audience were on their feet applauding as he made his entrance."

c) "Your audience is a bunch of shit."

2) Comment on the plural in the following words:
in all weathers, proceeds, rummagings, contents

V. Discussion points:

1) Do you think the Great Profundo derived pleasure from his street performances? Did he realize it was dangerous?

2) Why did he agree to give a live performance in the University Eccentrics Genuine Club?

3) Why do you think he went on performing in spite of the students' contemptuous and vulgar reaction?

4) What did Frankie Taylor think of himself? Why did he call himself the great Profundo? Why did he not enrich himself and not gain fame in the circus?

5) Do you like watching street performers – buskers, singers, acrobats? Do you stop to watch and listen or pass by indifferently? Do you give money to the performers?

6) Do people perform in the street for pleasure, fame, money? Could you sing or play music in the street? If no, why?

VI. Questions for analysis and evaluation:

1) How is the story structured? What elements does the plot contain? What is the peculiarity of the plot? What purpose does the placing of the appendix at the end of the story serve?

2) Who tells the story? Is the first-person narrator a main or minor character? Is he involved in the events? Whose voices does the reader hear in the narrative? Through whose perception does the reader receive and evaluate the story?

3) What is the general tonal system of the story? Do you find the story gripping? How is the suspense kept? What stirs the reader's curiosity and imagination? What linguistic means create a tense atmosphere?

4) What is the role of the interview? How does the language of the interviewee, the protagonist of the story, differ from the narrative

style of the story told by the author? How does the Great Profundo's direct speech characterize him? How do speech characteristics contribute to character portrayal?

5) Are the means of characterization of the protagonist direct or indirect? What language means are employed by the author? What role does the contrast between the crude vulgarity of the students' language and behaviour and the patient, restrained, self-possessed manner of the sword-swallower play in characterization?

6) Formulate the theme and the message of the story? The theme is treated through a deep complex insight into human nature, human relationships and the protagonist's fate. What generalization about life arises from this story? What emotional response does the author's message evoke in you?

Empire Building

Deborah Moggach

Deborah Moggach (born Deborah Hough on 28 June 1948) is a British writer. She has written sixteen novels to date, including 'The Ex-Wives', 'Tulip Fever', and, most recently, 'These Foolish Things'. She has adapted many of her novels as TV dramas and has also written several film scripts, including the BAFTA-nominated screenplay for 'Pride & Prejudice'. She has also written two collections of short stories and a stage play. In February 2005, Moggach was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters degree by her Alma Mater, the University of Bristol. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a former Chair of the Society of Authors, and is on the executive committee of PEN.

I. Read the note about the author and the story.

II. Write the plot of the story of a two-page length.

III. Vocabulary and language study

(a) Give the Russian equivalents of the following:

- to go bust
- at the till
- to flinch

- to put on the slate
- transaction
- to install
- retail n.
- junk heap
- junk food
- quickie (coll.)
- cabinet
- His heart swelled.
- business-wise
- to brighten the neighbourhood
- crockery (of utensils)
- to suffer from neglect
- dissipated
- latch-key children
- expire of the lease
- on long lease
- to be in a state
- shift
- to go like clockwork

(b) Write out and translate sentences with sound words: clink, chime, tinkle, rattle, thump, squeal, thud. Speak on the stylistic effect of their usage.

(c) Find in the story adjectives for the following nouns: ... banknotes, ...fruit, ...glass, ...neighbourhood, ...and ...carton, ... business (2),jacket, ...period (in business), ...chap, ...and ... house, ...fellow, ...concrete.

(d) Give equivalents of the following phrasal verbs, write out and translate sentences from the text with them: take over (2), rely upon, fall into, come up, show off, put on.

(e) Transcribe the words and practise pronouncing them: terrace, parade, merchandise, liquor, salubrious, surveillance, aerials, deign, balustrade, anorak, incorrigible.

(f) Name means of word-building and translate the words: bedsit, re-stock, merchandise, aim (n., v.), salubrious, twilight, rattle, shelf-space, bemusing, con-tob, flotsam and jetsam, sellotape (n., v.), business-wise, titbit, take-out (n.), take-away (n.), sought-after, vandal-proof.

IV. Translate (orally):

- ‘His main income... in conversation.’
- ‘The dressmaker’s... order.’
- ‘Hamid would have suggested... latch-key children.’
- ‘It grew darker... the Empire stores’.
- ‘He wanted to tell... feel foolish.’
- ‘There are some sights... who stood beside him.’

IV. Be prepared to discuss the story on the following points:

- 1) Hamid’s installing in London, beginning his own business, expanding, local customers.
- 2) Hamid’s family, his relations with the family members. Did lack of family unity distress him or did he not notice it at all?
- 3) Signs of Hamid’s growing prosperity, his judgments of well-being and prosperity.
- 4) Growing discrepancy between Hamid’s morals and values and what he did to increase his business and capital.
- 5) The crash of Hamid’s hopes and dreams, the wreckage of his world.

V. Discussion and inferring questions on the interpretation and analysis of the story:

- 1) Speak about the plot structure, its elements. Account for the digressions and the flashback.
- 2) What kinds of conflict does the story involve? Are they external or internal?
- 3) Is the portrayal of Hamid, the protagonist, created implicitly or explicitly? Give examples. What means of characterization are employed by the narrator (through action, speech, direct description, psychological portrayal, others)? How often does the reader hear Hamid’s voice? Give examples of epithets, metaphors in character drawing.
- 4) Comment on the mention of the change of seasons. What parallel does it imply?
- 5) What is the effect of the reiteration of the sentence “Business is business” and Wordsworth’s poem?
- 6) The final episode serves to be the climax of the story in which the author’s message is revealed. Formulate the message and the theme of the story.

Chemistry

Graham Swift

Graham Colin Swift (born May 4, 1949) is a well-known British author. He was born in London, England and educated at Dulwich College, London, Queens' College, Cambridge, and later the University of York.

Some of his works have been made into films, including 'Last Orders', which starred Michael Caine and Bob Hoskins and 'Waterland' which starred Jeremy Irons. 'Last Orders' was a joint winner of the 1996 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction and a mildly controversial winner of the Booker Prize in 1996, owing to the superficial similarities in plot to William Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying'. 'Waterland' was set in The Fens; it is a novel of landscape, history and family, and is often cited as one of the outstanding post-war British novels and has been a set text on the English Literature syllabus in British schools.

I. Write a 1-2 page-length summary of the story.

II. Vocabulary and language study:

1) Transcribe and learn to pronounce the words: knotted, veiny, manufactured, explicable, allaying, endowed, vestige, rheumatic, allegiance, equilibrium, impregnable, bunsen, cupboard, envelop (v.), rowan, coroner.

2) Give the English equivalents for the following: работать на батарейках; едва ли я понимал; облегчить горе; след, признак; лояльность, верность; уравнение; яблочный пирог; остерегаться, бояться; общаться; ради утешения; угрожающий; его власть (влияние) возросла; изгонять.

3) Give the Russian equivalents for the following:

- we would have the pond to ourselves
- to go crestfallen and blank
- a vestige of my father
- to keep smb. in check
- to grow neglectful of smb., smth.
- to show allegiance for smb.
- to break free of smb., smth.

- to unclip
- to obscure the view

4) Explain in English or give synonyms of the phrasal verbs: to stick by smth., to come off, to gobble down, to seal off, to fit out.

5) Give the three forms of the following verbs: rise, stride, tread. Write out and translate sentences with the verbs.

6) Find in the story adjectives for the following nouns: hand; voyage; tears; delight; year; equilibrium; look; shrubs; garden wall; smell; place; world; person; man; feeling; facts; hair; animal; cat; clothes; lips.

7) Write out the names of trees and shrubs. What effect do the words create?

8) Name the means of word-building: denuded; lord (v.) it; alum; cantankerous; Grandpa; muffle, hum, rustle; cherry-laurel; apple-crumble; spoon (v.); neglectful; sealed-off; unclip; a toppler.

III. Comprehensive questions:

1) Is the story written on behalf of a boy or an adult recollecting the drama of his childhood? Prove your opinion.

2) What would Grandfather, Mother and the boy do by the pond? What stopped their walks to the pond? What does 'would' imply?

3) Why did the boy and his mother come to live in Grandfather's house? How did they live for a year?

4) How did their relationship change after Ralph appeared in their family? Since what episode did Grandpa shun the house and would have his meals in the shed?

5) What attracted the boy in Grandfather's shed?

6) What brought the boy to the decision of injuring Ralph? What did he plot?

7) What accident happened before the boy could realize his plan? How did Ralph and Mother behave? What suspicions did the boy have? Why did he keep them to himself?

IV. Discussion and inferring questions on interpretation and analysis of the story:

1) Speak about the plot structure of the story. Is the exposition compressed or extended? Is the setting established at the beginning or scattered throughout the story? What events does the plot comprise?

What kinds of external/internal conflict does the plot involve? What is the climax of the story? Is there a denouement?

2) Does the fact that the story is a first-person narrative mean that the reader gets a biased understanding of the events and the characters? What is your attitude to Ralph? Do you approve or disapprove of Mother's behaviour?

3) The story is told quietly and gravely, but its general tone is sad and tense. The author resorts to different imagery devices and symbols to show the boy's psychological state during the dramatic period in his childhood. In this respect comment on the following:

a) a symbol of the invisible cord connecting Grandfather, Mother and the boy;

b) "It seemed that his invitation, his loneliness were written in a form only I could read on the dark green door";

c) "Then I had a strange sensation. It seemed to me that Grandfather's face before me was only a cross section from some infinite stick of rock, from which, at the right point, Mother's face and mine might also be cut";

d) Father's vision (ghost) coming to the boy on the night before Grandfather's death;

e) the Boy's vision of Grandfather by the pond.

4) The author's vocabulary is rather restricted but very precise. He reveals the characters indirectly, implicitly by using exact, apt words to describe their behaviour, relationships and psychological state. Prove that:

a) Ralf hates Grandfather;

b) the boy hates Ralph;

c) the boy likes and pities Grandfather;

d) Mother is torn between her love for father and son and her wish to start a new life.

5) Do you think "the wreck of the boy's boat" is a symbol of the wreck of the child's happy and secure world? If yes, motivate your answer.

6) Do you think the boy realized any connection between the words of Father's ghost and Mother's look when the launch sank? Is there any covert inference of the author? What is the reader led to believe?

7) Do you think it was natural death, murder, suicide?

Mr Tennyson

William Trevor

William Trevor, KBE (born 24 May 1928) is an Irish author and playwright. Trevor has resided in England since the 1950s. Over the course of his long career he has written several novels and hundreds of short stories. He is best-known for his short stories. He has won the Whitbread Prize three times and has been nominated five times for the Booker Prize, most recently for his novel 'Love and Summer' (2009). Tim Adams, a staff writer for 'The Observer', described him as "widely believed to be the most astute observer of the human condition currently writing in fiction".

I. Read the note about the author.

II. Tell the story according to the plan using the following words and word combinations:

1) Mr Tennyson, his appearance, his reputation, rumours circulating about him (up to "...His subject was English..."):

carry on v., carry on n., lay-by, morose, ragamuffin innocence, melancholy nature.

2) A new arrival in 2A, her infatuation with the teacher of English, her fantasies ("... a mousing owe"):

trapped, eye v., a successor to smb., to smell faintly of, in his soft voice, lanky, disruption, leisurely, to divorce, to be divorced, incompatible.

3) Meeting with Mr Tennyson's family in the store ("... He nodded and smiled"):

freckles, a trolley full of, a stroke of luck, a sprawling dormitory village.

4) Jenny's family. Her growing love for Mr Tennyson ("...pride of place"):

complexion, a relief, to moon, adolescence, edgy, miscarriage, to feign sleepiness, to swoon.

5) Chinny Martin's courting Jenny ("... she heard her farther murmuring"):

to go for a spin (ride), a crash helmet, exposure to the weather, to be exposed to smth., a jutting chin, I can't bear not seeing you; powdered

milk factory, sounded sloppy and stupid; admirer, to proclaim love for smb., sprightly.

6) Mr Tennyson's detaining Jenny after classes, his talk to her about her essay. the teacher's casual unwary compliment about Jenny's good looks and the girl's emotions apropos of this ("... I don't want to sir."):

like a grampus, enthralled, to become taut, shreds of reluctance, to linger over smth., to linger on smth., clammy (hands), croak v., n.; to ascertain, a brazen smile, stop-gap, sophisticated, to let smb. down.

7) Jenny's proclaiming love to Mr Tennyson, her revelation and violent protestations and shame ("... You mustn't feel embarrassed in class, Jenny."):

His face screwed up a little, frown at smb., give a dog a bad name, to take advantage of, infatuation, messy and horrible, a love affair, romantic sheen, catch a glimpse of, in sudden desperation.

8) The ruin of Jenny's dreams and hopes ("... with his silly love"): little scenes in the classroom, ridiculous (love), to call out.

III. Give a written translation of the following passages:

1. "She turned into the mace shop ... she heard her father murmuring";
2. "She wept standing there ... he found it hard to stop them";
3. "He was there ... with his silly love".

IV. Grammar study:

1. Translate the following sentences and comment on the use of "should":

a) That she, so much in love with someone else, should be moved in the very least by the immature protestations of a youth from 1B was a mystery.

b) Why shouldn't he be seen in the buffet-car of a train alone?

2. Comment on the grammatical meaning of "would" in the last paragraph of the story and its stylistic effect.

V. Write out and translate sentences with phrasal verbs:

blow up over smth., hang about, chat smb. up, feel like (doing), work out cover up, let down.

VI. Write a brief account of the story:

- a) in the person of Mr Tennyson;
- b) in the person of Jenny.

VII. Discussion points:

- 1) Is romantic love of a schoolgirl for her teacher common? What usually brings it about?
- 2) Do you think Jenny fantasized her love or was she really infatuated with Mr Tennyson? Motivate your choice.
- 3) Why do you think her parents didn't notice Jenny's state of first love and frustration?
- 4) How do you think Jenny's first love would change her? Would it make her become mature?
- 5) Speak about Mr Tennyson's treatment of the situation. Could he have handled it in a different way? How does his behaviour characterize him?
- 6) What recollection have you got about your first love? (Feel free not to speak about it if you don't want to.)

VIII. Questions for analysis and evaluation of the story:

- 1) What does the plot consist of? What episodes constitute the story? Is there climax and denouement? Is the ending predictable? Does the plot develop physically or/and emotionally? What span of time does the story cover?
- 2) What kinds of conflicts are involved in the story: physical, intellectual, moral or emotional?
- 3) Who is the narrator and through whose eyes and mind does the reader receive the story of the first love of a teenager? Does the omniscient author assume a detached or practical attitude to the story?
- 4) Pick out words and word combinations describing Jenny's feelings of admiration for her teacher, worry, anger, frustration, shame. Write out stylistic devices revealing the girl's subtle emotional experience.
- 5) Speak about the author's talent of penetrating into the inner world of a teenager.

A Shooting Season

Rose Tremain

Rose Tremain was born Rosemary Jane Thomson on August 2, 1943 in London and attended Crofton Grange School from 1954 to 1961; the Sorbonne from 1961–1962; and graduated from the University of East Anglia in 1965 where she then taught creative writing from 1988 to 1995.

Her novel 'Music and Silence' won the best novel in the 1999 Whitbread Awards, building on the recognition she received in the award of the 1989 Sunday Express Book of the Year for her novel 'Restoration', and the 1992 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for 'Sacred Country'. Tremain also won the Prix Femina Étranger in 1994 for 'Sacred Country'. She is an historical novelist who approaches her subjects «from unexpected angles, concentrating her attention on unglamorous outsiders.» In June 2008 she won the Orange Prize for fiction, awarded to the best novel of the year written in English by a woman, for 'The Road Home', the story of an Eastern European immigrant in the UK. Tremain has also written for radio.

I. Vocabulary study:

- 1) hair – hairs
- 2) sprout n., v.
- 3) enchant, enchanter, enchanting, enchantment
- 4) a boy's giggle
- 5) rowdy
- 6) pert, pertness
- 7) cadences
- 8) mallard
- 9) moorhen
- 10) puerile
- 11) decade
- 12) to outgrow smth.
- 13) to stretch tight
- 14) guilt-inducing
- 15) mean-minded

- 16) exquisite moment
- 17) villain
- 18) peevish
- 19) smock
- 20) to make do with smth.
- 21) hessian
- 22) to flounder
- 23) to snivel, sniveller
- 24) lament n., v., lamentable, lamentation
- 25) permanence

II. Translate the following passages in written form:

- 1) "The rough feel of his face... to give."
- 2) "He'd looked up... to be there."
- 3) "She's got stronger... with her too."
- 4) "I've cried for you... of words?"
- 5) "Senseless question... the sun's coming up..."

III. Discussion points:

1) Give a character sketch of Anna, her family, her profession, her life after her divorcing Marcus.

2) Give a character sketch of Marcus, his profession, his family. How long had Marcus and Anna been together? Why did he leave Anna?

3) Why do you think Marcus wanted to see Anna and invited himself to her house?

4) What did they talk about? Why did none of them feel easy?

5) The dinner, the talk. Did Anna want any change in her life now? Did Marcus come to reconcile?

6) The morning. Anna's perturbation of mind. The parting.

IV. Questions for analysis and evaluation of the story:

1) Who is the narrator? How does the omniscient author help the reader to penetrate into the protagonist's mind, understand her state, her changes of mood?

2) Speak about the plot structure. What role does the setting play in the story?

3) How do the descriptions of nature help to evoke the mood of the whole atmosphere, of Anna's anxiety, uneasiness of mind? How do they appeal to human senses of sight, smell, hearing?

4) Comment on the effect of similes and metaphors in depicting the characters, their appearance, emotional state, attitude to each other:

- like poor soil
- hair wiry as gorse
- sending fine ripples
- When I was washed ashore...
- Her novel crept to a beginning...
- successful granite
- he had been the landscape...
- like a tiny hidden orchestra
- ...polishing of my heart's hardness
- the debris of you
- reiteration in the passage "Reasonable? ...a coward".

5) What kind of conflict(s) does the plot of the story involve? Speak about the internal conflict within Anna's inner world rendered through her feelings and thoughts. To what stylistic devices does the author resort in order to portray her emotional drama?

6) It is a touching psychological piece of writing. How is suspense created and kept?

7) What do you conceive to be the story's central purpose? Does the primary interest lie in the plot, character, theme, message?

8) The message is conveyed in Anna's morning reflections through a prolonged metaphor ('She was weeping... they had life'). What is your idea of the message, the purpose of the story? Does purification of a human soul come easily?

9) Do you think there is climax and denouement at the end of the story? What makes the reader think the story is not finished?

10) What emotions, thoughts, reflections does the story evoke in you?

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and So Forth...

John Updike

John Hoyer Updike (1932–2009) was an American novelist, poet, short story writer, art critic, and literary critic.

Updike's most famous work is his *Rabbit* series (the novels 'Rabbit, Run', 'Rabbit Redux', 'Rabbit Is Rich', 'Rabbit At Rest' and the novella 'Rabbit Remembered'). Both 'Rabbit Is Rich' and 'Rabbit At Rest' received the Pulitzer Prize. He published more than twenty novels and more than a dozen short story collections, as well as poetry, art criticism, literary criticism and children's books. Hundreds of his stories, reviews, and poems appeared in *The New Yorker*, starting in 1954. He also wrote regularly for *The New York Review of Books*.

Describing his subject as «the American small town, Protestant middle class», Updike was well recognized for his careful craftsmanship, his unique prose style, and his prolificacy. He wrote on average a book a year. Updike populated his fiction with characters who frequently experience personal turmoil and must respond to crises relating to religion, family obligations, and marital infidelity. His fiction is distinguished by its attention to the concerns, passions, and suffering of average Americans; its emphasis on Christian theology; and its preoccupation with sexuality and sensual detail. His work has attracted a significant amount of critical attention and praise, and he is widely considered to be one of the great American writers of his time. Updike's highly distinctive prose style features a rich, unusual, sometimes inscrutable vocabulary as conveyed through the eyes of a wry, intelligent authorial voice that extravagantly describes the physical world, while remaining squarely in the realist tradition. Updike famously described his own style as an attempt «to give the mundane its beautiful due.»

I. Read the note about the author and be ready to discuss it.

II. Recommended vocabulary list:

to teach high school; to yield to; under smb's eyes; to generate electricity; to linger in the doorway (in one's mind); adolescent premonitions; at smb's expense; to pierce; soliloquy, minor flaw; self-

congratulatory; kindly pose; to stun; to subside; ...and all; to deliver recitations; renditions; to repress laughter; to know gratifyingly well; to coddle; to rip smth from smb; overworked language; to be heavenly with poetry; locker; to lift an umbrella off the hook.

III. Write out words and word combinations pertaining to the topic “School discipline”, “Behaviour in the Classroom”.

Describe the beginning of the lesson using the topical vocabulary. How is the atmosphere of excitement in the classroom depicted? Speak about the effect of epithets, metaphors, similes, allusion in attaching vividness and powerfulness to the description.

IV. Tell the plot of the story in brief.

V. Speak about Mr. Prosser as a teacher of literature. Do you think he understands teenagers’ inner world, problems? What are his merits as a teacher? Characterize his language, manner of handling the class, way of treating the teenagers.

VI. Render the episode with Gloria Angstorn. Do you think the teacher acted adequately and efficiently? How else could he have handled the situation? What would you, as a teacher, have done in his place?

VII. Study the passage from Shakespeare’s “Macbeth” and its translation.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Завтра, завтра, завтра –
А дни ползут, и вот уж в книге жизни
Читаем мы последний слог и видим,
Что все вчера лишь озаряли путь

К могиле пыльной. Дотлевай, огарок!
Жизнь – это только тень, комедиант,
Паясничавший полчаса на сцене
И тут же позабытый; это повесть,
Которую пересказал дурак;
В ней много слов и страсти, нет лишь смысла.

Do you think this passage is conceivable for the teenagers to understand and interpret?

The Alligators

John Updike

I. Practice the pronunciation:

Braided, eyebrows, bow, baldy, profile, miniature, caricature, sarong, numb, rescue, odor, mustache, dumbness.

II. Explain in English the meaning of:

- 1) homeroom
- 2) the fifth grade (what age?)
- 3) school board
- 4) the upper levels
- 5) at recess
- 6) buzzer
- 7) tablet
- 8) quizzes

III. Speak about:

- 1) Why did the fifth graders dislike Joan from the start? How was she different from the other girls in the class?
- 2) How did the children maltreat her?
- 3) Charlie's reason for teasing Joan;
- 4) Account for the change in Joan's behaviour and clothes;
- 5) When did Charlie realize he loved Joan? What changes did he discover in himself?
- 6) Seeing Joan home for the first time;
- 7) Translate orally: "He planned... to the dam."

8) Charlie's terrible revelation.

IV. Vocabulary list:

- 1) to despise
- 2) ...or you'll be in serious trouble
- 3) groan
- 4) crash
- 5) grab
- 6) stutter
- 7) ...was worth twice the price of...
- 8) He kept calculating.

V. Study the verbs "to rise" and "to raise" and give phrases or sentences with them.

VI. Speak about the plot structure of the story.

VII. Speak briefly about the most typical features (characteristics) of J. Updike's style. Write a 250-word text about the author's literary career and style.

The Family Meadow

John Updike

I. Preview questions:

1. What is a family in your culture? Discuss the kinds of relationships that make up a family unit.
2. What effect do you think modern life is having on the extended family unit? Explain.
3. Do groups of people who share a common ancestor have any kind of annual get together or meeting in your country? If so, what do they do? Who organizes it? When and where do they meet?

II. Key Words and Expressions:

1) **reconvene** v., gather together again; assemble once more in a meeting.

2) **generation** n., a single stage or degree in the succession of natural descent; the period of time of that stage or degree (about 25–30 years).

3) **reunion** n., a gathering of persons after separation, as members of a school class or of a family.

4) **album** n., a book with blank pages for mounting pictures, clippings, etc. — things one wishes to keep and remember.

5) **clan** n., a form of social group composed of several families claiming descent from a common ancestor bearing the same family name.

6) **a tapestry of the family fortunes** n. phrase, fig., a depiction, as in a tapestry, of what has happened in the individual lives of a particular family.

Do these words suggest anything about the theme of the story?

III. Culture notes:

1. **Levis**: overalls or jeans, named after Levi Strauss who first made these sturdy, reinforced, canvas cloth work pants. Levi Strauss came to the United States from Germany. In 1853 he opened a store in San Francisco to provide clothing for the gold miners who had rushed to California following the gold strike of 1849.

2. **Camden, Trenton, the Oranges, Burlington, Morristown, Newark**: towns and cities in the State of New Jersey. One of the thirteen original colonies, New Jersey is today a populous state with seven and a half million inhabitants. It is a combination of industrialized urban areas in the north and agricultural farm lands in the central and southern parts. Its long Atlantic coast is famous for sandy beaches and popular summer resort areas. About 89 percent of the population lives in busy manufacturing centers like Camden, Trenton and Newark.

3. **The bypass**: a part of the highway that avoids or is auxiliary to the main way. In the United States, almost all large and medium-sized cities are bypassed by a route that avoids the center of town and thus reduces unnecessary vehicular congestion on the city streets. In many cases, in fact, if you wish to visit the city, it is necessary to drive off the main route and take an auxiliary access road into town.

4. **Horseshoes and quoits**: games in which players throw metal, rope, or hard rubber rings at a peg or stake driven in the ground. The object is to encircle the peg or come as close to it as possible. The horseshoe is a flat, U-shaped metal plate used to protect a horse's

hoof. On farms, men tossed these shoes as a form of recreation, and the game was born.

5. Station wagon: a large automobile with folding or removable rear seats and a back end that opens for easy loading. These vehicles are frequently used in the country and in the suburbs, and are especially popular with large families because of their capacity. Dodge is the trade name of a particular make of automobile.

6. Softball: a kind of baseball played on a smaller diamond and with a larger and softer ball than a regulation baseball. Baseball and softball are both played by two opposing teams of nine players each. The field, called a diamond because of its shape, has four bases forming its circuit. The runner uses a wooden bat to hit the ball, and then must complete the circuit of bases without being put “out” in order to score a “run.” The game may derive from the English games of cricket or rounders, but it has evolved since its reputed invention in 1839 by Abner Doubleday into a typically American game, and is sometimes called “the great national pastime.”

IV. Understanding the story:

A. General Comprehension

1. Where is the story set?
2. Who are the people in the story? Where have they come from?
3. What are they doing? List some of their activities.
4. What is the last thing they do before separating?
5. What is the significance of the houses that surround the family meadow on three sides?

B. Delving Deeper

1. What signs does Updike give us that the modern world is intruding on the old tradition that has held the family together?
2. Who is Karen? Why do you think she feels out of place?
3. What kind of people do you think these are? Would you like to know them? Why or why not?
4. What does Updike mean when he says about the family, “Protestant, teetotaling, and undaring, ironically virtuous and mildly proud, it has added to America’s statistics without altering their meaning”?

5. Why do the houses that overlook the meadow seem to be saying to Jesse, “sell, sell”?

V. Word study:

Find the words below in the text. Only one of the definitions given is correct. Determine the meaning from context.

1) **scrupulously**

a) slowly b) carefully c) sadly d) freely

2) **scythed**

a) mowed b) planted c) watered d) gathered

3) **oscillating**

a) shining b) jumping c) flickering d) swinging to and fro

4) **festooned**

a) draped b) built c) covered d) filled

5) **jovially**

a) rudely b) cruelly c) gaily d) belligerently

6) **sloshed**

a) filled b) shaken c) poured d) stirred

7) **domineers over**

a) rises above b) rules over c) shines on d) warms up

8) **yeomen**

a) slaves b) leaders c) soldiers d) workers

9) **teetotalling**

a) hard working b) deeply religious c) narrow minded d) drinking no alcohol

10) **suspenders**

a) supports for stockings b) wrist protectors c) supports for trousers d) head protectors

VI. Understanding structure:

The Simple Present Tense

Updike makes frequent use of the simple present tense in his works. It is a characteristic of his style that the reader is immediately aware of. It brings the reader literally into the story and holds him there as a witness to the things that are happening and to the people and events that are being described. All of this is going on, occurring and unfolding as we read, and yet it seems to be standing still,

as if frozen in time. There seem to be no terminal points to the action, but only a timelessness that holds the characters in activities that begin to take on the force of general truths or universal statements, as when the simple present is used to express such occurrences as

The earth rotates on its axis.

...or Trees shed their leaves in the fall.

What would be the effect of the story if it were in the past tense? We would normally expect the past when the narrative is relating something that is over. Take a paragraph from the story and change the verbs to past tense forms. What is the effect? Does the story seem more or less vivid?

VII. For further work:

1. Speaking of the family photograph, Updike says, "Their history is kept by these photographs of timeless people in changing costumes standing linked and flushed in a moment of midsummer heat." What does he mean?

2. Do you think there will be another picnic in the family meadow. Tell or write about what you think will happen in the lives of some of these people in the future.

3. If you have any old family photographs, how would you describe the people in them and what they were doing before the picture was taken? Write a brief paragraph.

The Sorrows of Gin

John Cheever

John William Cheever (May 27, 1912 – June 18, 1982) was an American novelist and short story writer, sometimes called "the Chekhov of the suburbs." His fiction is mostly set in the Upper East Side of Manhattan, the Westchester suburbs, old New England villages based on various South Shore towns around Quincy, Massachusetts, where he was born, and Italy, especially Rome. He is now recognized as one of the most important short fiction writers

of the twentieth century. While Cheever is perhaps best remembered for his short stories (including “The Enormous Radio,” “Goodbye, My Brother,” “The Five-Forty-Eight,” “The Country Husband,” and “The Swimmer”), he also wrote a number of novels, such as ‘The Wapshot Chronicle’ (National Book Award, 1958), ‘The Wapshot Scandal’ (William Dean Howells Medal, 1965), ‘Bullet Park’ (1969), and ‘Falconer’ (1977).

His main themes include the duality of human nature: sometimes dramatized as the disparity between a character’s decorous social persona and inner corruption, and sometimes as a conflict between two characters who embody the salient aspects of both – light and dark, flesh and spirit. Many of his works also express a nostalgia for a vanishing way of life (as evoked by the mythical St. Botolphs in the Wapshot novels), characterized by abiding cultural traditions and a profound sense of community, as opposed to the alienating nomadism of modern suburbia.

A compilation of his short stories, ‘The Stories of John Cheever’, won the 1979 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Critics Circle Award. On April 27, 1982, six weeks before his death, Cheever was awarded the National Medal for Literature by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His work has been included in the Library of America.

I. Read the note about the author and be prepared to discuss it.

II. What can you say about the way the girl was treated at home by her parents? Was she paid enough attention to? Use the following: to swoop down on the nut dish; Amy’s legs were worn out from riding a bicycle; superfluous advice; they were always at her.

III. Tell Rosemary’s story:

cook; the Bible; sweet smile; huddled up on the floor; peaches-and-cream complexion; sullen and withdrawn; to retreat into oneself; condescending and inconsiderate; to raise one’s spirits; to complain about nervousness; to have the last word; to empty the gin bottle into the sink.

IV. Speak about Rosemary's dismissal:

to be rewarded; clean, industrious and cheerful; a distasteful and habitual precaution; anything personal; the local(s); to cling to the conductor; to ease her down the steps; a sour smell; spotted with mud and ripped in the back; a bottle with a cork stopper; to take a drink.

V. Why didn't the girl confess that it was she who had emptied the gin bottle?

VI. Speak about Amy's observations about her parents' drinking parties. Use the following:

to stagger; to turn round on the lawn; to hang on to a lamppost; indecorous; to walk into the wall; to collapse onto the floor; to miss the chair by a foot; to thump down onto the floor; like actor in a play; stiff, funny walk.

What did the girl not understand?

VII. What made the girl decide to leave her home? Speak about the scene with Mrs. Henlein. Comment on the following: "She perceived vaguely... they were indignant".

VIII. What made father agreeable and cheerful in the morning? What confirmed the girl's resolve to go? Describe her preparations.

IX. Speak about father's revelation: to touch smb.; to shiver with longing; literal symbols.

X. Translate the passages:

- 1) "The lackluster old woman... to scream at him".
- 2) "The voices awoke Amy... have to go away".
- 3) "It was dark... the best place of all?"

XI. Speak about the plot structure of the story.

Sonny's Blues

James Baldwin

James Baldwin (1924-1987) established his reputation with his first novel, *'Go Tell It On The Mountain'* (1953), an autobiographical tale of growing up in Harlem. He became one of the leading African-American authors of his generation, known for novels and essays that tackled black-white and hetero-homosexual relationships. He was particularly a noted essayist during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Baldwin turned to writing after being encouraged by Richard Wright, and, like Wright, left the U.S. after World War II and moved to France. His novels, including *'Giovanni's Room'* (1956), *'Another Country'* (1962) and *'Just Above My Head'* (1979), all deal with the struggle for individuality against intolerance. He also wrote several plays, including *'Blues For Mister Charlie'* (1964), and *'Evidence of Things Not Seen'* (1986), a book about racially-motivated child murders in Atlanta.

I. Discuss the story according to the tasks.

Speak about the narrator's reaction to the news about his brother's arrest.

Vocabulary to be used: in the subway; a great block of ice; to choke or scream; to be picked up in a raid; peddling and using heroine; to put away suspicions; crazy; to turn evil; hard or disrespectful; to have horse.

II. Comment on the use of the word "darkness" and the antithesis "at once more together... and more alone".

III. Speak about the visit of Sonny's friend to the school.

Vocabulary to be used: to hang around the block; to spend hours on the street corners; repulsive; to smell funky; a smart boy; to feel guilty; juke-box; menace; to cure; to kick the habit.

IV. Speak about Sonny's letter and his homecoming.

Vocabulary to be used: to climb up out of; to escape from; to be strong in the head; to blow one's brains out; to keep in constant touch with; baby brother.

Comment on the use of similes.

V. Describe the trip uptown.

Vocabulary to be used: basements; rooftops; to dominate the landscape; to smolder; encircled by disaster; to escape the trap.

VI. Speak about the brothers' parents and the uncle's story.

Vocabulary to be used: the apple of smb's eye; big and rough and loud-talking; the old folks; restless; a job in the mill; to drift around to different places; a kind of frisky; to scare; to roll over smb.; to have good sense; to hold on to your brother.

VII. Describe the old folks' gatherings. Comment on the meaning of the word "darkness".

VIII. Discuss Sonny's future.

Vocabulary to be used: a set of drums; a drummer; to handle smb.; a concert pianist; to play classical music; to sober; jazz musician; to play jazz; to clown on band-stands; beneath him; to get him fixed up at Isabelle's; trapped and anguished; to cheer up; to practice on the piano.

IX. Speak about Sonny's life at Isabelle's.

Vocabulary to be used: to be serious about music; a record player; to play the record over and over again; to improvise; to be afflicted by; to sense dimly; life or death for him; torture; navy; it was like living with sound.

X. Speak about the brothers' drifting apart.

Vocabulary to be used: loose and dreamlike; to be an excuse for; weird and disordered; might just as well be dead; to be concerned; to slam the door.

XI. Speak about Sonny's blues.

Vocabulary to be used: jam-packed bar, dim lights; to confide to smb.; ceremonious; to bow from the waist; Sonny's kingdom; feeling with his drums; bass fiddle; horn; to announce smth.; the quartet; to strike the fiddle; to evoke; personal, private evocations; triumphant; to leave the shoreline and strike out for the deep water; on the keys; to let out one's reins; lament; freedom lurked around us; to let out one's breath.

XII. Translate in written form the extract “And while Charlie listened... brand-new pianos certainly were a gas”.

XIII. Find metaphors and comment on their use.

XIV. Speak about the plot structure of the story.

How the Devil Came Down Division Street

Nelson Algren (1909–1981)

Chicago's West Side and its urban slums are the setting for many of Nelson Algren's novels and short stories. Born in Detroit, Michigan, he grew up in poverty and insecurity in Chicago. During the Depression he worked at a variety of jobs throughout the South and Southwest that eventually led to the writing of his first published story, Somebody in Boots (1935).

Algren made his reputation as a writer of social protest and as a harsh realist. His best known work is the novel, The Man with the Golden Arm (1949), which portrays the sordid life and world of a gambler and drug addict. In the story that follows, he writes in a gentler, more humorous vein, but there is still a strong undercurrent of social comment.

I. Preview Questions:

1. What is the supernatural? Do you believe in miracles? Tell of some unusual occurrence that you might have heard of or experienced.

2. What are some of the reasons why a person might turn to drink? Are they ever justified in your opinion?

II. Key Words and Expressions:

1) **drunk** n., an intoxicated person; a drunkard; one who has taken too much alcoholic liquor.

2) **a sign of good omen** n. phrase, something foretelling a future good event; an indication that something good will happen.

3) **haunted** adj., visited often by ghosts.

4) **miracle** n., a remarkable event attributed to supernatural causes or an act of God.

5) **devil** n , the chief evil spirit; Satan.

Do these words suggest anything about the theme of the story?

III. Cultural notes:

1. Division Street: a street on the West Side of Chicago in one of the old ethnic areas. Chicago was rebuilt after the disastrous fire of 1871 in a grid pattern, with streets laid out running either east-west or north-south. This is a pattern common to most American towns and cities. The city of Chicago, the third largest in the United States, has evolved out of a blockhouse and stockade called Fort Dearborn that was constructed on the shore of Lake Michigan in 1804. Chicago is a center for the manufacture of iron and steel, an immense distributing point for the Middle West, and an important seaport, with ocean-going vessels coming in via the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway.

2. Symanski, Olijec, Koncel, Czechow-ski, Orlov, Zolewitz: Slavic names of Polish and Russian origin. In the late 19th and early 20th century, there was a large influx of immigration from eastern Europe. In the period 1890 through 1917, some three and a half million people arrived from eastern Europe on this wave of “new immigration.” At this time the United States was at the peak of its great industrial development and these immigrant groups, composed chiefly of unskilled laborers, contributed much to the rapid expansion of the country as well as to its swelling population. The bulk of these later European arrivals settled in the cities, usually forming distinct ethnic neighborhoods. Although they brought a rich diversity of culture and talent, they tended to cling to native languages and customs and assimilation was difficult in the first generation.

3. Tenement: a building divided into low-rental apartments or a rooming house whose facilities and maintenance barely meet minimum standards. Tenements are found in the poorer sections of a city and are characteristically run down, overcrowded, and dirty. The poorest of the recent immigrants to the United States frequently settled together in slum tenements to create lively ethnic communities. Tenement was originally a word that was merely synonymous

with apartment, and a tenement house was a multifamily dwelling. The first tenement house was built in New York City in 1833. It was four stories high, with living arrangements for one family on each floor.

4. Tavern: a type of saloon or bar, a place where alcoholic beverages are sold to be drunk on the premises. In American usage, a tavern in the strict sense of the word dispenses only food and drink, while an inn is a small house or hostel, usually in a rural setting, where lodging for transients may be provided as well. In large cities, neighborhood taverns were gathering places where the men could relax after a hard day's work. Their rough and tumble atmosphere was not considered proper for women.

5. Pierogi or pirogi: the plural of pirog, probably from the Russian word *pir* meaning feast or party. Pierogi are large pastries made of dough stuffed with various fillings —meat, fish, rice, eggs, vegetables. These pastries are popular snacks and may also serve as the main meal. When immigrants from eastern Europe settled in America, they brought with them their favorite recipes for food from their native countries, adding to the rich ethnic cuisine from all parts of the world that is available in most large cities.

IV. Understanding the story:

A. General Comprehension

1. Who is Roman Orlov?
2. Where did the Orlovs live when Roman was a child?
3. What did Papa Orlov do in the evenings?
4. What was Mama Orlov's dream?
5. What did the Orlovs do to quiet the ghost?

B. Delving Deeper

1. How did Mama Zolewitz explain the phenomenon of the knocking and Mama Orlov's dream?
2. How did the Orlovs' prayers for the young man change their lives?
3. What eventually turned Roman to the taverns?
4. Why did Mama Orlov decide finally that the ghost who knocked was the devil?
5. What is the worm that Roman seeks to drown in drink?

V. Word study:

Listed below each of the ten words are three alternatives. Choose the one that defines the word as it is used in the text. Then complete the sentences that follow. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word. You may have to modify the stems of verbs in some way to fit the context.

A. 1) gnaw(v.)

a) to bite b) to chew c) to crawl

2) lopsided (adj.)

a) crooked b) unpainted c) broken

3) slug colloq. (v.)

a) to push b) to pat c) to strike

4) eaves (n. pl.)

a) edges of the roof b) walls c) window frames

5) sneak (v.)

a) to stamp loudly b) to move stealthily c) to walk unevenly

6) avenge (v.)

a) to exact punishment for b) to atone for c) to erase

7) unsanctified (adj.)

a) not protected b) not clean c) not blessed

8) wed [slightly archaic] (adj.)

a) single b) divorced c) married

9) redeem (v.)

a) to sacrifice b) to save c) to pardon

10) sober (adj.)

a) solemn b) unhappy c) bitter

B.

1. She ... herself by performing good deeds and praying faithfully.

2. The rain dripped steadily from ... the all day.

3. The rat managed to ... through the cage and escape.

4. All night we heard him ... about overhead.

5. The house looked a little ... but was quite sturdy.

6. Angrily the son tried to ... wrong done to his father.

7. His ... look was his story.

8. The couple was so happy to ... at last.

9. It was Papa Orlov's habit when he came home to ... the dog with his accordion.

10. The little grave was not ... because a priest had refused to come.

VI. Understanding structure: **Nonstandard Speech Forms**

In rendering the colorful speech of this Polish immigrant family, Nelson Algren uses structures that are nonstandard. Standard word order is altered. Verb forms and prepositions are ungrammatical. Articles and pronouns are omitted.

Rewrite the following sentences from the text in standard English.

Example: Somebody was by door.— Somebody was at the door.

1. I say “Hallo.” Was nobody.
2. Who plays tricks by Papa?
3. How’s t’ings, ever-body?
4. Maybe was the Zolewitzes.
5. Mama Z. comes perhaps to borrow.
6. What you say, all peoples?
7. Landlord doesn’t like we should tell new tenants too soon.
8. You shouldn’t say it, I told.
9. It was a young man lived in this place.
10. It is nothing to worry.

VII. For further work:

1. Mama Z. tells the Orlovs a horrifying account of murder and suicide. Develop the tragedy of the young man and his lady and write it as a little story.

2. Imagine that you are Roman at age 13. Write a first-person recollection of the night you heard the knocking. For example, you could begin your paragraph, “I was sitting at the table across from Teresa one Sunday night when...”

I Came from Yonder Mountain

Evan S. Connell, Jr. (b. 1924)

Evan S. Connell was born in Kansas City, Missouri. He studied at Dartmouth College and received his B.A. from the University of Kansas in 1947.

I. Preview Questions:

1. What characteristics are sometimes associated with people who live in isolated mountain communities?
2. How does vacant, unresponsive behavior on the part of someone make you feel? How would it affect your opinion of the person?

II. Key Words and Expressions:

1) yonder *adv.*, at or in that (relatively distant or specified) place; over there, *adj.*, at some distance, but still visible.

2) upcountry *n.*, the interior of a country; inland regions.

3) wound [waund] **down the trail** *v. past + prep, phrase*, descended a narrow path or track, usually associated with mountains and forests.

4) give (someone) the creeps *v. phrase, colloq.*, inspire a feeling of fear, repugnance, etc., as if insects were crawling on one's skin.

5) those hills *n.pl.*, the mountains, used in the story somewhat contemptuously. Persons coming from the mountains or backwoods, especially of the South, are sometimes referred to as "hillbillies."

Do these words suggest anything about the theme of the story?

III. Cultural notes:

1. The Carolinas: an inclusive term for the two states of North and South Carolina. These two Southern states on the east coast were originally settled by English colonists and the land was named the Province of Carolina (the land of Charles) for the English king, Charles I, in 1629. Both states have three main land regions: the Atlantic Coastal Plain, the Piedmont, and the Blue Ridge. The Blue Ridge is the mountain region from which Laurel in the story comes. Tobacco is the chief crop in both states, with North Carolina leading the nation in tobacco production and manufacture.

2. A string with seven knots: a fetish or talisman to cure sickness or ward off danger. The knot has long been a thing of significance and power throughout the world in rituals, magic, and folk medicine. Knots have been used in both the causing and curing of diseases. Seven knots and twice seven knots are considered especially strong by those who hold to this superstition.

3. The stoppered mouth of a cannon...a red iron tablet of poetry, and...the broken sword of a stone horseman riding north: throughout the South, in dozens of little towns and villages the main square features such monuments and memorials to the Civil War—the tragic fratricidal war between the North and the South that occurred from 1861 to 1865. When the Southern states broke with the North over the issue of slavery, seceded from the Union, and declared themselves a separate and independent confederation, Abraham Lincoln and his Secretary of State, William Seward, determined to preserve the Union at the cost of war. Open hostilities broke out when Southern batteries fired on Union-held Fort Sumter off the coast of South Carolina on April 12, 1861. Four bitter years later and at the cost of thousands of lives lost on both sides, the South capitulated. The heroes of the Confederacy were honored in their home states with statues, inscriptions, and other monuments set up in parks and squares where they remain in sad testimony today.

4. Blister plaster: a home remedy consisting of a paste of mustard applied to the chest and covered with cloth. It has the effect of creating heat and burning the skin which was thought to draw off the “poisons” of a disease, especially one of the chest, or to relieve pain and coughing. Modern science has confirmed that many popular remedies based on herbs and plants were actually quite effective.

IV. Understanding the story:

A. General Comprehension

1. Where did Laurel Wyatt come from?
2. How did she travel to Keating?
3. What was wrapped in the quilt she was carrying?
4. What was Laurel’s final destination? Who was she going to see there?
5. Why did the doctor send Laurel away?

B. Delving Deeper

1. Why were the people at the station made uneasy by Laurel's presence?
2. What was the train conductor's attitude toward her?
3. When did the baby die? Why did it die?
4. What do you think is the attitude of the doctor and nurse toward people from "those hills" in general?
5. What does the ending suggest happens to Laurel?

V. Word study:

Categorization

This story is full of words that refer to the plants, birds, animals, and natural features of the South (see the opening paragraphs describing Laurel's descent from the mountain). It is not necessary to know the exact definition of each term, but in order to appreciate the descriptive passages of the story, it would be helpful to identify each general category. On a piece of paper, set up six columns with these headings: a) land features, b) trees, c) plants, d) animals, e) birds, f) insects. From the context of the story, try to guess the category under which each of the following terms falls and list it in the proper column. The words are given below in the order in which they are found in the story.

- 1) clay
- 2) wild carrot
- 3) yellow lily
- 4) a hollow
- 5) sweet bay
- 6) honey cup
- 7) red spruce
- 8) paintbrush
- 9) oak
- 10) cinnamon squirrel
- 11) flicker
- 12) bloodhead
- 13) pine
- 14) raccoon
- 15) moss tail

- 16) beetle
- 17) water spider
- 18) hog bear
- 19) a bald
- 20) mica
- 21) thorn
- 22) a clearing
- 23) toadstool
- 24) flare hawk
- 25) a charred tract
- 26) false loblolly

VI. Understanding structure:

Archaic Usage and Rural Speech

A. In the Southern mountains lives a sturdy people of Anglo-Saxon origin, descended directly from the early English and Scottish colonists and settlers. Their speech often reflects usage that has become obsolete. Some linguists claim that the people speak a form of English that is still closely related to that of their Elizabethan ancestors — that they retain traces of the language of Shakespeare.

Laurel's expressions show this inheritance. Study the following lines from the story. How would these ideas be expressed in modern American English?

- 1. 'Tis a piece.
- 2. Powerful day.
- 3. I am locally.
- 4. I have come to train travel.
- 5. I came from yonder mountain.
- 6. 'Tis the money for a train travel to Tipton town.
- 7. I have quite a considerable of this money.
- 8. 'Twas Carleton.
- 9. I presume I forgot it.

B. The train conductor's speech also reflects Southern colloquial usage that is not standard.

Example: «Them folks inform me you been sitting there nearabouts an hour waiting on this train.» = Those people tell me that you have been sitting there almost an hour waiting for this train.

them folks — demonstrative
you been sitting — present perfect
tense without auxiliary *have* waiting on — preposition
What other structural characteristics of the conductor's speech
can you identify that are not standard usage?

VII. For further work:

1. What was the purpose of Laurel's journey?
2. Do you think she understood what was going on around her?
What was her state of mind?
3. Describe the community you think Laurel came from in "those hills."
4. How does the image of rain contribute to the mood of the story?
5. What is the effect of the long descriptive beginning recounting Laurel's descent from the mountain?

The Man Who Saw the Flood

Richard Wright (1908–1960)

Richard Wright was born on a plantation near Natchez, Mississippi. He had an unhappy and unstable childhood caused by a broken home, and managed to complete only the ninth grade before being forced to seek work. He migrated to Chicago at the age of 19, working at various jobs there before moving to New York in 1937. The last fourteen years of his life were spent as an expatriate American in Paris.

Richard Wright's biggest success was the novel, *Native Son* (1940), a naturalistic tragedy of a Negro boy raised in the Chicago slums. It became a bestseller and was produced in a successful stage version. However, *Black Boy* (1945), a searing autobiography of Wright's childhood and youth, is considered his real masterpiece.

I. Preview questions:

1. List all of the natural disasters that you can think of. Which are the most devastating? Why?

2. Share in class any experiences you may have had with some of the terrible forces of nature.

3. Why do people who have lived through such disasters most often try to go back and put their lives together again in the same place? What does this say about the human spirit?

II. Key Words and Expressions:

1) **flood** *n.*, an excessive overflowing of water on land that is normally dry; inundation.

2) **bewildered** *adj.*, very confused; puzzled.

3) **a first-day strangeness** *n. phrase, fig.*, a sense of something unusual or inexplicable, as might have been felt on the first day of creation.

4) **down and out** *adj., idiom.*, destitute; lacking resources or in the state of having no money.

5) **start from scratch** *v. phrase, idiom.*, begin over from the beginning; commence something from a base of nothing.

Do these words suggest anything about the theme of the story?

III. Cultural notes:

1. **Cabin:** a small, roughly built house. In the rural South tenant farmers and sharecroppers may live in these structures and work on the great plantations or farms for very little wages. They exchange their labor for a piece of land or a share of the crop they work. When times are hard or when disaster strikes, as in this story, the tenant may find himself very deeply in debt, unable to attain his dream of owning his own land.

2. **Reckon:** a “Southernism” meaning to guess or to suppose. Southern speech spread from Virginia and the Carolinas to Georgia and the cotton lands of the Gulf States during the nineteenth century, and is now one of the major regional variations in American English that linguists have correlated with geographical location and settlement history. Southern speech is generally considered “softer” and slower than Northern speech, and it contains a number of distinctive words as well as certain forms of usage that are found only in the South. The assemblage of differences that characterize this variation are often referred to collectively as a Southern “drawl.”

3. Bull Durham tobacco: a brand of rough cut pipe tobacco. The tobacco plant is native to the New World. The name comes from the Carib Indian word for the pipe in which it was smoked. The majority of North American Indian tribes knew and used tobacco for smoking, chewing, snuffing, or as an offering. Tobacco was unknown to Europeans until the first cultivation and exportation was undertaken at Jamestown Colony, Virginia, in 1612 by the English settler, John Rolfe, whose wife was the Indian princess, Pocahontas.

4. Buggy, see Cultural Notes (no. 5) to *The Bedquilt* by Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

5. Sheriff: chief law officer of a county. The county sheriff is charged with keeping the peace and with carrying out court orders. The figure of the sheriff as a lone, brave figure upholding law and order in a ruthless frontier town has been romanticized in many Hollywood films. A less well-known stereotype is the small town Southern sheriff, often portrayed as ignorant, crude, and racially biased.

6. ‘Lasses: shortened form of *molasses*, a thick dark syrup that results as a by-product of sugar refining. Molasses may be used as a sweetener by people who are too poor to buy refined sugar, but it is also prized in itself for its strong flavor. It is used in making cakes and candy. A favorite social gathering of young people in earlier times in America was a *candy pulling*, when molasses taffy candy was made. Molasses is known as *treacle* in England. The word probably came into American English via French *melasse* or Spanish *melassa*, from the Latin word for honey.

IV. Understanding the story:

A. General Comprehension

1. What has happened to the people in the story before it begins?
2. Describe the inside of the cabin as Tom, May, and Sally find it.
3. What does Tom find that cheers him up a little?
4. Who is Mister Burgess?
5. Where does Tom go at the end of the story?

B. Delving Deeper

1. What losses have Tom and May suffered on their little farm?
2. Why does Tom spread white lime around before they enter the cabin?

3. What can you guess about Tom's relationship with Mr. Burgess before the flood?

4. Why is Tom reluctant to go with Mr. Burgess at the end of the story?

5. Why did May want him to go and what do you think she feels as she watches him drive off in the buggy?

V. Word study:

The characters in the story speak a dialect that is called Black English, although many Southern whites share this same variety of language. There are certain regularities of word formation and consistencies of use that make the words quite intelligible once their adaptation in spelling has been recognized to represent the way they sound when spoken.

Here are some general rules of Southern Black English pronunciation:

- 1) final consonants are omitted
- 2) final -er is pronounced [a:]
- 3) consonant clusters are reduced to one sound
- 4) diphthong [ai] is pronounced as mono-thong [a]
- 5) unstressed syllables are pronounced with reduced vowel sounds [i] or [e]

In trying to render the way the spoken language sounds, Richard Wright alters the conventional spelling of many words. Based on the rules of pronunciation, what are the Standard English forms of the following words from the story? Read them in context before you write them down in conventional spelling. The words are listed in the order in which they occur in the story.

- 1) tha
- 2) n
- 3) Lawd
- 4) les
- 5) gimme
- 6) hep
- 7) yuh
- 8) don
- 9) pos

- 10) en
- 11) kin
- 12) bettah
- 13) ol
- 14) watah
- 15) fo
- 16) ah
- 17) yo
- 18) foun
- 19) mah, ma
- 20) awright
- 21) jus
- 22) mawnin
- 23) hoss
- 24) mo
- 25) git
- 26) chile
- 27) mistah
- 28) dollahs
- 29) wanna
- 30) befo

Find some other words in the story that are examples of dialect. What are their Standard English equivalents?

VI. Understanding structure:

Black English

In representing his characters' speech, Richard Wright also employs forms that represent the grammatical peculiarities of Black English as well as its distinctive pronunciation.

A. Read the following pairs of sentences. What structure do the two sentences of each pair have in common? Formulate a generalization that would describe this usage.

- 1) a) ...them chickens is all done drowned, b) Ah done foun mah plow.
- 2) a) We's got some watah. b) We's gotta sleep on them floors tonight.
- 3) a) I wasn't looking for no trouble. b) Ah don wanna make no trouble.

B. What conclusion can you draw about the use of the demonstrative from sentence 1 a, “them chickens” and sentence 2b, “them floors”?

C. Rapid colloquial speech in both Black and Standard English is characterized by a running together of weak sounds and a collapsing of unstressed structural forms. The author has tried to render these structures by writing them the way they sound. There are no conventional spellings for spoken dialect, and dialect forms are used in writing only to reproduce speech as authentically as possible.

Say these two sentences aloud quickly, being sure to put the stress only on the syllables that are marked:

Ahma get a BUCKet. WHUTcha gonna DO?

Both sentences are very simple and uncomplicated English. Try not to think about how these structures are rendered in writing but about the words and the forms the sounds represent. The native speaker “understands” or feels the presence of the *full* structure.

1. How many words are understood in the first sentence?

a) 4 b) 5 c) 6 d) 7.

2. How many words are there actually understood in the second sentence?

a) 3 b) 4 c) 5 d) 6.

3. What is understood to be the third word in the first sentence?

a) am b) going c) to d) get

4. What is understood to be the second word in the second sentence?

a) are b) you c) going d) to

5. Write out each sentence in its full Standard English form.

VII. For further work:

1. Read this poem, part of a larger poem entitled *Lenox Avenue Mural*, by Langston Hughes (1902-1967), a Black American poet. How does it relate to the story, *The Man Who Saw the Flood*?

What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore— And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over— like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

2. What will happen to Tom, May, and Sally now? Write a paragraph telling what you think will occur in their lives.

Sophistication

Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941)

Sherwood Anderson was born in Camden, Ohio, one of seven children. He never completed college and was obliged to work at a number of menial jobs. He eventually turned to writing copy for advertising. The urge to write was, in fact, so strong with him that one day he simply walked away from both job and family to devote his life to writing.

Anderson is more than just a regionalist. He was among the first American authors to become interested in psychological motivation and the unconscious, with the themes of loneliness and alienation constantly recurring. His first collection of short stories, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), is considered his best and most important work.

I. Preview Questions:

1. Have you ever felt lonely in a crowd of people? Think about your mood and try to describe it.
2. In the story the author writes, «There is a time in the life of every boy when he for the first time takes the backward view of life.» What do you think is meant by «the backward view of life»?
3. Are you sure of your future? What is the effect of uncertainty upon people?

II. Key Words and Expressions:

1) sophistication *n.*, the state of being worldly-wise, refined, not naïve.

2) maturity *n.*, the state or quality of being fully grown, fully developed.

3) the long march of humanity *n. phrase, fig.*, the progression in time of the human race.

4) to muse *v.*, to think deeply; ponder or meditate.

5) this other *n.*, this person who is different from me (the concept implies a relationship of some emotional importance).

Do these words tell you anything about the probable theme of the story?

III. Cultural notes:

1. The Winesburg County Fair: Winesburg is an imaginary town created by Sherwood Anderson, but the fair he describes is still typical of county fairs across America today.

2. Trunion Pike: Pike is a shortened form of “turnpike,” originally a barrier or place on the road where money was paid for use of the road. Now the term is applied to the toll road itself, and may also be loosely used to refer to any major highway. In the eastern United States, the term is used as part of the proper name of some major cross-state toll highways: the New Jersey Turnpike, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the Massachusetts Turnpike. In earlier times before the large interstate highway system was built, pikes linked towns with one another. Thus we may assume that the pike in the story ran between Winesburg and a neighboring town called Trunion.

3. Main Street: The principal street in many American towns and cities is quite literally called “Main Street.” In the grid pattern that is common to these towns it is the main thoroughfare where shops and businesses and professional offices are located. The reputed lack of culture and provincial nature of many small towns is sometimes also implicit in the term when it is used figuratively. This figurative sense is derived from Sinclair Lewis’s novel, *Main Street* (1920), about the unhappiness of a young married woman who feels trapped in a small Midwestern town. There are thousands of Main Streets throughout the United States.

4. Cleveland: With a population close to 600,000, Cleveland is the largest city in the state of Ohio and the eighteenth largest in the United States. Located on the shore of Lake Erie (one of the Great Lakes), Cleveland is called the Gateway City to the Middle West. The site of the present city was established in 1796 and the first permanent settlement was made by pioneers in 1799. The city today is an important lake port and industrial center.

5. Grand-stand (also written as one word, **grandstand**): the seating area for spectators at sports events, races, etc. The stands are usually open benches or long planks set lengthwise in rising tiers or rows. Sometimes the stands are covered with a roof and enclosed, but if they are roofless and outdoors, they are also popularly known

as “bleachers” in reference to the effects of exposure to the sun. In colloquial slang, the word “grandstand” has entered American English as a verb. To grandstand or to play to the grandstand means to show off or display oneself so as to gain the attention and approval of an audience. By extension, a “grandstander” is a person who likes to show off in this manner.

IV. Understanding the story:

A. General Comprehension

1. What sort of mood was George Willard in?
2. Who had George been thinking about all day?
3. What were both George and Helen remembering?
4. Where did George and Helen go to be together?
5. Did they express their feelings for each other?

B. Delving Deeper

1. Why was George feeling lonely?
2. What does Anderson mean by “the sadness of sophistication”?
3. How did Helen’s mood shift during the day? Why?
4. What decision do you think George and Helen came to about their lives?
5. What is “the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible” (last line of the story)?

V. Word study:

stout (adj.) boast (verb) pedantic (adj.) fiddler (noun) medley (noun) livery barn (noun) veranda (noun) pompous (adj.) squirm (verb) shudder (verb)

Find these words in the story and then match the words with the definitions given below.

1. A person who is ... displays his learning in a very forward and showy way.
2. A...is an open porch built around the outside of a house.
3. An assortment or mixture of various elements is called a...
4. To tremble or shake with fear, cold, disgust, excitement, etc. is to...
5. Someone who behaves in a very self-important and exaggerated manner is...
6. Horses and carriages for hire are kept in a...

7. To...means to brag or to talk about oneself and one's abilities too much.

8. A...person is rather heavy or fat, but talk that is...is strong and bold.

9. When we..., we twist and turn our bodies somewhat like snakes.

10. A...is a colloquial word for someone who plays the violin.

VI. Understanding structure:

If Clauses

Study this passage from the text. What seems strange about the italicized segment?

“From being quite sure of himself and his future he becomes not at all sure. *If he be an imaginative boy a door is torn open* and for the first time he looks out upon the world, seeing, as though they marched in procession before him, the countless figures of men who before his time have come out of nothingness into the world, lived their lives and again disappeared into nothingness.”

If-clauses always imply some degree of uncertainty. When the condition is “real,” the fulfillment of the result dependent upon the if-clause is, however, at least expected. The usual sequence of tenses is present indicative in the if-clause and future in the result clause:

If it rains, we'll stay home. I'll see him if he comes.

When the result expressed by the main clause is accepted as being always (or usually) true every time the condition is present, then the present tense is used in *both* clauses:

If he gambles, he (always) loses.

She (usually) gets a headache if she doesn't eat breakfast.

The use of the present subjunctive to express a hypothetical real condition with an expected result is rare and slightly archaic. It has been generally replaced by the present indicative, but it still occurs infrequently with verbs like BE, HAVE and DO. The present subjunctive is simply the base form without TO. Here are some examples from Shakespeare:

And let me wring your heart; for so I shall, If it be made of penetrable stuff.

Hamlet, Act III, Scene 4

If there be, or ever were, one such, It's past the size of dreaming.

Antony and Cleopatra, Act V, Scene 2

If music be the food of life, play on; Give me excess of it, that,
surfeiting. The appetite may
sicken, and so die.

Twelfth Night, Act I, Scene 1

What is the effect of BE in the sentence in the text? Does it make the condition more or less uncertain? Replace BE with IS. How does the sentence sound to you now? What effect would replacing BE with IS have on the quotations from Shakespeare's plays?

VII. For further work:

1. What did Helen's mother mean when she said, "There's no one here fit to associate with a girl of Helen's breeding"? Do you think she approved of George? Write the conversation between the college instructor and Helen's mother that continued this opening remark.

2. There is very little direct speech in this story, but what there is reveals something about the characters. Describe George Willard and the college instructor as you imagine them. Compare their use of English. How do you feel about each young man? Why?

George: He turned and hurried away along the street. "Old windbag," he sputtered. "Why does he want to be bragging? Why don't he shut up?"... 'Til go to Helen White's house, that's what I'll do. I'll walk right in. I'll say that I want to see her. I'll walk right in and sit down, that's what I'll do."

College Instructor: He wanted to appear cosmopolitan. "I like the chance you have given me to study the background out of which most of our girls come," he declared. "It was good of you, Mrs. White, to have me down for the day." He turned to Helen and laughed. "Your life is still bound up with the life of this town?" he asked. "There are people here in whom you are interested?"

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