



INTERACT
WITH
LITERATURE

George Orwell – James Joyce – Virginia Woolf

Relationships

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A task-based
stylistic analysis and
critical study of short
passages and stories

TEACHER'S BOOK



ANIMAL FARM

Synopsis

Students can be asked to go through the synopsis and the while-reading activity: **a** before reading and working through the passages, as a warm-up activity; or **b** after reading the passages and doing the activities, as a round-up or follow-up activity.

The notes students are asked to make from the synopsis will help them understand the notion of plot. A class discussion may follow if the students differ in their choice of what the main stages of the plot are.

I: What Old Major said

1 **b** suggested answers:

- The animals live like slaves and in terrible conditions. (lines 1-9)
- The cause of the animals' misery is Man, who exploits them for his benefit only. (lines 10-51)
- The solution is to rebel against Man's tyrannical rule, in order to establish an ideal community based on freedom, equality and fraternity. (lines 52-62)
- The animals must be careful to keep to the ideas and rules they decide upon, whatever problems they may come across in the future. (lines 63-9)

2 He asks all the animals to vote on a controversial question. (lines 70-82) He is teaching them that all issues and disagreements must be resolved through general consultation and that the opinion of the majority wins. In addition, the leader is simply a member of the community; his main task is that of supervizing legal proceedings.

II: Rules

3 The pigs appear to be taking all the decisions. Students should be encouraged to notice that the pigs are the subject of action verbs like "taught themselves", "sent for", "led the way", "explained" etc., which underlines their role as leaders, while the other animals never do more than follow the pigs' orders. The only time the animals are the subject of an action verb (line 32) it is to show their complete agreement with what the pigs have decided for them.

4 The Seven Commandments are a successful simplification of Old Major's principles. The pigs have cleverly made them easy enough for all the animals to understand. The first and the second discussion points are both acceptable. The third is incorrect because there is no evidence of there being violent intentions against anyone.

5 Open ended.

VI: Other Changes

12 b

| Aspects to consider | At the beginning | Now |
|--|---|--|
| relationship with the other animals | equal | leaders |
| relationship with/similarities to the humans | subjected to the same conditions as the other animals | business relationship; increasing similarities to humans |

The pigs now give orders to the other animals and do many things in secret. The ideals of a democratic community no longer exist on the farm. The pigs are becoming increasingly similar to men; Napoleon even carries the whip which was one of the symbols of Jones' s hated reign – see Synopsis (line 21). The similarities are both physical (lines 17-29) and behavioural (lines 59-69).

- 13 The single Commandment now written on the barn wall underlines the hierarchical structure inherent in Animal Farm. Before this latest change, hierarchy existed only in practice, this single commandment officially recognizes and sanctions the inequality on the farm. The pigs have re-established the order which existed before the Rebellion and have successfully convinced most of the animals that the present situation is completely different! In cancelling the Seven Commandments the pigs have removed all traces of the past, in this way the other animals have no concrete proof that life was in fact different before.
- 14 The pigs now control production and administer all resources. The leaders of the revolution have become conservatives whose aim is to maintain their position of power. Students should be encouraged to notice how sinister the image on line 29 is, and how its isolation in the compact lay-out of the page stresses its emotional impact.
- 15 Open ended.

The Novel as a Whole

- 1 Open ended.
- 2 Napoleon was the French emperor who started a revolution to change a corrupted political system, but became a tyrant himself. Orwell seems to imply that all revolutions, whatever the social, historical and political context, begin by promising an improved standard of living, freedom and equality for everyone but end in repression or dictatorship.

3 a

| Character | Stands for ... |
|------------------|--|
| Napoleon | Stalin (1879-1953), the Bolshevik leader who betrayed the ideals of Russian Revolution (1917) becoming virtual dictator of the USSR until his death. |
| Squealer | His name suggests his function in the novel (to squeal = 1 to make a long high-pitched sound; 2 (sl.) to give secret information esp. to the police about the criminal activities of someone you know). He embodies propaganda, a sort of talking Pravda, the official Communist Party newspaper. He may be modelled on Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, who succeeded in presenting a very favourable image of the Nazi Regime. |
| Snowball | Trotsky, Stalin's great political rival. Unlike Stalin, Trotsky strongly believed in encouraging the world-wide spread of Communism. He also believed in the modernizing of Russian industry. |
| Old Major | The philosopher Marx, whose political ideas inspired the Russian Revolution and its political leader, Lenin. Old Major is essentially a thinker, not a politician. The song Old Major teaches the animals – "Beasts of England" – which becomes the anthem of the Rebellion, corresponds to the "Socialist International". |
| Boxer and Clover | The Proletariat. Both of them strongly believe in the Rebellion and in the pigs, to whom they are loyal to the last. They are not educated and are willing to accept everything, even the worst sacrifices, in the name of the common welfare of all the animals. The pigs betrayal of them is particularly cruel. |
| Benjamin | Cynicism, pessimism, scepticism (Orwell himself? The intellectuals in general?). |
| Mr Jones | Tsar Nicholas II, who himself is the embodiment of corrupt capitalism and tyranny. |
| Moses | Religion / the Orthodox Church. |

a

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| The Dogs | The secret police. They are the forces of violence and fear which the dictatorship uses to maintain its position of power. |
| Mr Frederick of Pinchfield | Hitler and Germany. |
| Mr Pilkington of Foxwood | Winston Churchill and England. |
| The Sheep | The masses, made up of uneducated and unthinking individuals who provide unquestioning support for the leaders of the rebellion / revolution. They are the means by which Napoleon's power is consolidated. |
| Molly, the white mare | Deviationists, people who at first supported the ideals of the Revolution then betrayed them. |

b

| Event | Stands for ... |
|--|---|
| The Rebellion | The revolt of the Russian people against the Tsar in October 1917. Jones is driven out of the farm as the Tsar and his family were driven out of the Royal palace. |
| The drawing up of Animalism and the Seven Commandments | The reduction of Marx's complex philosophy (= Old Major's ideas) into simple rules. The Bolsheviks in Russia tried to educate the Russian peasants, teaching them the principles of Communism to increase their political awareness. |
| The disagreement between Napoleon and Snowball over the building of the windmill | Stalin and Trotsky's different ideas on the issue of industrialization. Trotsky believed that Russian industrial production methods should be modernized quickly to improve the overall economy of the country, whereas Stalin supported the 'collectivization' of farms, leading to the complete state control of agriculture. |
| The Battle of the Cowshed | The Counter-Revolution/The Russian Civil War (1917-21) |
| The trials | The Great Terror/The Purges and 'Show Trials' (1936-38) |
| Napoleon's secret pact with Frederick over the sale of timber | Stalin's secret negotiations with Hitler's Germany, while officially negotiating with Churchill's England, which led to the Non-Aggression Pact between Stalin and Hitler (1938). |

b

| | |
|--|---|
| Frederick's surprise attack | Hitler's surprise invasion of Russia. The Germans were defeated at the Battle of Stalingrad (1942-3), as Frederick is defeated by the combined efforts of all the animals. The price of victory is very high (the destruction of the windmill). |
| The progressive alteration of the Seven Commandments | The systematic betrayal of the principles of Socialism and the Revolution, at the expense of the Russian people. |

4 The main characteristic of the beast fable is that it is easy to understand, ensuring that the audience would immediately see the underlying allegory. *Animal Farm* can be read on various levels; it can be read as a tale about a group of badly treated and exploited animals who unsuccessfully try to improve their situation or as an allegory of the Russian Revolution and its degeneration into dictatorship. This novel, however lacks the happy ending typical of the genre. The outcome is disturbing rather than comforting, it poses questions rather than answering them. Orwell's subtitle may be seen as an ironic comment on the situation in Russia. Orwell's decision to disguise his novel, however loosely, may have been influenced by the difficulties involved in criticizing the Soviet regime in a period when internal propaganda and left-wing intellectuals in Europe presented it in a positive way.

5 Suggested answers:

humour: when the tone of the narrative introduces an element of comedy: for example in **Passage II: Rules** (lines 16-17), or **Passage IV: Comrade Napoleon** – the pompous and ridiculous titles invented for Napoleon, the comments of the animals (lines 19-25) and the poem written by Minimus.

irony: situations where the reader has greater understanding of events than the characters involved in the story. For example **Passage III: Changes** (lines 23-5).

dramatic irony: whenever something seems to be in a certain way but the readers know it is not so because they have had a privileged view of the situation. For example, **Passage V: Time Passes** (lines 19-27) and **Passage VI: Other Changes** (lines 17-32), where the animals are terrified by the sight of the pigs walking on their hind legs, a scene which for the reader is ridiculous.

6 Open ended.

7 After the Spanish Civil War, Orwell became disillusioned with what may be described as utopian ideals. His efforts as a writer were directed towards showing how Utopia can easily be turned into Dystopia. He suggests that no revolution can ever be successful, as it merely substitutes old tyrants for new ones.

8 Orwell wanted to warn his readers against the risk of being deluded by false promises. *Animal Farm* was 'intended as a satire on dictatorship in general', as Orwell himself wrote. He defends the positive values of liberty and justice, which he considered typical of **democratic socialism** against the risks of **totalitarianism** in all its disguises.

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

I: Airstrip One

1 b the setting

| | Inside | Outside |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| most noticeable features | poor and unpleasant-smelling; the setting is dominated by a poster of a huge face which appears to be the only coloured object in sight (line 7); the same poster is on every landing | windy, dusty and cold; houses in bad repair, bombed buildings not rebuilt (lines 66-75); the exceptions are four enormous "glittering" buildings which house the "Ministries" (lines 76-96); the poster of Big Brother is everywhere |
| atmosphere | the overall impression is that of lack of comfort, oppression and a vague sense of threat (line 6, lines 10-19); a place where there is no personal freedom or privacy ("telescreen" lines 45-58) | bleak, sad and cold; the impression is of impending danger and terror, as if a superior power were in control (lines 31-44; lines 59-75); the Ministry of Love is described as being particularly frightening; the building has no windows (lines 97-103) |

c the character

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| age | thirty nine years old (line 14) |
| physical appearance | has a varicose ulcer on his right leg (lines 14-15), is rather small, thin and frail, fair hair, red face, rough skin (lines 26-30) |
| actions | climbs the stairs to the seventh floor where his flat is, "resting several times on the way" (line 15); once inside his flat he turns down the volume of the telescreen (lines 23-4), then he looks out of the window keeping his back to the telescreen (lines 45 & 59) |
| thoughts | focuses his attention briefly on the four huge Ministry buildings which dominate the city, then he tries unsuccessfully to remember if London had looked different when he was a child; he wonders if the buildings had always been in such bad condition (lines 60-75) |

2 The novel is set in April, but in this world the clocks are striking thirteen, in Britain, it would be very unusual to find a clock striking thirteen. This detail tells the reader that we are in the world of 'science fiction'.

3 a

| | Victory Mansions/ Winston's flat | The street/ London | The poster | The Ministries |
|-------|--|--|---|---|
| shape | oblong metal plaque (line 22) | rotting nineteenth-century houses (line 66), crazy garden walls (lines 68-9) | | enormous pyramidal structure (lines 77-8) |
| size | at least seven floors high (lines 13-14) | London is the chief city of Airstrip One, ie. Britain (line 63) | too large for indoor display, more than a metre wide (line 7), enormous (twice, lines 8 & 16) | towered vast (line 61), enormous (line 77), three hundred metres high (line 79), three thousand rooms above ground and probably the same below (lines 85-6) |

a

| | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|--|
| colour | like a dulled mirror (line 22) | bright cold day (line 1), harsh blue sky, but there seemed to be no colour in anything (line 34), grimy landscape (line 62) | coloured (line 7), heavy black moustache (line 9), black moustachio'd face (line 35), dark eyes (line 38) | white (lines 61 & 80), glittering white concrete (line 78) |
| smell | boiled cabbage and old rag mats (line 6) | | | |
| sound | fruity voice coming from the telescreen (line 20), vile wind (line 3) | | | |

b The adjectives are mainly emotive. Students should notice the contrast between the lack of colour of the landscape vs the poster, the bleakness of the buildings and the city vs the elegance of the Ministries.

- 4 The telescreens inside (lines 20-6), the helicopters outside (lines 39-44) and above all the mysterious and frightening Thought Police (line 44) are the methods which the authorities use to keep the people under constant surveillance. The language conveys a sense of oppression and impending danger (lines 24-6; lines 40-4; lines 47-58; lines 97-103).
- 5 Open ended.
- 6 Open ended. Students should be encouraged to notice that the slogans are printed in isolation on the page and in capital letters to attract the reader's attention and to convey the sense of the protagonist being somehow 'crushed' by them. The other element that is highlighted in this way is the caption underneath the poster - BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU!
- 7 Through constant surveillance of the population and a reign of fear. Notice the contrast between the word 'Love' and the words referring to violence, fear and weapons in the description of what happens in the Ministry of Love.
- 8 The average standard of living seems very low (the city needs rebuilding, the landscape is "grimy", the lift at Victory Mansions almost never works, the electricity is cut off during the day, Winston is thin and not well-dressed etc.). Technology is used to control people, not to help improve the standard of living.

II: Winston's Job

- 9 Winston has to 're-write' four news items, to make it appear that Big Brother never makes mistakes and that his predictions are always correct.
- 10 Their function is to destroy original documents so that there is no proof that Big Brother has made a mistake or that an "unperson" has ever existed etc..
- 11 **a**

| | Where and when the item was originally issued | What the original news item was about | How it is changed | Why and to what purpose it is altered |
|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| 1st message | <i>The Times</i> , 17th March 1984 | Big Brother had predicted that there would be no danger of attack on the South Indian front; the Eurasian army would attack North Africa | contrary to Big Brother's predictions the Eurasian army attacked South India and not North Africa | to remove evidence of Big Brother's error in foreign policy |
| 2nd message | <i>The Times</i> , 19th December 1983 | the article made predictions about the quantity of consumption goods produced | the figures are altered to make them agree with the later ones | to correct the Party's mistake about the production of goods |
| 3rd message | <i>The Times</i> , 14th February 1984 | in the article there was a "categorical pledge" that there would be no reduction of the chocolate ration | Winston changes the article into a warning that the chocolate ration would be probably be reduced from 30 to 20 grammes | to correct the Party's mistake in economic policy |
| 4th message | <i>The Times</i> , 3rd December 1983 | praising FFCC and Comrade Withers, one of its members | there must be no mention of FFCC and its members, now unpersons | to eliminate any proof that these people had ever existed |

b

| | Dictionary meaning | Newspeak meaning |
|------------|---|--|
| to rectify | to correct something that is wrong or not precise | to re-write or 'correct' data according to the Party's present needs |
| to verify | to check if a fact is true or correct | to change figures and data in order to make them agree with the Party's present declarations |

- 12 The reduction of the chocolate ration will affect people's lives the most. Winston considers the fourth message the most difficult because it has 'political' implications.
- 13 Open ended (all choices are possible).
- 14 Comrade Withers has disappeared. It is not clear what has happened to him and Winston is not sure why he has disappeared, although he does provide some suggestions (lines 158-63).
- 15 Winston's parents had "disappeared" (lines 142-4).
- 16
- This phrase tells the reader that Winston is not the perfect party member, it hints that he may well be conscious that what he does (ie. 'destroying' the past) is morally wrong. See also **Passage I: Airstrip One** (lines 55-8).
 - The past is altered to make it 'agree' with the present. In this way the Party can control the past and the present, as they have removed any possibility of maintaining objective reality.
 - No certainty of anything can exist in a world where facts are altered every minute and lies become truths and vice versa.
 - If forgery is carried out by single individuals the Party can at any moment deny it knows what is going on. Nothing can ever be proved. Handing the work over to a committee would make the act of falsification official.
- Winston seems to enjoy his job – he has a rather ambiguous attitude towards his duties: on the one hand he is disgusted by it, as it makes him an accomplice of the Party (lines 1-2; lines 97-104), on the other he is proud that 'difficult' and delicate tasks are entrusted to him (lines 28-31; lines 145-57).
- 17 Open ended.

III: Newspeak

18 b

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| name | Syme |
| physical appearance | very small, even smaller and thinner than Winston, dark-haired with large, penetrating eyes (lines 14-17). His description highlights his physical frailty and his intelligence |
| job | he is a philologist, ie. a linguist, now working on the latest edition of the Newspeak Dictionary |
| attitude towards his job | he loves it (line 21; lines 33-6) |
| relationship with Winston | Winston thinks of him as a friend but immediately qualifies that (see lines 8-11) |
| Winston's opinion of him | He thinks that Syme is clever, but perhaps too clever to survive in Oceania (lines 99-102). He understands too much and speaks too clearly. |

- 19 Lines 29-32; lines 37-51; lines 61-3; lines 67-82.
- 20 Open ended. Students should be encouraged to think about the concept contained in this passage, ie. that language is vital for the formation of abstract thought and that concepts and ideas disappear without the words to express them (lines 96-8). Language is a powerful means of social and political control (this is one of the major themes of *Animal Farm*).
- 21 Open ended. Students should think carefully about how people in Oceania are forced to believe contradictory things. Objective reality does not exist.
- 22 a No, he doesn't (lines 53-5; lines 64-5; lines 84-7).
- b It allows for the possibility that one day Winston may also disappear. His attitude towards the Party is far more critical than Syme's. Although strangely Winston does not seem to see this possibility.
- 23 Open ended.

IV: Julia

- 24 Refer to lines 4-5.

VI: Vaporization

- 25 Syme has disappeared; he has become an "unperson".
- 26 Because they show that they have realized something strange has happened, whereas they should pretend everything is normal. Syme has never existed, he is an unperson, so he can't have disappeared.

VII: “They can’t get inside you”

27 Refer to lines 1-4 and lines 14-16.

28 Winston seems to have become more aware of the danger he is facing. He is aware one day he might be captured, but he still believes that Party cannot destroy him completely, his “inner heart” would remain intact. Although he is more aware of the Party’s “nefarious aims” he believes that they cannot discover what his inner thoughts are. The reader at this stage may be aware that Winston is deluding himself.

VIII: Big Brother and Doublethink

29 b

| | True or False? | Where in the text? |
|---|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Big Brother is not real: he is simply a general point of reference, a cult figure whose only function is to embody Ingsoc | probably true | lines 5-11 |
| the Outer Party is made up of a very restricted group of people, an elite who make decisions and govern Oceania | false | lines 13-15 |
| the equatorial populations are considered sub-human, inferior even to the proles | true | lines 18-20 |
| Oceanic society is strictly hierarchical, not a socialist state based on collective ownership as the Party claims it is | true | lines 11-20 |
| doublethink is the most powerful means of reality control | true | lines 28-35; lines 39-42 |
| doublethink implies total belief in the goodness of the system | false | lines 28-30 |
| the Party intellectual is ultimately aware that objective reality does exist | probably true | lines 22-5 |

IX: The Horror! The Horror!

30 b

| | 1st phase | 2nd phase | Differences |
|---|---|---|--|
| who the torturers are | five or six men in black uniforms (lines 8-9); ruffians (line 40) | Party intellectuals, little round men with ... (lines 40-2) | the first group is simply violent, the second more specialized in psychological torture |
| how they torture Winston | they inflict physical pain on him (lines 5-7; lines 9-15) | they keep him in slight physical pain but their main aim is to humiliate him, to make him feel weak and defenceless by questioning him for hours on end (lines 44-54) | the first group of torturers inflict physical pain, the next group concentrate on psychological torture |
| what their aims are | to frighten him, break his resistance (lines 18-21) | “to destroy his power of arguing and reasoning” (lines 48-9) and to make him lose his human dignity (lines 59-63) | in the 1st phase they inflict pain so that Winston becomes terrified even of the threat of violence (line 20), in the 2nd phase they want to destroy his self-esteem |
| what the effects on him and his reactions are | he is physically crushed (lines 27-9) | he confesses imaginary crimes, he says everything he thinks his torturers want him to say (lines 62-78) | Winston’s defences have been destroyed completely |

31 He seems to have forgotten completely his previous idea that the Party could not reach your “inner heart”. Lines 76-8 seem to suggest that they are getting inside him.

X: O'Brien

32 Refer to lines 1-26. In the Middle Ages the religious persecutions created martyrs, however the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century learned that martyrs are very dangerous, as they create more political opponents. The Party realized that the ideas of their 'opponents' are more dangerous than the individuals themselves. This is why the Party aims to change its opponents' minds and ideas by turning them into enthusiastic followers of the Party. In this way there will be no martyrs and no 'unorthodox' ideas (lines 41-68).

XI: The End

- 33**
- Winston now loves Big Brother (lines 19-21; line 42).
 - He no longer has rebellious thoughts.
 - He can no longer distinguish between reality and fantasy, truth and lies; he accepts whatever the Party wants him to believe (lines 21-6; lines 31-6).

The Novel as a Whole

The activities in this section are all open ended. Their aim is to trigger off class discussion. Students should be encouraged to express individual opinions freely, provided they support their ideas with relevant and appropriate quotations from the text. Key ideas can be written on the blackboard and discussed with the whole class.

Building up Relationships

1

| Style and Structure | <i>Animal Farm</i> | <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> |
|--|---|--|
| the story is told by a third-person narrator | yes; the point of view is external and it coincides with the narrator's point of view | yes; the point of view is internal and it coincides with Winston's point of view |
| the events are presented in chronological order | yes; the period of time covered by the narration is several years; the narrator provides 'summaries' of long spans of time, while some short periods are narrated in detail | yes; the narration covers a period of one year |
| the language is concrete, the prose style is plain, clear and simple, to convey the author's message as directly as possible | yes; 'Good prose is like a window pane' | yes; language and style are here used to clarify, to present an unambiguous message |
| the ending is closed, there is little hope for improvement at the end of the novel | yes; no further development seems possible; the pigs' final transformation appears to be definitive | yes; Winston no longer has the possibility to rebel, his mind has been destroyed irreparably; the Party has won the battle |
| the novel can be considered anti-utopian | yes; it is the story of a revolution gone wrong | yes; the "last man alive" is spiritually dead at the end of the book |

| Themes | <i>Animal Farm</i> | <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> |
|--|--|---|
| totalitarian systems are founded on lies and self-interest | yes; refer to the progressive alteration of the Seven Commandments and to Squealer's twisting of reality | yes Big Brother is himself is a big lie; he does not exist in the normal sense of the word; it is impossible to discover what is true and what is false |
| true democracy is impossible without the freedom to think and to love | yes; democracy ends when the personality cult which is built up around Napoleon, as well as the threat of violence from the dogs turns him into an absolute leader, who is above all criticism | close relationships of any kind are forbidden – for example children spy on their parents and denounce them; in this way the Party controls people's private lives and feelings |
| tyranny is maintained through propaganda, ie. constant manipulation of the truth | yes; squealer's 'turns black into white' and invents lies to cover up the pigs' tricks | objective reality does not exist and history is continuously altered; the Party is in control of everything as there is no proof of its lies |
| tyrants base their power on fear and deception | yes; the Purges are an instrument of power – the animals are terrified into submission | Winston's mind is changed through psychological torture and O'Brien's brainwashing |

The Boarding House

1 b

| Characters | Job | Where in the text? | Personality / Habits | Where in the text? |
|---------------|---|------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Mr Mooney | he used to be a foreman, then he became a butcher, but ran into debt, now he works occasionally for a bailiff | lines 3-6; line 16 | disreputable man, very violent; he drinks too much; Mrs Mooney does not want him to have any contact with their daughter | lines 6-10; lines 14-16; lines 45-8 |
| Mrs Mooney | she used to run a butcher's shop, now she runs a boarding house | lines 3-5; lines 17-19 | a determined woman, strong-willed, a big imposing woman | line 3; lines 10-12; line 19 |
| Jack Mooney | clerk to a commission agent | lines 29-30 | reputation of being a hard case, swears, tells funny stories, likes women and betting on horses, rather violent and vulgar | lines 29-34; lines 30-4 |
| Polly Mooney | she used to work as a typist; now she helps her mother at the boarding house | lines 45-50 | very lively, likes to join the young men's parties on Sunday nights at the boarding house, sings and flirts with the young men | lines 34-52 |
| The residents | tourists from Liverpool and the Isle of Man, music-hall <i>artistes</i> as well as the more permanent guests (clerks from the city) | lines 19-22 | friendly with one another, like talking about horse-racing, like parties | lines 26-9; lines 34-7 |

2 Polly looks innocent (*a little madonna*) but in fact flirts openly with young men (*her perverse look*). The resulting image in some way implies that she is still innocent enough not to understand fully the implications of what she is doing. The writer may be placing the 'blame' for what happens on the mother. Her behaviour with men is made quite clear throughout the story (lines 39-41 '*naughty girl*', which has the meaning of 'easy'; lines 49-50 'very lively' which has a double meaning and implies sexual freedom).

3 Lines 49-50; lines 51-6; lines 58-64.

| | |
|---|---|
| how Mrs Mooney's plans for Polly have changed and why | she wanted Polly to have a job in an office, but took her away when her father wanted to see her, she then thought of keeping her at the boarding house to do the housework |
| what Mrs Mooney has noticed and how she has reacted | she has noticed that Polly has become involved with one of the guests; she shows no reaction |
| what Mrs Mooney has decided to do | nothing for the moment, she has decided to wait and see how the situation develops |
| how Polly has reacted to her mother's strange behaviour | she is aware her mother knows about her relationship but does not talk to her about it; she does not seem to understand her mother's intentions |

4 A mother should deal with moral problems in a sympathetic and understanding way. The particularly violent image of the cleaver suggests lack of sympathy and tact. The narrator's moral judgement appears unequivocally negative.

5 a

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Time setting | Sunday morning in early summer, the weather is pleasant, it is "seventeen minutes past eleven" (lines 65-6 ; lines 89-91) |
| Place setting | The story takes place in Dublin, not far from St George's Church (Protestant), off Marlborough Street; the scene is set in the dining room at the boarding house |

b The few details mentioned are enough to give a clear picture of the scene. The boarding house is a cheap place where left-over pieces of bread are saved to make Tuesday's bread pudding, implying lack of hygiene and meanness. The disorder of the room, with the tables still covered with dirty plates, may be an objective correlative of the 'disordered, messy situation' existing between Polly and her lover, which Mrs Mooney feels she must 'tidy up' and settle as soon as possible (through marriage). The characters are lower middle-class, or possibly working class, with bourgeois pretensions.

6 The first sentence seems to give the best description of the situation.

7 The narrator here suggests the mother-daughter relationship is based upon hypocrisy.

- Mrs Mooney is 'embarrassed' because she is afraid people might gossip about Polly's affair, but mainly because she knows that she has in some way encouraged the relationship by not intervening. At first she does not pay much attention as long as the love story remains secret, but when people "began to talk of the affair" (line 60) she can no longer pretend she doesn't know about it. She takes the matter seriously because she sees the possibility of finding a husband for her daughter, not because she is sincerely worried about Polly's future.
- Mrs Mooney pretended not to know. It is quite clear that her behaviour has been calculating (lines 81-3).
- Because she feels embarrassed when talking about personal matters (Mrs Mooney is not a gentle or understanding character) (lines 83-6).
- She has understood her mother's intentions and feels embarrassed because she does not want her mother to know that she has understood.

8

| Mr Doran | Your notes | Where in the text? |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| age | 34 or 35 | line 95 |
| job | clerk in a well-known Catholic wine merchant's office | lines 112-13 |
| Mrs Mooney's opinion of him | she thinks he should 'pay' for what he has done, he is not innocent or particularly young; Mrs Mooney feels he should take full responsibility for his actions; her real motives however may be more mercenary – he is respectable, has a good, secure job and has saved some money | lines 96-8; lines 108-10 |

9 Refer to lines 91-5; lines 104-5; lines 106-10; lines 114-16; lines 118-20. He is a serious young man, and any negative publicity might mean the loss of his good job and respectable social position, a thing that Mrs Mooney does not think he would risk. Notice that Mr Doran's employer is **Catholic** (line 113).

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| 10 b | What happened the night before? | he had confessed his 'sin' to a priest who had not been sympathetic, in fact the priest had "magnified his sin" (lines 125-9) |
| | What is Mr Doran doing at the moment? | he is in his room, sitting on the bed (line 151), earlier he had tried to shave twice, but his hands were shaking so much that it was impossible (lines 121-3), he wiped his glasses which had steamed up because he was so "anxious" (line 125), he is thinking about his present predicament |
| | What worries him most? | in his public life: focus on lines 130-6 in his private life: focus on lines 178-80 he has broken the rules of the community, people would talk of the affair and he could well lose his job; on the other hand his instinct tells him to avoid marriage, but he has a strong sense of having committed a grave sin (lines 178-80); he also thinks his family will despise Polly and consider her vulgar (lines 145-6), he is conscious she comes of a family socially inferior to his own (line 142) |
| | What does Polly's visit remind him of? | it reminds Mr Doran of how the affair started; he is trying to understand where the fault lies, and remembers that there had been happy moments in their affair (lines 160-76) |

11 Lines 142-50; lines 160-80. It seems to be based on physical attraction.

12 Mr Doran's instincts tell him to avoid marriage and leave Dublin if necessary, but he is trapped by the strong grip of social conventions and moral taboos. He is paralysed; he is aware that he is unable to escape, he will have to make reparation for his 'sin'.

"Instinctive lust - the normal sexual urge - cannot be satisfied outside marriage, and married life is doomed to failure. [...] Joyce denounces neither sex nor women but the institution of marriage, which is equated with a mere money bargain."¹

13 Mr Doran will probably decide to marry Polly; this can be inferred from line 222.

14 He feels social pressures very strongly, making his decision inevitable; he sees the faces of the Madam and his employer, and feels threatened by Jack, Polly's brother.

1 RAFROIDI, Patrick, *James Joyce: Dubliners*, Longman, 1985.

| | | |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 15 | where she is now | she is in Mr Doran's room, lying on the bed |
| | what she is doing | she stops crying and looks at herself in the mirror, refreshing her eyes and tidying her hair (lines 204-8) |
| | what she is feeling | the sight of the pillows on the bed remind her of happy moments in her relationship with Mr Doran; she appears to be hopeful about the future, and appears unaware of the reality of her situation; she becomes so lost in her dreams that she forgets what she is waiting for (lines 208-17) |

- Earlier she had appeared very upset, aware of the gravity of the situation. She becomes much calmer when she is sure that Mr Doran will marry her.

- Open ended.

16 Open ended.

The Story as a Whole

| 1 a | Events | Where in the text? |
|-------------------|--|--|
| distant past | presentation of the Mooney's (background information) Mr Doran's flashback | lines 1-14; lines 45-8 lines 135-9; lines 160-73; lines 197-203 |
| recent past | Polly's confession to her mother, their interview, Mrs Mooney's convincing Mr Doran to marry Polly Mr Doran's interview with the priest | lines 57-64; lines 77-86 lines 125-29 |
| fictional present | Mrs Mooney's 'counting all her cards' Mr Doran's present predicament Polly's visit to Mr Doran's room Mr Doran going downstairs to talk to Mrs Mooney | lines 87-120 lines 121-5; lines 135-50 lines 151-9; lines 181-5 lines 186-203 lines 204-23 |
| | Polly waiting for the final outcome | |

b lines 1-24; lines 45-56 (narrator's excursus/digression), lines 125-41; lines 160-73 (characters' thoughts).

c • **introduction** : background information about the Mooney family; Mrs Mooney's present attitude towards her daughter's affair with one of the guests, Mr Doran

- **climax** : Mr Doran's predicament, resulting in the epiphany and in the silent acceptance of the condition of moral/spiritual paralysis (lines 177-80)
- **conclusion** : Mr Doran and Polly will be married

It is a closed-ended story as the readers may predict what will happen in the future. Both Polly and Mr Doran seem to feel that they might be happy together, but the overall impression is that the characters are forced into this marriage by social and family pressures.

d

| Point of view | Where in the text? |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| omniscient narrator | lines 1-86; lines 204-23 |
| Mrs Mooney | lines 87-120 |
| Mr Doran | lines 121-203 |

e

| | Where in the text? |
|--|--|
| narrator's comments and opinions | lines 42-5; lines 1-3; lines 14-17; lines 29-34 |
| character's personality / cultural background | lines 49-50; lines 58-60; lines 63-4; lines 102-4; lines 118-20; lines 135-41; lines 148-50; lines 178-80 ; lines 187-91 |

- Mrs Mooney and Mr Doran are developed through interior monologue, the reader is given privileged access to the thoughts of these two characters. The reader sees Polly only from her actions and words, adding to the impression of superficiality in this character.
- **prevailing narrative modes** : the first two suggested answers.

2 Open ended (all suggestions are acceptable).

3

| Narrative perspective | Where in the text? |
|-------------------------------|---|
| examples of verbal irony | lines 49-50; lines 97-9; lines 119-20; line 136 |
| examples of situational irony | Mrs Mooney' attitude towards Polly's relationship with Mr Doran; the mother seems simply to be waiting for the two young people to enter her trap (lines 51-64) |
| examples of dramatic irony | Mr Doran tries to convince himself that it is the correct decision he is making, the reader however sees that he can do nothing to escape; his desperation becomes almost comic, as he walks down the stairs, seeing the faces of the Madam and his boss, and meets Jack with his "bulldog face"; another example is the mother- daughter interview; both of them play a part (the <i>offended</i> mother, the <i>innocent</i> girl) and the readers are well aware of the hypocrisy of the situation |
| examples of satire | the institution of marriage, as Mrs Mooney sees it as a way of getting rid of her daughter and Mr Doran sees it as a sort of duty all men must fulfil after a certain age. the institution of the church, the priest who hears Mr Doran's confession is unsympathetic and hypocritical (lines 11-12; lines 126-9) |

- The first suggested answer gives the best description.

4 Open ended.

Clay

1 b the character

| | Where in the text? | Personal inference? |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| name | Maria | |
| age | no longer young, possibly approaching fifty | we can infer this detail from lines 68-72 |
| physical appearance | “Maria was a very, very small person indeed” (line 9); “tiny dress-boots” (line 68); “diminutive body” (line 71); with “a very long nose and a very long chin” (lines 9-10); “She talked a little through her nose” (line 10); “grey-green eyes (line 55); when she laughed “the tip of her nose nearly met the tip of her chin” (detail repeated line 55; lines 59-60; lines 165-6) | |
| place of work/job | <i>Dublin by Lamplight</i> laundry; she seems to be in charge of the workers' meals | we can infer Maria has a position implying a certain amount of responsibility (lines 50-1) |
| family situation/ social status | unmarried; she has a close relationship with Joe Donnelly and his family (see lines 33-5); she nursed Joe and Alphy as children, but it is unclear whether or not she is a member of the family, the way she speaks to Joe would suggest that she is at least on equal terms with them (lines 149-51) | she lives in the place where she works, although Joe had asked her to live with him and his family (lines 30-4; lines 63-6) |
| religious beliefs | practising Catholic, but she lives and works with Protestants | lines 36-7; lines 64-6 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| colleagues' opinion of her | “She was always sent for when the women quarrelled [...] and always succeeded in making peace” (lines 11-17); she is generally well-thought of: “Every one was so fond of Maria” (line 18); Joyce's description however seems to imply that the relationship between Maria and her 'colleagues' is not a close one | |
|----------------------------|--|--|

c the physical settings

| Places | Reasons for being there | People she meets |
|--|--|---|
| the laundry | Maria has to supervise the women's tea | the matron (line 1); the cook (line 44); Lizzie Fleming (line 52); Ginger Mooney (line 56) and the other women who work in the laundry |
| her bedroom | she changes from her working clothes and puts on her best skirt and also changes her blouse (lines 66-8) | |
| the 1st tram | she goes to the Pillar (city centre) to buy something to take to Joe's | the tram is full and Maria has to sit facing all the other passengers (lines 74-6) |
| Downes's cake shop / a cake shop in Henry Street | she wants to buy cakes as a present to take to the Donnelly's house | the shop assistant a “stylish young lady” (lines 92-3), who is annoyed by Maria; Maria merely blushes when the shop assistant is rude to her (lines 94-5) |
| the 2nd tram | she is going to Drumcondra where Joe's house is | a “colonel-looking gentleman” who makes room for Maria to sit down (lines 98-110) |
| Joe's house | Halloween party/the Eve of All Saints' Day | Joe Donnelly, his wife and children and “two big girls in from next door” (lines 113-16) |

| | Your Notes | Where in the text? |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|
| pagan celebration | tea at the laundry, Lizzie Fleming makes a joke at Maria's expense; the games that the children are playing when Maria arrives at the Donnelly's, note the superstitious meaning attached to the objects in the game | lines 156-63 |
| religious celebration | Sunday morning mass; party at Joe's to celebrate the eve of All Saints' Day, an important Catholic holy day | lines 65-6 |

3 The text is intentionally ambiguous as far as this aspect is concerned. It should be made clear to students that there is no 'right answer', it is a question of interpretation. However students should be asked to back up their answers with examples from the text.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Maria as a witch | the story is set at Halloween; the narrator emphasizes her witch-like characteristics (lines 9-10; line 56; lines 59-60); she is pleased with the way she looks (lines 70-2); she lives among sinners (Protestants, former prostitutes) |
| Maria as a saint | line 14 (" <i>Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God</i> "); asexuality (lines 52-4; lines 94-6); she is a 'virgin mother' (line 34); she lives among the sinners to redeem them (lines 14-18; lines 148-9) |

4 Open ended.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| what she misinterprets | she thinks that the shop assistant has made a joke and does not appear to understand the cruelty of the girl's comment (line 94) she mistakes condescension for kindness (the old man in the tram) |
| what she fails to understand | her mistake (she repeats the first verse of the song, missing out the second verse); people's embarrassment when she touches the clay (which signifies death) |
| what she fails to do | to act as a peace-maker between the two people she loves most, Alphy and Joe (lines 148-51) |

- 6
- The period of time covered by the story is from shortly before six p.m. to about nine p.m. (lines 19-22 + the party scene), making a total of approximately three hours;
 - the present Joe gives her (lines 23-6), it underlines her links with the Protestants, it is introduced through conscious association of ideas;
 - how Maria started to work for a Protestant institution (lines 35-8), conscious association of ideas;
 - she remembers past happiness, and contrasts it with a difficult present life (lines 79-82), conscious association of ideas.

7 "spick and span" (line 3);

"And Ginger Mooney [...] it wasn't for Maria." (lines 16-18);

"Lizzie Fleming [...] common woman." (lines 52-62);

"she thought [...] a drop taken." (lines 111-12);

"... that he was [...] the wrong way." (lines 138-9);

The characters are from the lower classes. Most of the story is seen from Maria's point of view. The narrator's presence is felt in the scenes that are reported from the 'outside' as a fixed external point of view, but the language he uses is that of his characters. The style is consistent throughout the story.

8 Open-ended.

It may be useful to reflect upon this extract from Patrick Raftery, p. 47.

"Clay [...] is, in the section [of Dubliners] devoted to 'mature life', the first study in sterility, [...] the sterility of humility and celibacy. Maria is in love with herself (see the mirror scene) and her state of innocence; she refuses to see the world as it is [...] and ignores her vital impulses, particularly sexual, her refusal and willing ignorance being conveyed through the simple-mindedness of the vision and the style (which are Maria's throughout the story) and through her laughter, blushings and omissions."

9 In his private life Joe understands his failure as a brother ("there was no time like the long ago") when the family was united and happy. This may be linked to Maria's remark on lines 25-6 and lines 79-82); he also realizes that Maria is mortal (brought home to him when she touches the clay) and may see her life clearly for what it is (the contrast between the content of the song and Maria's life).

In his public life, he neither likes nor respects the manager under whom he works (lines 134-9). He seems to have many links with the Protestants (line 25; lines 35-6), this could be considered as disloyalty to his country (however he is nostalgic about the composer Balfe (lines 200-2)).

10 Maria is the typical Dubliner, content with what she is and has. She refuses to acknowledge the shabbiness of the world she lives in. She is spiritually dead, she is unable to awaken even on Halloween, when the dead are said to rise from their graves.

11 Students should be encouraged to use their knowledge of the story and their imagination. One suggestion is that clay stands for 'death', and it symbolizes the spiritual and emotional death of people like Maria that inhabit the paralysed world of Dublin.

The Story as a Whole

All these activities are open-ended; their aim is to trigger off meaningful class discussion. The results of the discussions can be written down as homework.

Building up Relationships

1

| | Realistic/Naturalistic elements |
|---------------------------|---|
| The Boarding House | the description of the setting is very realistic and naturalistic, with all its sordid details highlighted, which contribute to reveal how Mr Doran's final choice is implicit from the beginning; he is paralysed by social taboos and cultural conventions and is unable to escape; Polly's future as unhappy wife is already pre-figured by her mother; nobody can escape his/her destiny as long as they remain trapped in Dublin |
| Clay | the cultural milieu is powerfully rendered through careful choice of language; Maria's apparent naivety is in fact a stubborn refusal to 'see' reality and to accept her condition consciously; Joe's final epiphany does not lead to any real change in his life, so this story too, like 'The Boarding House', has a closed ending |

2

| The Seven Deadly Sins | The Boarding House | Clay |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Pride | Mrs Mooney's certainty of her 'victory' implies excessive self-confidence | Maria is very proud of her physical appearance |
| Covetousness | Mrs Mooney is greedy for profit and for Mr Doran's money (lines 115-16) | |
| Lust | the relationship between Mr Doran and Polly, which is mainly sexual; Mr Doran's past excesses (line 136); the <i>artistes'</i> dubious morality | the past life of Maria's 'colleagues' at work (they are former prostitutes) |
| Envy | | |
| Gluttony | The Mooney men (both the father and the son) drink too much | Maria's apparent obsession with food; Joe gets drunk at the party and Maria is worried about how much he drinks |
| Anger | Mr Mooney (father)'s attitude towards his wife; Jack Mooney's violent character | Joe's anger towards his brother Alphy, which implies broken family ties and corrupt relationships; in addition he appears unwilling to forgive him |
| Sloth | Mr Doran's refusal/inability to take action to change his predicament | at a symbolic level, Maria's (unconscious) refusal to sing the second verse of the song implies refusal to accept her condition |

- Students should notice that Joyce highlights the Dubliners' **hypocritical attitude** towards religion.

3 Open ended. All the suggestions are possible.

4 Open ended. Students should be encouraged to pay particular attention to the narrative style, and to how Joyce stresses details which are apparently ordinary but acquire extra-meaning in the context, such as Mrs Mooney's physical appearance (line 19, which is the objective correlative of her personality, especially in contrast with her husband's thinness – lines 14-17), or Maria's repressed and frustrated sexuality (lines 92-6; lines 108-12), which she refuses/is unable to admit to herself.

5 Open ended.

MRS DALLOWAY

I: Clarissa

1 b

| Topic | Where in the Text? |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Peter | lines 1-17; lines 22-32 |
| her husband Richard | lines 17-21 |
| herself | lines 35-48 |
| people and episodes from her youth | lines 48-52 |
| death | lines 53-7 |
| the Great War | lines 68-70 |

2

| Peter | Marriage | Herself |
|---|---|--|
| She thinks that there will always be a special relationship between herself and Peter, even if they do not meet or write to each other very often. She complains that he does not notice the world around him – he is more interested in intellectual things. She is glad she decided not to marry him when he proposed to her, as now she would be far less independent, because Peter demanded total spiritual involvement. However she remembers that when she discovered he had got married she had suffered terribly | She thinks partners in a marriage should maintain some independence. Her husband Richard gives her that independence, (she does not know what he is doing at the moment, for example) | She has mixed feelings about herself; she feels old but young at the same time (line 36), superficial and ignorant (lines 41-3) but at the same time able to understand people instinctively (lines 46-8). She feels detached from ordinary life but at the same time part of it, and this is a strange feeling that she doesn't understand clearly (lines 36-40; lines 57-63) |

3

| Facts | Where in the text? | His Attitudes/ Opinions | Where in the text? |
|--|----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| he wears glasses his letters are unemotional, "dry" | line 9 line 2 | he isn't very interested in what happens around him | lines 7-9 |
| he once asked her to marry him in a little garden near a fountain (at Bourton) | lines 22-3 | he is well educated and interested in arts (music), literature and analysing people's characters | lines 10-11 |
| he married a woman he met on a boat going to India, where he now lives | line 27; lines 29-30 | he called Clarissa cold and a prude and seems to have been critical of her character | lines 11-12; lines 28-9 |

4 "[...] she had borne about her for years **like an arrow sticking in her heart** the grief, the anguish;" (lines 24-5). The simile underlines the fact that in spite of the years that have passed, Clarissa still feels the pain as if the events had happened yesterday. The emotional pain becomes physical; underlining the strength of feeling. The simile may also imply that Clarissa is prey to a certain amount of self-pity (the image suggests martyrdom).

- 5
- the environment: lines 37-40; lines 57-60;
 - people: lines 35-6; lines 44-8; lines 60-3; lines 68-70;
 - life and death: lines 39-40; lines 53-8; lines 60-3;
 - the past, present and future: line 38; lines 41-3; line 44; lines 48-52; line 53.
- 6 Open ended. In this context, trees seem to symbolize life and friendship – the intricate web of relationships that bind people together.
- 7 Open ended. All suggestions are acceptable.

8 a

| Mode | Where in the text? |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| indirect interior monologue | lines 1-32; lines 35-70 |
| external description | lines 33-4 |

- b The narrative emphasis is placed upon the character's interior life, her thoughts and feelings. The advantages may be that the readers get to know the character more intimately, as they have access to her mind. The disadvantages may be that the narration may seem less logically organized and readers may find it difficult to follow the workings of the character's mind without the filter provided by the omniscient narrator in a more traditional narrative.

II: Septimus

- 9 a An elegant motor car which has stopped outside the florist's shop. The person sitting inside is not visible because there are blinds over the windows. There is a tree pattern on the blinds.

b

| Who? | Where in the text? | How do they react? |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Septimus Warren Smith | line 12; lines 14-20 | His attention is attracted by the pattern on the window blinds, similar to a tree. Then he panics, violent images come into his mind, as he thinks the commotion in the street is his fault, as he is blocking the way for the car to move on. |
| Lucrezia Warren Smith | lines 23-5; lines 32-42 | She is curious about the motor car in spite of herself and wonders if the passenger might be the Queen. She wants to go away quickly because Septimus has said 'I will kill myself', she is embarrassed, worried that people would notice her husband's strange behaviour. |
| Clarissa Dalloway | lines 10-11; lines 62-6 | She is curious and thinks that the occupant of the car must be the Queen going to some official ceremony, she adopts a "look of extreme dignity" for a second just in case it is the Queen (the narrator is taking an ironic look at Clarissa's behaviour). |

b

| | | |
|------------|--------------------------|---|
| Passers-by | lines 11-13; lines 47-61 | Everyone's attention is caught by the mysterious motor car. Some people stop to look at it. There is some discussion as to the identity of the person inside. The general reaction is one of veneration for the "greatness" passing so close to them. |
|------------|--------------------------|---|

- 10 Her attention is almost completely absorbed by her husband. She is worried that people might notice how strange her husband's behaviour is, so she wants to cross the road to go away. She silently cries for help, remembers an episode when they had laughed, only a few months before and she had been happy that people had noticed them, but realizes that failure has to be hidden. Suggested answers: desperation, shame, loneliness, self-pity and nostalgia.
- 11 The noise of the car engine reminds him of the noise of war. His panic takes him back to the time he was fighting in the First World War (lines 5-8; lines 13-18).

12

| | Age | Physical appearance | Feelings towards each other |
|-----------------------|----------|---|--|
| Septimus Warren Smith | about 30 | pale, poorly dressed, with a pointed nose and hazel brown eyes; they have a deeply worried look which makes people uneasy | he obeys her but angrily; he appears annoyed that she is drawing him from the world of his nightmarish images back into the real world (lines 29-31) |
| Lucrezia Warren Smith | 24 | Italian, small, with big eyes in a pale unhealthy face | she left Italy, to follow Septimus to England; she is protective towards him, and remembers with nostalgia her past happiness with him |

| | True | False |
|--|--|-------------|
| people stop discussing the identity of the mysterious person as soon as the car moves on | | lines 47-50 |
| ordinary people are always fascinated by manifestations of power | the narrator would seem to be suggesting this | |
| 'official' history ignores the lives of individuals | it is only the 'great' who are remembered by history, the struggle of the ordinary individual passes unnoticed | |
| common people base their idea of patriotism on outward signs and symbols | the narrator seems to be suggesting this | |

14 The image gives a negative impression on the viewers' patriotic reactions to the mysterious person, who is seen as the embodiment of authority. The images of death and decay seem to suggest that the outward manifestations of power are ultimately meaningless and empty, as they are bound to be destroyed by time and history. It is the same theme expressed by Shelley in his sonnet "Ozymandias". The narrator's tone is heavily ironic and emotionally detached.

15 All the suggested answers are acceptable.

16 Open ended. Suggested answers:

the setting: they are seen as isolated characters contrasted with the mass of people around them all doing the same thing (wondering who is in the car, silently admiring the mysterious occupant of the car). Septimus and Rezia do not share anything with the rest of the people on the street. They are like two aliens, lost in the crowd.

the style: their individual thoughts are reported and the readers can understand how frightened they are, even though for very different reasons. Some key words convey Septimus's terror: *burst into flames* (twice), *terrified*, *wavered*, *quivered*, *threatened* and Rezia's desperation: *help!* (three times).

III: Doctor Holmes

- 17
- Rezia thinks Dr Holmes is a good doctor, she is willing to follow his advice. She believes that he has understood Septimus's problems.
 - Septimus on the contrary thinks Dr Holmes a "damned fool" (line 45), he refuses to see the doctor when he arrives. In Doctor Holmes, Septimus sees human nature personified.
 - Dr Holmes makes a superficial diagnosis of Septimus's mental illness, advising Septimus to take up a hobby. He believes Septimus is simply trying to attract attention to himself (lines 49-57). He underestimates the seriousness of the situation.
 - Dr Holmes is offended by Rezia's suggestion that they should consult a specialist, suggesting that a specialist would be far too expensive for them (lines 102-4). He is quite convinced that his diagnosis is right.
- 18 Septimus blames himself for his inability to feel, which worries and at the same time frightens him (lines 23-32). Septimus's sanity has been strongly affected by his experiences in the trenches of the First World War. He blames himself most for not feeling anything when his friend Evans was killed, and recalls a series of unidentified 'crimes'. By "communication" Septimus means his own desperate attempt to communicate his feelings and emotions to all those who have not shared his experiences. Septimus needs serious psychological treatment, Dr Holmes's superficial analysis of the situation is insufficient.
- 19 Septimus is haunted by memories: the moment of Evan's death has apparently stopped the normal flow of Septimus's subjective time. He is unable to come to terms with his experiences and relives that devastating moment over and over again. The past haunts him and prevents him from living an ordinary life. Clarissa finds in the memories of the past the strength to go beyond present problems. She has vivid memories of that summer at Bourton which determined her subsequent life.

20

| Narrative techniques | Where in the text? |
|---------------------------------|---|
| external omniscient description | line 1; line 13; lines 33-5; lines 85-7; lines 106-11; line 114 |
| free indirect speech (FIS) | lines 2-3 (Rezia); lines 14-22 (Dr Holmes); lines 35-44 (Dr Holmes and Rezia); lines 46-8 (Dr Holmes, including some interior monologue); lines 49-57 (Dr Holmes, including some interior monologue); lines 65-6 (Rezia); lines 82-4 (Agnes, the servant girl); lines 88-9 (Rezia); lines 94-7 (Rezia); lines 101-5 (Dr Holmes) |
| direct speech | line 49 (Dr Holmes); line 81 (Septimus); line 94 (Rezia); line 98 (Septimus); lines 100-1 (Dr Holmes) |
| interior monologue | lines 3-12 (Septimus); lines 22-32 (Septimus); line 45 (Septimus); lines 58-64 (Septimus); lines 67-80 (Septimus); lines 90-3 (Septimus); lines 111-14 (Rezia) |

It may be interesting to read the following critical interpretation [of lines 49-57], from John Mepham, *Virginia Woolf: Mrs Dalloway*, p. 34.

“The first phrase is directly quoted, but thereafter Dr Holmes’s speech is given in free indirect speech. This allows the narrator to capture Holmes’s style of speaking and thinking and hence to make fun of it. For example, in this passage his smug self-confidence, very limited intelligence and absurd patriotism are all mimicked and made fun of. This has all been achieved very efficiently, because the narrator has not had to give a full reproduction of the conversation; we have an edited version which highlights the important points in the character’s speech and retains his verbal idiom.”

- 21 The reader is given the clear impression that Dr Holmes is arrogant, vain, unsympathetic and superficial. The narrator’s ironic tone (achieved through a careful choice of language and narrative style) clearly influences the readers’ opinion of the character.
- 22
- hearing and sight;
 - “leaden” suggests a sense of heaviness, whereas the words “thin”, “ethereal” and “wisps”, which are associated with the idea of the dissolving circles, suggest an opposite sense of delicacy and dissipation. Notice the sound of the words: wisps is an onomatopoeic word;
 - “stroke” has negative connotations, as it conveys the idea of something heavy and imposing, “wafted” on the contrary suggests something light, able to fly in the air above the city. The contrast highlights the ambiguity and alternation that characterizes the world of the characters.

IV: Sir William Bradshaw

- 23 At first Sir William Bradshaw seems more competent than Dr Holmes. The readers feel that perhaps Septimus is going to be treated properly, as the doctor realizes the seriousness of Septimus’s problem.
- 24 The narrator influences the readers’ opinion of Sir William through the choice of the narrative style, which changes from the beginning of the passage. FIS is used extensively to cast an ironic light on the sharp contrast between the doctor’s words and his thoughts. The reader is aware that he despises Septimus (and, by inference, his patients in general). In the end, he turns out to be no better than Dr Holmes.
- 25 Line 37: Rezia interrupts Septimus and Sir William takes Rezia to speak privately to her in another room. Septimus observes that the upkeep of the grey car must cost a lot of money. He has understood that the doctor needs a lot of money to keep up his standard of living, implying that he has the money and not the interests of his patients at heart. The car is a symbol of power and wealth, an outward manifestation of success. All this is meaningless to Septimus.

26 a

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Sir William: vocabulary used to define him, his view of medicine and his actions as a doctor</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lines 68-74 (ironic treatment of the self-made man who despises the poor and unfortunate) • lines 114-23 (the doctor does not cure his patients, he simply imposes his own will on them, he subdues and dominates them, crushing their will) • lines 158-69 (the narrator’s tone here is highly ironic; Bradshaw has convinced himself that his motives are respectable, as he is protecting society from ‘dangerous’ misfits; the language here is very ‘violent’, as it expresses the doctor’s pleasure in controlling other people’s lives) |
| <p>the patients: vocabulary used to define their reactions and position in relation to the doctor</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lines 128-40 (how the doctor considers his patients; the language here expresses the doctor’s disgust of his patients) • lines 141-58 (all resistance and opposition to Dr Bradshaw is useless the doctor controls the lives of his patients; the language conveys impressions of <i>sorrow</i>, <i>submission</i> and <i>impotence</i>) |

b Open ended.

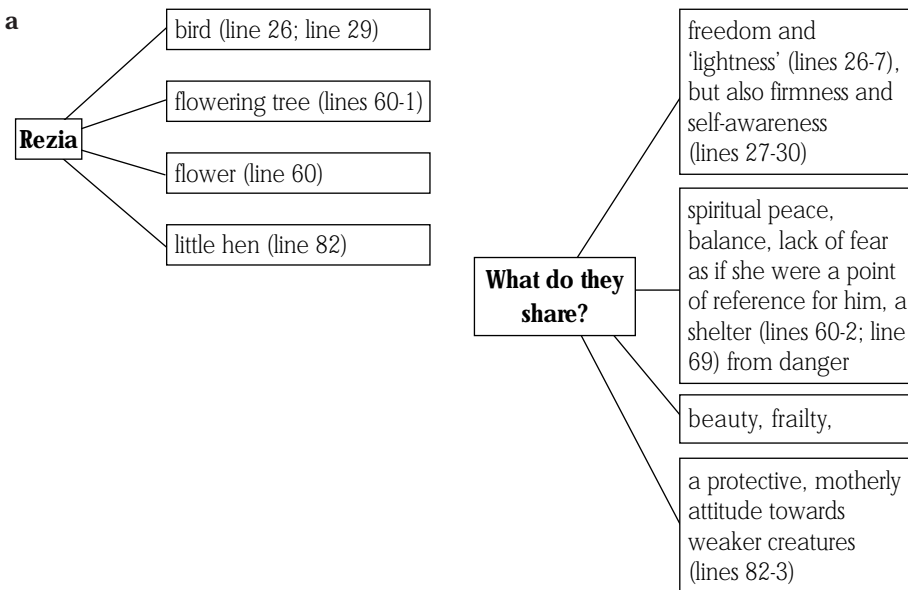
V: The Plunge

27

| Topic | Your notes | Where in the text? |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| how Rezia feels about the present situation | She feels comfortable with him now, as she used to in the past. She feels she can say anything to him, as if they were an couple without problems. She doesn't want to be separated from him. | lines 1-4 lines 56-7 lines 72-5 |
| her memories of the past (flashback) | She remembers when they first met, in Italy. She immediately liked his frail physical appearance, similar to a 'young hawk', and his natural kindness. She felt she could be herself with him, and tell him everything. She believed she could rely on him and she hoped she too could in turn help him. | lines 4-22 |
| how Septimus sees her | He sees her in a very positive way. He feels he can follow her thoughts, her superficiality is seen positively – it gives her the solid foundation that Septimus lacks, he sees her as spiritually free and strong, able to cope with the weight of "human nature" where he is not. | lines 24-33 lines 60-9 |
| what they decide to do and why | They will not allow anyone, Bradshaw or Holmes, to separate them. They will go away to escape from the doctors. | lines 57-8 lines 70-5 |

28 Dr Holmes forces his way into the room; he uses brute force to impose his will on his patients and their relatives. The readers' negative opinion of him is here confirmed. The verb "push aside" is used also in a figurative way, to highlight the doctor's aggression and arrogance. He 'pushes aside' whatever he doesn't understand or doesn't like.

29 a



b Trees are associated with life, protection and love. Contrasted to flowers, which are frail and delicate and therefore symbolize transience, trees symbolize longevity and a strong, powerful attachment to the earth. "Universal love" (lines 50-2) is that for human beings and nature. This vision is shared by Clarissa (who feels part of "the trees at home") and by Septimus (who does not want trees to be cut and associates his wife, the person he loves most, to "a flowering tree").

30 Open ended. Suggested answer: Septimus's final act can be seen as a definitive escape from his persecutors. In this way he gives them what they want, something which responds to their idea of tragedy, not his. *His own* idea of tragedy is living in the hands of the doctors, either Dr Holmes or Dr Bradshaw, it does not matter which one, as they both are 'agents of death and destruction'. Septimus's inability to communicate does not depend on him but on the inability of the doctors (who claim to be specialists, able to treat mentally ill people but who are in fact arrogant and incompetent) to deal with him and understand him. His last words stay in the readers' mind as an incontrovertible accusation against society as a whole and its wrong values.

VI: Peter's Vision

31 a "prancing, sparkling, with the stateliness of her grey hair. She wore [...] its element." (lines 1-7); "There was a breath of tenderness; [...] take her leave." (lines 9-15)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| b | what image does he associate with her? | that of a mermaid looking at the setting sun reflected in her mirror (line 8) |
| | Clarissa's special gift | making people feel at ease as if she cared for everybody in a special way (lines 11-15) |

- 32 Peter says to himself that he is not in love with Clarissa. He suffered because of her (see **Passage I: Clarissa**, Activity 4), he admires her and admits there is a special bond of affection between them, but he rejects anything more. (There may be the suggestion that in fact there is more to his feelings for her than he admits.)
- 33 Open ended. Suggested answer: yes, it is a 'moment of being' as Peter has finally understood the reason why Clarissa is so special to him.

VII: Clarissa's Vision

| 34 | Topic | Your notes | Where in the text? |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| | who the late guests are | Sir William Bradshaw and Lady Bradshaw. | lines 1-3 lines 7-8 |
| | what they do and what they talk about | They apologize for being late; Lady Bradshaw talks to Clarissa about social life, about their son at Eton and the reason for their delay in coming, they had learnt that one of Sir William's patients had committed suicide. Sir William Bradshaw talks to Peter about politics and about Septimus's difficult case. | lines 5-8 lines 18-20 lines 35-8 lines 28-31 |
| | Clarissa's opinion of them | She doesn't like them. She thinks Lady Bradshaw is similar to a sea-lion; she considers her a silly, empty woman who one couldn't dislike. Lady Bradshaw is happy to live in the shadow of her husband and his success. Clarissa considers Sir Bradshaw dangerous and is repelled by him, but she can't explain why in a rational way. She guesses intuitively that he is insensitive to his patients' problems. | lines 1-3 lines 32-5 lines 10-16 lines 23-8 |

- 35
- Clarissa has understood that the world she lives in is based on material values and that the 'privacy of the soul' (see introduction to **Passage V**) is more important than the outward signs of material success (embodied by the fashionable guests and by the Prime Minister himself).
 - She has understood that one must preserve some sort of spiritual liberty and independence to maintain the 'privacy of the soul', not to be totally controlled by the obscure forces of evil that Clarissa sees embodied by Dr Bradshaw.
 - Death is a sort of liberation from life, when it has become intolerable and too painful. It is an extreme act of independence (lines 62-5) and of communion with nature's eternal cycle.
 - Only truly sincere human relationships can make life meaningful and worth living.
- 36 "Clarissa thinks about Septimus's suicide. She compares it in her mind with the occasion when she had thrown a coin into the Serpentine. This was the most that she had ever achieved by way of a spontaneous gesture of extravagance or defiance. She senses that Septimus, by throwing away his life, may have preserved something valuable, something that lies hidden behind all the chatter, insincerity and corruption. Perhaps his death was an attempt to communicate his refusal to give up something that he believed in." (John Mepham, p. 27).
- 37 Open-ended. Suggested answer: Clarissa has understood that she is compromised with the society that has 'murdered' Septimus's spirit, whether through the war or through the medical mistreatment of his mental derangement. She is aligned with this society's values: she is perfectly conventional (as a hostess and a rich lady) and, at the same time, a misfit, as she doesn't feel completely at ease among its champions (represented by the Bradshaws and the guests, from whom Clarissa escapes into the little room).

VII: The Remains of the day

- 38 Open ended. Students should be encouraged to take into consideration the central role of Elizabeth in this last scene. She is young and beautiful and symbolizes the continuity of life. She is the promise of a positive future.
- 39
- a Clarissa decides to leave the little room that symbolizes her own private space in order to return to the public sphere, to share her life with her family and friends. After her reflections about death and the ultimate meaning of life, she has realized that she does have something precious to give her a reason for living – that is her relationships with other people.
- b Peter's reaction (his terror and ecstasy) at Clarissa's reappearance epitomizes the ambiguity that characterizes interpersonal relationships, which is one of the major themes of the novel. Sally's last words highlight another central theme, that is the bond between the mind and the soul, which is essential to understanding life's ultimate meaning. The scene as a whole represents the ideal link between the past (Peter and Sally), the present (Richard and the guests) and the future (Elizabeth).

The Novel as a Whole

The activities in this section are open ended. They have been devised to trigger off class discussion and stimulate students to express individual opinions. The following notes are therefore to be intended as further points to think about or suggestions for the students to develop.

- 1 Through the use of such techniques the text becomes elusive: the narrative voice avoids identification with any form of 'authority' (as in more traditional narrative with the omniscient narrator) and the reader is free to form his/her own opinion of what is going on in the fictional world. The reader is placed 'inside' the action, which is 'internal' as it takes place more in the characters' minds than in the external world.
- 2 Big Ben represents common, objective time shared by all the characters: its chiming provides a common point of reference, something certain and fixed in the continuous flow of life. The environment is the common space where all the characters act and move while their minds are filled with their own affairs. The narrative techniques employed do not constitute merely the *form* of what Woolf narrates, but they are intrinsically connected with the *subject matter* of the novel, as it is synonymous with characterization. Woolf wants to demonstrate that meaningful life takes place in the mind, therefore she needs this flexible style to slide in and out her characters' **streams of consciousness** without interrupting the narrative flow.
- 3 Both Clarissa and Septimus struggle to make sense of death. When she was young, Clarissa elaborated a complex personal theory about death (see introduction to **Passage VI**): she still believes that an unseen part of ourselves can spread among the people and the places we love (see **Passage I**, lines 57-63). This is the relationship between the two characters, even if they have never met. They are united by their common love for nature (see their love for trees) and by their mutual attachment to certain values such as personal freedom and respect (see their common hatred for Dr Bradshaw). Septimus's invisible self 'haunts' Clarissa's little room (her innermost self) and helps her understand herself (what is really important in life) and her life (how she cares for her family and friends). In a sense, therefore, Clarissa and Septimus fulfil the ideal connection between the living and the dead which they both strongly believe in.