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## **A GUIDE TO MODERN BRITISH NOVELS**

*Утверждено Редакционно-издательским советом университета  
в качестве учебного пособия*

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Цель пособия – обеспечить руководство самостоятельной и аудиторной работой студентов, направленной на развитие умений изучающего чтения, а также иноязычных устно-речевых и письменных умений.

Настоящее пособие предназначено для формирования общекультурных и профессиональных компетенций студентов-бакалавров, обучающихся по направлениям 45.03.02 Лингвистика и 44.03.05 Педагогическое образование на занятиях по дисциплинам «Практикум по культуре речевого общения (первый иностранный язык)» и «Практический курс первого иностранного языка».

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## ВВЕДЕНИЕ

Настоящее пособие призвано способствовать формированию общекультурных и профессиональных компетенций студентов-бакалавров, обучающихся по направлениям *45.03.02 Лингвистика / Перевод и переводоведение* и *44.03.05 Педагогическое образование (с двумя профилями)/ Иностранный язык и иностранный язык*, на занятиях по дисциплинам «Практикум по культуре речевого общения (первый иностранный язык)», «Практический курс первого иностранного языка (английский язык)» и «Практический курс первого иностранного языка».

Цель пособия – обеспечить руководство самостоятельной и аудиторной работой студентов, направленной на развитие умений изучающего чтения и иноязычных устно-речевых умений.

Специфика данного пособия заключается в том, что обучение чтению осуществляется на материале самых современных произведений британских писателей. Следует отметить, что создание данного пособия стало возможным благодаря участию кафедры английского языка ФГБОУ ВО «МГТУ им. Г.И. Носова» в уникальнейшем российско-британском проекте «Современная британская литература в учебном процессе в российских вузах». Созданный на базе старейшего и одного из самых лучших вузов мира, Оксфордского университета, это проект ежегодно собирает преподавателей английского языка со всей России, чтобы поделиться лучшим, что сейчас может предложить современная британская литература.

В рамках проекта преподаватели английского языка под руководством профессора английской литературы Оксфордского университета Карен Хьюит имеют возможность встретиться с коллегами из ведущих вузов Великобритании, современными писателями (Джилл Доусон, Эстер Фрейд, Адамом Торпом, Дэйвидом Митчеллом и многими другими), получить уникальную информацию из первых рук и ознакомиться с современным литературным процессом изнутри. Также за годы участия в проекте библиотека иностранных языков пополнилась сотнями томов художественной и критической литературы на английском языке, специально отобранных и подаренных вузу литературным отделом Оксфордского университета. Среди них не только классика британской литературы, но и самые современные романы на английском языке, в том числе и произведения-лауреаты престижных литературных премий. Выбор произведений обусловлен их художественными достоинствами, актуальностью затронутых проблем, соответствии возрастным и познавательным интересам обучающихся и доступностью языковых средств. В них поднимаются самые разные темы: проблемы семьи и детей, расовой дискриминации, а также вечные темы морали, искусства, человека и общества и, конечно, любви.

Пособие состоит из восьми разделов. Первые три раздела посвящены общим вопросам литературоведческого характера и практическим вопросам, направленным на обучение умениям читать и писать о современных

британских романах на английском языке. Следующие пять разделов представляют системы заданий к пяти современным британским романам: «Мой мальчик» Ника Хорнби (*About a Boy* by Nick Hornby), «Дочь таксиста» Джулии Дарлинг (*The Taxi Driver's Daughter* by Julia Darling), «Дом у моря» Эстер Фрейд (*The Sea House* by Esther Freud), «Портобелло» Рут Ренделл (*Portobello* by Ruth Rendell) и «Луг черного лебедя» Дэвида Митчелла (*Black Swan Green* by Michael Mitchell).

Задания, разработанные к каждой книге, имеют разную направленность. Важными задачами, на наш взгляд, являются развитие гуманитарной культуры студентов в процессе иноязычного образования [7; 15; 21; 22; 23; 25], формирование их ценностной автономии и познавательной самостоятельности [5; 17; 20; 24], развитие профессионально значимых умений студентов [11; 13; 18]. Цель лексических упражнений – овладение новым вокабуляром и его закрепление, предупреждение ошибок в словообразовании и сочетаемости слов [9; 10; 12; 16; 27]. Цель грамматических упражнений – повторение некоторых правил английской грамматики и тренировка грамматических структур [6]. Речевые упражнения направлены на полное, глубокое понимание художественного текста на уровне его смыслового содержания. Выполняя данные упражнения, студенты обсуждают события и характеризуют героев, интерпретируют отдельные высказывания, доказывают или опровергают мнения, определяют отношение автора и свое отношение к описываемым событиям и персонажам и т.д. [1; 2; 19; 29; 30]. Ряд заданий направлен на развитие у студентов умения определить темы и основную идею произведений, понять контекст, оценить содержание с точки зрения его социокультурной и нравственной значимости, а также умения сравнивать иноязычные и родные ценности [4; 28].

Особое внимание уделяется заданиям на развитие социокультурной компетенции студентов, обогащение их знаний о культуре страны изучаемого языка, знакомство с современными реалиями англоязычного мира. Авторы настоящего пособия считают, что целесообразно увязывать прочитанное с личным опытом обучающихся, сравнивая разные аспекты родной и изучаемой культур [3; 8; 14; 26]. Достижению этой цели способствуют также биографические справки об авторах, в которых сообщаются основные факты их жизни и творчества.

Кроме этого, студенты развивают навыки создания письменных работ, таких как эссе, рассказ и рецензия на основе прочитанных текстов, отрабатывая стандартные письменные структуры и осваивая принципы создания текстов различной стилистической и жанровой направленности.

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канд. филол. наук, доцент кафедры английского языка ФГБОУ ВО «МГТУ им. Г.И. Носова» М.В. Артамонова – разработка к книге «Мой мальчик» Ника Хорнби (*About a Boy* by Nick Hornby);

канд. пед. наук, доцент кафедры английского языка ФГБОУ ВО «МГТУ им. Г.И. Носова» Ю.В. Барышникова – разработки к книгам «Дочь таксиста»

Джулии Дарлинг (*The Taxi Driver's Daughter* by Julia Darling) и «Дом у моря» Эстер Фрейд (*The Sea House* by Esther Freud);

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## UNIT 1. MODERN ENGLISH NOVELS IN RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES

### Exercise 1

First read the introduction (page 4) about the project *Contemporary British Literature in Russian Universities*. Then read the following extracts from an article by Karen Hewitt, a professor from Oxford, and do the task after the article.

### On Contemporary English Fiction and English Culture (for *Вопросы Литературы*)

In the autumn of 2005, students studying English at twenty Russian universities discovered, to their surprise and excitement, piles of contemporary English novels stacked up in their departments. Fresh new copies of books by writers like Julian Barnes, Jonathan Coe, Graham Swift and Pat Barker, highly admired, prize-winning, literary novelists, were being introduced into the curriculum. By September 2006, teaching sets of these novels had found their way into nearly fifty Russian universities from Smolensk to Khabarovsk.

The project, which is paid for by the Oxford Russia Fund, is a response to the woeful lack of contemporary literature available to Russians studying foreign languages. Those University departments which signed up to the scheme could choose three or four out of twelve novels in the list; their teachers who participated in a seminar in Perm were given sets of whichever books they had selected – a minimum of a hundred volumes altogether, more if they could show that they would *use* them. But there was a *quid pro quo*. Each department taking part in the scheme had to contribute material towards new commentaries on each novel which they were using with their students.

Any Russian teacher, confronted with a novel by Julian Barnes or Jonathan Coe or Hilary Mantel, is going to need help. The novelists scatter their pages with unfamiliar allusions and expressions, many of which cannot be found in dictionaries. They assume that essential social and historical information is part of our shared British culture, so they do not bother to explain what we take for granted. They challenge our complacencies with irony, mock our fictional expectations and recast our nostalgia in fresh modes. Russian teachers are bound to be nervous as they struggle to interpret the tone and meaning of crucial scenes. As one teacher said, 'We can all sense that the opening chapter of *Nice Work* is comic. The author is obviously laughing at the hero. But we cannot quite understand *why* he is laughing.'

Because of such uncertainties, the project directors decided at the beginning of this project that each novel should have a separate commentary – a booklet which could accompany the sets of novels given to the departments, to enlighten teachers and students on matters where no amount of consulting dictionaries, reference books or the Internet would *explain* the significance of a fictional passage. So teachers and students who were using the novels were asked to compile lists of questions and indicate what extra information they needed. It was my job to sort through this material, answer the questions, write short contextual essays for each novel, and

provided annotations to words, phrases, scenes, dialogues. The first seven booklets were published in time for the seminar in Perm in September 2006.

[...] Since we had chosen 'mainstream' novels rather than fantasy and science fiction, I was ready to explain aspects of English life (such as our enthusiasm for pubs); but I had underestimated how extensively these novels reveal both our shared culture and our humour at some of its ridiculous manifestations. I had forgotten how, as English readers, we immediately pick up signals which do not occur within the Russian orbit. We enjoy those dances of mingled passion and mockery, those debates with surprising twists, and the clever manipulation of our emotions. So much in these novels is scarcely made explicit but is none the less instantly recognisable to the native reader. The questions from Russian readers not only uncovered their own misunderstandings (as well as sharp perceptions and good criticism); they also forced me to re-examine the novels we had selected.

What follows is certainly not literary analysis of the twelve novels, enjoyable though that would be. The commentaries are not critical tools, but are intended to help Russian readers understand what is happening by putting them, as far as possible, in the position of an English reader. Nor am I attempting a comprehensive survey of contemporary English culture. (The discussion does not, for example, include debates about multiculturalism versus assimilation.) I simply hope to point out a few of the distinctive ways in which the English look out at the world around them, using our selection of novels to illustrate what is not always obvious.

[...] The characters in Nick Hornby's *About A Boy* (1998) share economic conditions in a small area of North London, but Hornby who is intensely sensitive to social culture shows how these urban characters, drawn from the ever-shifting boundaries of the middle-class, separate themselves into distinct groups, identified by their values and aspirations. His hero is a wealthy young man who believes that he does not have to belong to any group – until life teaches him otherwise. The English reader will pick up the signals: distinguishing uses of informal language, details of neighbourly contact, shared commitments and prejudices; choice of food to cook and meals to eat out, and – since this is Hornby's passion – the music they listen to. Are these definitions of class? In Marxist terms perhaps not, but in terms of social self-identification these choices of behaviour and belief are essential to the construction of the complex society that is England today.

(Incidentally, one cultural difference between Americans and the British is that Americans tend to define themselves as *individuals* 'what is right for myself' whereas the British still ask themselves 'where do I belong'?)

Is modern England a collection of unrelated groups with no shared beliefs and no clear moral standards? Russian students have sent me essays announcing that they are shocked at the behaviour of the younger characters: "Why doesn't the author tell us how wrongly their hero is behaving? Why don't these characters believe in Love? Why don't you have Positive characters?" Their objections are the outrage of the young (although I think young English readers would be more sympathetic) to what they perceive as cynicism on the part of characters and authors. In fact none of these writers is cynical although one or two of them are angry; they differ from these young



essayists because they do not think in terms of 'positive' and 'negative' characters. 'Positive' and 'negative' are possible categories only if a society agrees not only on fixed values but also on the rewards for following those values. That is not possible in a liberal democracy. What the writers do endorse is kindness, generosity and trying to sort out one's own responsibility for the mess which we make of our lives.

One way of dealing with personal problems is to share them with others in a similar situation. Russian readers are quick to see that this needs comment. They ask, 'Do single parents *really* get together in a kind of club?' (Yes, certainly.) Or they pick up on details of local life: 'Can you explain: "Gertrude was on the committee for the local history exhibition." Please tell us who organizes a local exhibition? Who elects the committee? Is it voluntary? Social activities in a Russian village are organized in a different way.' These are pertinent questions.

The English flourish in what one sociologist has called 'voluntary associationism'. Up and down the country are hundreds of thousands of informal groups, small charities, clubs and associations for mutual enjoyment, support, interest. The group of single parents (mostly divorcees) whom Will joins in *About A Boy* has not been organised by any outsider or official organisation. Single parents who want companionship and support get together and set up their own club. At some time in the past a group of villagers in *The Sea House* would have formed a local historical society because they were keen on local history. Alsana's friends in *White Teeth* meet together to watch a video, taking it in turns to choose which video, and learning how to compromise over each other's likes and dislikes. All three groups have a committee and a simple constitution.

[...] Much of the history of England lies all around us. The countryside is densely covered with evidence of earlier populations; our cities still contain a profusion of old buildings; our traditions and rituals have not been separated from the land on which they were developed. Which brings us to the English feeling for 'place'. In commenting on these novels, I have found again and again how necessary it is to explain the sense of place – a distinct and special place – in each novel. One Russian reader sent in a comment on Esther Freud's novel, *The Sea House* (2003) which is set in a Suffolk village on the North Sea coast. 'Suffolk is a county on the coast of South-East England. It represents here classical English countryside with very picturesque landscapes but no big buildings. I want to say, 'Well, no, not exactly, because there is no such thing as "classical English countryside." Freud wants us to think about *Suffolk*, not Sussex or Berkshire, or Cambridgeshire or Kent, all of which are counties in the south east of England, but about Suffolk which is special, distinctive, as are all those other counties.'

Why is this so? Although England is tiny by Russian standards, its geography is more varied than the geography of any similar sized area in the whole of European Russia. I was brought up on dry chalk hills; I walked to school across muddy clay; my friends who travelled by bus from the south crossed the green sandstone of the Sussex weald to get to school. We knew, without much thinking about it, that around our homes grew different trees and plants, that the houses were made of different

materials, that the weather and the colours were different as we moved from one soil to another – all within a distance of twenty kilometres.

Such experiences mean that writers, like the rest of us, do not think of the smallness but of the special identity of their own corner of England. Even with motorways, urban sprawl and common institutions, the differences remain. Hornby and Smith write about undistinguished parts of North London, but to the writers – and therefore the readers – they are distinct, as though topography is as much an identifying factor as class. Out in the countryside, geology, geography and history combine to form well-defined and often strange areas. Swift's East Anglian Fens (his 'Waterland') and Freud's Suffolk coastal village are the outstanding examples in this selection of novels, but both writers are drawing on a long literary tradition, most powerfully enshrined in the great Wessex novels of Thomas Hardy. Work varies according to the area in which you live: different kinds of farming, different kinds of industry are overlaid now by modern industrial processes which do not depend on local conditions, but they are still traceable once you start exploring the area.

You may notice that people are always *walking* in these novels – not to arrive anywhere but to wander round an intimate and varied district. As Russians you are just as aware of your land, but your literature insists on the vastness, the unending road, the huge rivers, the harsh climate. (An exception is Turgenev's *Sketches of a Hunter* a work which the English love and have no difficulty in understanding, for Turgenev writes about one field, and then the next field which is *different*.) The distinctiveness of place is so powerful for us that we hesitate to say that a particular area represents 'classic' or 'picturesque' countryside, even if, from the Russian reader's point of view, it is simpler to have some typical scene in mind.

[...] When I began writing the commentaries I knew that I would have to explain such matters as our education system, our housing system, our ways of enjoying ourselves in England. I had not realised how I would need to formulate in my own mind such matters as: our ever-changing but pervasive experiences of class; our ambivalent feelings towards those groups with which we do not identify ourselves; our capacity for organising ourselves into little groups to *do something* for ourselves or for other people; our ready and widespread acceptance of public institutions which goes alongside willingness to let them be manipulated by unscrupulous people; our childhood knowledge of Bible stories that sits alongside an ingrained scepticism towards religion, notwithstanding the number of people who think of themselves as Christians; our fascination with interpretations and re-interpretations of our history and willingness to mock our own national myths; our passion for small, specific areas of countryside or townscape that have to be distinguished from other places that to the unknowing eye may look similar; our belief that understanding art must begin with careful contemplation of actual works; our suspicion of 'theory', our resistance to large comparisons and symbols, our pleasure in analogies and complex but real connections.

And – for this has not yet been sufficiently stressed –our insistence that all these aspects of our culture can be, and probably should be, treated humorously – this too is deep in our culture. Some of these novels are overtly comic; others are sober; one or

two carry the weight of tragedy. But all the writers without exception look at the situations they have created as though the shifting light of humour must be played across them. Apart from the special case of *What a Carve Up!* the humour is not grotesque; it may flicker in individual scenes, as in *Regeneration*, or be omnipresent in the quizzical self-questioning of a confused man, as in *Headlong*. It may be tart and intelligent to the point of cruelty, as in *An Experiment in Love* or reflectively humane in the voice of Barnes' narrator. Hearing the humour in some of these novels was the most difficult task for our Russian readers, perhaps because the difficulties and dilemmas facing the characters were not obviously *funny*. Why should anyone want to laugh?

The teachers and students who are reading these unfamiliar contemporary novels are struggling with the lesson which foreigners have always found difficult: the English resist grand gestures by looking at them with wry irony. At points of crisis, even tormented narrators can always turn round and see the quiet absurdity of the situation. Humour, however painful to articulate, is a powerful refusal to tidy up the human condition into a single state or an ultimate truth.

Karen Hewitt  
Oxford, February 2007

Now summarize the article specifying the following items:

1. The beginning of the project.
2. Commentaries on the novels.
3. The challenges of understanding *About a Boy* by Nick Hornby.
4. The sense of place in the novels.
5. Aspects of the British culture that need an explanation.
6. Humour and irony in the novels.

## Exercise 2

Karen Hewitt made a list of some good English contemporary novelists. Look through the list and answer the questions after it.

### List of Some Good English Contemporary Novelists

**Julian Barnes** – Witty and sophisticated, though difficult for non-native readers because of highly educated, allusive, ironic approach. Much interested in French and English relations. In some ways more of an essayist than a novelist.

**William Boyd** – Good stories, lots of plot, plenty of bizarre comedy, many issues to discuss. Mostly set outside Britain with British characters.

**A.S. Byatt** – Probably best as a short story writer, particularly on art. A bit 'intellectual' and not a natural novelist (her ideas are usually better than her plots and characters). But many people love *Possession*. I like her *Matisse Stories*.

**Jane Gardam** – An elderly writer now, so her stories tend to look backward. But a wonderful writer, very sympathetic, excellent short stories, some novels.

**James Kelman** – Tough life in Glasgow in a monotonous Glasgow dialect – but humane and powerful. If that sounds good, try *The Bus Conductor Hines*.

**Bernard McLaverty** – McLaverty is a Northern Irish writer, now living in Scotland. Try the short stories or, say, *Grace Notes* for this distinctive cultural world. Direct writing, not too difficult. But you need to know something about the Protestant/Catholic divide.

**Deborah Moggach** – Sympathetic shrewd stories about contemporary life. She has a wonderful eye for contemporary detail. The story in CBS is excellent. Try her novels, e.g. *Porky*. Her writing is colloquial-friendly, not great literature, but intelligent.

**Graham Swift** – A brilliant writer who will last. (For home reading, get them to read 'Waterland' – your students will be faced by something intelligent, emotional, comic and tragic and philosophical – and dealing with the problems of young people.) *Last orders* is another wonderful novel, though maybe too difficult for Russian readers.

**Rose Tremain** – Stories and novels packed with visual and sensuous images. A strong eccentric taste, each book different from the last, but all with a lot of sympathy for her heroes who are both obsessive and witty. Set in other times or other countries.

**William Trevor** – Another Irish writer though now living in England. Perhaps our best living short story writer. Always sad, wry, with endless sympathy for failures. A very powerful writer who seems at first to be writing unobtrusively. But there is enormous art in what he writes. Also try the novellas like *Reading Turgenev*.

**Fay Weldon** – A lighthearted but intelligent feminist writer, who can also attack women. A good comic guide to social habits of the English. She also writes fantasies.

**Hilary Mantel** – I think she will be another classic; wonderful writing packed with sharp, strange brilliant images; witty, cool, very intelligent. She deals with important and difficult themes. I particularly recommend her two novels, *A Change of Climate* and *An Experiment in Love*. Far more in them than appears in a first or second reading.

**Jim Crace** – He writes parables, compelling symbolic tales. They manage to be complex and sympathetic, strange and yet comprehensible. Unlike Golding, he is an optimist about human beings and their instinct for insisting on their own way of doing things. Try *Continent* or *Signals of Distress*.

**Ian McEwan** – He is potentially one of our finest writers. His style is quietly but immensely powerful and he enjoys creating horror and terror. He is best at scenes and local effects rather than complete novels. I think his best book – which is still sinister – is not a tale of horror but a complex story about children: *The Child in Time*. The newest one, *Atonement* is worth reading.

**Helen Dunmore** – A poet turned novelist whose writing is beautiful, though sometimes her stories seem to trail away. Try *Burning Bright* or *Zennor in Darkness*.

**Jonathan Coe** – A humorous, friendly, easy-to-read writer who explores interesting ideas and who can be satirical. Try *What a Carve Up* which is on a Dickensian scale, and which Russians as well as English love. It's probably his best.

**David Lodge** – A comic 'university campus' novelist, very up-to-date with social commentary. His *Nice Work* is wonderful, and one of the best guides to Thatcher's Britain. The most recent two 'Therapy' and 'Thinks' are good

entertainment and more up-to-date in their social satire, but I feel he is writing a bit on auto-pilot.

**Martin Amis** – An immensely skilled writer who has a horror of modern Britain. So his novels are grim, even disgusting, but very linguistically brilliant. His early novels are probably his best, if you like them at all.

**Penelope Fitzgerald** – A writer of short, distinctive, eccentric and very humane novels. Impossible to categorise, but rightly much-loved. She set one novel in Moscow (*The Beginning of Spring*) but perhaps you should try *The Bookshop* or *Human Voices*. Her virtues are subtle and perhaps not clear to foreign readers.

**Beryl Bainbridge** – Another eccentric, who can leave you gasping and bewildered, but whose recent writing has become very brilliant and funny/painful. Her settings are varied, and many set in her own youth. Later novels tackle other periods. Try *An Awfully Big Adventure* (theatre) or *Master Georgie* (partly about the Crimean War.)

**Margaret Forster** – Not a great writer, but a good, solid decent writer who deals very sympathetically with problems in Britain today. Useful for Russian students.

**Adam Thorpe** – A writer of one indisputable (I say!) classic novel, which is very difficult to read because of its verbal ingenuity and its recreation of earlier language. If you can cope with it, you will read a masterpiece – *Ulverton*.

**Pat Barker** – A trilogy about the First World War from the point of view of emotionally wounded men. An astounding feat. First volume is *Resurrection*. She also writes contemporary novels about people living in North East England.

**Barry Unsworth** – He has written many novels, mostly set in other countries and in other times. He can write beautifully, and is a warm, sympathetic and serious writer, although his characterization is not very subtle.

**Nick Hornby** – He deals with young, educated as-yet-unmarried Londoners who are now in their mid-to-late 30s. His writing is witty, lightweight but intelligent. But Russians miss most of the jokes which are very topical. Try *About a Boy*.

**Malcolm Bradbury** – Like Lodge, a comic ‘Campus’ novelist, perhaps with a harsher edge. Several of his novels are set in Soviet-period Eastern Europe as seen from the point of view of a visiting lecturer. Try *Dr Criminale* (End of Cold War period).

**Michael Frayn** – Known in Russia for his plays, but he also writes sympathetic comic novels. The most recent is about art history: *Headlong*.

We have some other very fine writers – this is only a selection. And I have left out **Salman Rushdie** (*Midnight’s Children*), **V.S. Naipaul** (*A House for Mr Biswas*) and **Kazuo Ishiguro** (*Artist of the Floating World*) because although they are British, they are writing about other communities. However, **Naipaul** and **Rushdie** are arguably in a bigger league than any of my list. In my list my money is on Swift and Mantel and on Trevor as a short story writer.

Answer the questions.

1. Which writers were familiar to you? Whose books have you read? Did you read them in Russian or English? Did you enjoy reading them or not? Why?
2. Whose books would you like to read? Why?
3. Explore your university library. Has it got any books by the above-mentioned writers? Read them and compare your impressions with those of Karen Hewitt.
4. Study the language of the commentaries and make a list of words and expressions you may find useful to talk about writers and their works.
5. Make your own list of some good Russian contemporary novelists you'd recommend your English (or Russian) friends to read.

### Exercise 3

Here is a list of some books in the scheme *Contemporary British Literature in Russian Universities*. Karen Hewitt writes, "All of them are by highly regarded, serious contemporary writers. Seven of them have won the Booker prize. The novels have been chosen because they are worth reading – and worth reading several times, and because in different ways they should appeal to the Russian reader. None of them is simple, banal, reassuringly easy. Most are suitable for 4th and 5th year students, but I have indicated where novels are also suitable for younger readers".

Study the list and choose a book you'd like to read. Explain why you have made this choice. If you have already read some of the books, share your opinion with your fellow-students.

#### The Books in the Project

1 Graham Swift *Waterland* (1983); 4th year – brilliant, complex, serious, much to discuss; a history teacher's stories about his own teenage years, involving family history, love, murder and philosophy.

2 Hilary Mantel *An Experiment in Love* (1995) 4th year. A very intelligent, intense story about girl students; short, but very demanding because of its language and approach. Too difficult for younger readers – Mantel's view of the world requires a sense of life's complexities and an attention to detail. Mantel is one of the finest writers in Britain today.

3 Julian Barnes *A History of the World in 10 and a Half Chapters* (1989); 4th year. A brilliant, warm, critical, satirical, speculative, unexpected approach to the meaning of life, art, religion and love from a very English point of view. Some students love it, others hate it. It can be discussed in sections which is useful. Some intelligent 3<sup>rd</sup> year students can manage it – but you have to have a mature mind.

4 Jonathan Coe *What a Carve Up!* (1994); 3rd year, 4th year. A long novel with a complicated structure; part-satire, part-ruminative love story. Lots of extra material

including pictures and documents. Energetic 3rd year students have enjoyed this if their English is good enough. Historians/economists/non-philologists also enjoy it, especially the satire.

5 David Lodge *Nice Work* (1988); 3rd and 4th year. A university comic novel. Intelligent, witty, lots of discussions, lots about university – and work.

6 Pat Barker *Regeneration* (1991) 4th year. A novel, very much admired in Britain, about the First World War. A thoughtful novel about war, poetry, personality under stress. A minority novel, but excellent for those who enjoy serious reading. Some of the best student essays we have received (from 5<sup>th</sup> year students) have been on this novel.

7 Michael Frayn *Headlong* (1999); 3rd year, 4th year. A philosophical black comedy with much art history. Many students and teachers love this novel – but as with all the other novels, the reader is expected to *think*.

8 Ian McEwan *Atonement* (2001); 4th year. A very difficult novel – *and not much like the film*. This is not primarily a love story but a story exploring the moral responsibilities of the artist. Very demanding language and long. You need to work at it, so students must be experienced readers. Some critics regard it as one of the best novels for forty years.

9 Nick Hornby *About a Boy* (1998); Good 2nd year. 3rd year. A comic novel about a painful situation for a 12-year-old boy. Most students love this novel. (And the film isn't bad, but watch it afterwards when the students will understand how much better the novel is.) But by the time students are in the 4<sup>th</sup> year they should be expecting something more demanding for their university reading.

10 Esther Freud *The Sea House* (2003) 3rd year, 4th year. Two love stories separated and connected by nearly 50 years. Plenty of recognizable emotions and a wonderful sense of place.

11 Zadie Smith *White Teeth* (2000); Good 3rd year students; 4th year. A wonderful study of multicultural London today, using three families and several generation. Funny, warm – but *long*. Most students struggle until they get into it. Then it 'clicks' and the bright ones *love* it – and love writing about it.

12 Penelope Lively *The House in Norham Gardens* (1974) 2nd and 3rd year. Chosen specifically for younger students. It uses quite demanding English, but the subject is a few months in the life of a fourteen-year-old in unusual circumstances. Not a love story – a story about age and time and houses and other peoples.

13 Beryl Bainbridge *Master Georgie* (1998) 4th year. Only for experienced

readers, this is a strange but powerful novel of love and obsession, set in nineteenth century Liverpool and in the Crimea during the Crimean war. Beryl Bainbridge who died in 2010 is a classic English eccentric genius, and this is probably her masterpiece.

14 Barry Unsworth *Morality Play* (1995) 4<sup>th</sup> year. Perhaps 3<sup>rd</sup> year, because it is short and the language is not difficult. But it is a troubling, dark, oblique novel, brilliant but not simple, set in the fourteenth century. It involves a murder mystery, concepts of God and the nature of drama.

15 David Mitchell *Black Swan Green* (2006) 4<sup>th</sup> year. Perhaps intelligent 3<sup>rd</sup> year students. The story of a year in the life of a 13-year-old boy told by himself. Growing up in rural England in 1982, with plenty of colloquial and slangy early teenage language. On another level, a beautiful book about learning to understand the world – courage, loss, families, war, early love, art, poetry, honesty. Its hero may be 13 but it is *not* a book for children.

16 Adam Thorpe *Ulverton* (1992) 4<sup>th</sup> year for very good students; wonderful for diploma/MA students who care for literature, history and language. This is a masterpiece – but it is difficult. The commentary should make it much easier. It consists of 12 stories, set at different dates from 1660 to 1986, which celebrate characters, strong emotions, different kinds of speech and written prose, passion and ideas, all linked by the fact that they are set in one village.

17 Ruth Rendell *Portobello* (2008) 3<sup>rd</sup> year, perhaps 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Too easy to stretch 4<sup>th</sup> year students A novel by a well-known crime writer which is not quite a murder mystery though it contains plenty of action and excitement. Set in a lively part of contemporary London.

18 Bernard MacLaverty *Grace Notes* (1998) 4<sup>th</sup> year. Perhaps for thoughtful 3<sup>rd</sup> year students. A beautiful novel about a young woman composer from Northern Ireland who has to struggle with the contradictions of family, love and motherhood on the one hand, and the imposing demands of music on the other. The writing is quite simple, the implications are more complex.

19 Sebastian Faulks *A Week in December* (2009) 4<sup>th</sup> year. A novel about contemporary Britain, following the lives of seven characters – a financier, a footballer, an Islamic student, an underground train driver, a lawyer, a reviewer and a schoolboy – during a week in December 2007. Tense and exciting, but quite complicated – it requires an intelligent and thoughtful reader.

There are 11 more books in the scheme. Make your own comments on them. The books are:



- 21 Jill Dawson *Magpie* (1998); 2/3  
21 Julia Darling *The Taxi Driver's Daughter* (2003) 1/2/3  
22 Magnus Macintyre *Whirligig* (2013); 2/3/4  
23 David Hare *Stuff Happens* (2004); 2/3/4/MA (Especially for politics,  
international relations students.)  
24 David Edgar *Testing the Echo* (2008); 2/3/4/MA  
25 John Lanchester *Capital* (2012); 3/4/MA  
26 Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night time* (2004);  
1/2/3  
27 Emma Healey *Elizabeth is Missing* (2015); 3/4  
28 Rachel Joyce *A Snow Garden* (2016); 1/2/3  
29 Mike Bartlett *King Charles III* (2014); 2/3/4  
30 Jane Rogers *Hitting Trees with Sticks* (stories) (2012); 1/2/3/4

## UNIT 2. HOW TO READ NOVELS

### Exercise 1

Look at this entry for the verb *read* in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. What collocations could you learn from this entry? Underline or highlight them. Then write one new sentence for each of them.

**read** verb /rɪd/ noun /rɪd/ adj. /red/  
 ■ verb /rɪd/ (read, read /red/)  
 WORDS/SYMBOLS 1 (not used in the progressive tenses) to look at and understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols: [V] *She's still learning to read.* ◊ *Some children can read and write before they go to school.* ◊ [VN] *I can't read your writing.* ◊ *Can you read music?* ◊ *I'm trying to read the map.* 2 ~ (sth) (to sb/yourself) to go through written or printed words, etc. in silence or aloud to others: [V] *I'm going to go to bed and read.* ◊ *He liked reading to his grandchildren.* ◊ [VN] to read a book/a magazine/the newspaper ◊ *Have you read any Steinbeck (= novels by him)?* ◊ *He read the poem aloud.* ◊ [VN, VN] *Go on—read it to us.* ◊ *She read us a story.*—see also PROOF-READ  
 DISCOVER BY READING 3 ~ (about/of sth) (not used in the progressive tenses) to discover or find out about sb/sth by reading: [V] *I read about the accident in the local paper.* ◊ [V(THAT)] *I read that he had resigned.* ◊ [VN] *Don't believe everything you read in the papers.*  
 SB'S MIND/THOUGHTS 4 [VN] ~ sb's mind/thoughts to guess what sb else is thinking  
 SB'S LIPS 5 [VN] ~ sb's lips to look at the movements of sb's lips to learn what they are saying—see also LIP-READ  
 UNDERSTAND 6 [VN] ~ sth (as sth) to understand sth in a particular way: [VN] *UNDERSTAND: How do you read the present situation?* ◊ *Silence must not always be read as consent.*  
 OF A PIECE OF WRITING 7 [V(speech)] to have sth written on it: to be written in a particular way: *The sign read 'No admittance.'* ◊ *I've changed the last paragraph. It now reads as follows...* 8 [V] to give a particular impression when read: *Generally, the article reads very well.* ◊ *The poem reads like (= sounds as if it is) a translation.*  
 MEASURING INSTRUMENT 9 [VN] (of measuring instruments) to show a particular weight, pressure, etc. *What does the thermometer read?* 10 [VN] to get information from a measuring instrument: *A man came to read the gas meter.*  
 HEAR 11 [VN] to hear and understand sb speaking on a radio set: *'Do you read me?' 'I'm reading you loud and clear.'*  
 REPLACE WORD 12 [VN] ~ A for B | ~ B as A to replace one word, etc. with another when correcting a text: *For 'madam' in line 3 read 'madman'.*  
 SUBJECT AT UNIVERSITY 13 ~ (for) sth (BrE, rather old-fashioned) to study a subject, especially at a university: [VN] *I read English at Oxford.* ◊ [V] *She's reading for a law degree.*  
 COMPUTING 14 [VN] ~ sth (into sth) (of a computer or the person using it) to take information from a disk: *My computer can't read the disk you sent.* ◊ *to read a file into a computer.*  
 IDIOM read between the lines to look for or discover a meaning in sth that is not openly stated: *Reading between the lines, I think Clare needs money.* read sb like a book to understand easily what sb is thinking or feeling: *read my lips* (spoken) used to tell sb to listen carefully to what you are saying: *Read my lips: no new taxes* (= I promise there will be no new taxes). read (sb) the Riot Act (BrE) to tell sb forcefully that they must not do sth  
 ORIGIN From an Act of Parliament passed in 1715 to prevent riots. It made it illegal for a group of twelve or more people to refuse to split up if they were ordered to do so and part of the Act was read to them. take it/sth as read (BrE) to accept sth without discussing it: *Can we take it as read that you want the job?*  
 PHRASES read sth back to read a message, etc. aloud in order to check that it is correct. read sth into sth to think that sth means more than it really does: *Don't read too much into what she says.* read on to continue reading: *That's the story so far. Now read on...* read sth out to read sth aloud, especially to other people. read sth over/through to read sth carefully from beginning to end to look for mistakes or check details. read sth up to read up on sb/sth to read a lot about a subject: *I'll need to read up on the case before the meeting.*  
 ■ noun /rɪd/ (sing.) (informal) 1 (especially BrE) an act or period of reading sth: *I was having a quiet read when the phone rang.* 2 a good, interesting, etc. ~ a book, article, etc. that is good, etc. *His thrillers are always a gripping read.*  
 ■ adj. /red/ (used after an adverb) (of a person) having knowledge that has been gained from reading books, etc. *She's very widely read in law.*—see also WELL-READ

### Exercise 2

Think of as many collocations as you can for each word. Then look in a dictionary for other suitable words.

- 1 to read .....  
 2 reading .....  
 3 reader .....

How useful do you think these collocations are for you personally? Choose which collocations are most important to you personally and make sentences with them.

### Exercise 3

Complete the sentences using a word or collocation from the box.

1. I haven't had time to do much ..... lately.
2. In the holidays I'll ..... some serious reading.
3. She has a good ..... of Russian.
4. Their story makes ..... reading.
5. After ..... reading on the subject she set to work on an article.
6. A ..... reading of the text reveals several contradictions.
7. My ..... skills are not the best.
8. The dials were giving higher ..... than we had expected.
9. .... readers may have noticed the misprint in last week's column.
10. We are ..... readers of this magazine.
11. This book will be too difficult for ..... .
12. He is a ..... reader of science fiction.
13. Dickens gave many ..... from his works.
14. We met at ..... of his poetry.
15. His ..... about Ruskin led him to the works of Turner.
16. You will find magazines and other reading ..... in the waiting room.
17. It is important to do some ..... reading before buying a pet.

- a) close
- b) public readings
- c) reading
- d) map-reading
- e) alert
- f) regular
- g) matter
- h) extensive
- i) background
- j) get down to
- k) reading
- l) readings
- m) a reading
- n) reading knowledge
- o) voracious
- p) compulsive
- q) the general reader

### Exercise 4

Explain the difference in meaning between the collocations in each pair.

- 1a. compulsive reading
- 1b. compulsory reading

2a. serious reading

2b. light reading

3a. required reading

3b. recommended reading

4a. extensive reading

4b. background reading

5a. holiday reading

5b. bedtime reading

6a. background reading

6b. introductory reading

### Exercise 5

Choose the correct collocation.

1. I took some *light* / *avid* / *voracious* reading on holiday with me.
2. Their teacher has given them a reading *skills* / *list* / *glasses*.
3. Because of his *essential* / *light* / *extensive* reading, he knew a lot about the topic.
4. The test is designed to measure children's reading *matter* / *ability* / *room*.
5. She has poor reading *skills* / *age* / *light*.
6. This story is too scary to make *disturbing* / *introductory* / *good* bedtime reading.

### Exercise 6

The following adjectives make up collocations with the noun *reader*. Study the collocations and explain what kind of reader they denote. What collocations can you use to speak about yourself and your reading habits?

- careful, competent, fast, fluent, good;
- alert, attentive;
- discerning, sophisticated;
- poor, slow;
- avid, great, voracious;
- omnivorous;
- regular;
- casual;
- adult, female, male, women, young;
- specialist;

- general, non-specialist;
- Daily Express, Guardian, etc.;
- tabloid.

## **THE PLACE OF LITERATURE**

We know that there are hundreds of famous names in English literature. We feel that we and our pupils ought to know something about them and of what they wrote. How do we start on this rather bewildering task?

There has been a good deal of cruelty practiced in the name of literature, and many of us have suffered from poor teaching; but there is another side to this picture. We often talk of the love one of our masters gave us for poetry, and we often quote it. What has it done for us? It has given us something very precious that we shall never lose, and it has given us standards of taste for certain things that are worth while. The teacher, if he or she carries any weight in the class at all, cannot help having this potential influence on the pupils. That is what we are striving for: an influence, which we hope will improve the taste of our pupils for something lasting and worth-while. The pupil does not realize that this is going on, of course. He does not realize at first that one kind of reading matter is better than another.

Do not be afraid of the word “classical”. There is a whole wealth of reading material available which is just as attractive as any of the cheaper forms which seem to catch our children’s fancy.

The teacher of English is not only an instructor in an honorable craft, the writing and reading of prose, he is also something of a magician with the key in his hands to an art which is more universal than music and which (unlike the plastic and graphic arts) is nourished and not vitiated by cheap mass production. The end of the teaching of literature is not primarily the amassing of knowledge about books and plays and poems, but the acquisition and development of an attitude towards the reading of books and the values that literature has to offer. If the pupil grows into an adult whose mental life is completely satisfied by the thriller and the daily newspaper, the school teaching of literature has in his case completely failed. The real test of good literature teaching is in the adult discrimination of the community it has helped to create, not what the pupil knows in the fifth form but what he reads in his twenties and thirties. I doubt if any other teaching in the school carries such a burden of responsibility. The English teacher teaches a craft, but he also initiates into mystery. The good teacher of literature must have not merely knowledge, but a sensitive appreciation of the art he communicates.

Our objective in the higher classes, then, is not to provide a conducted tour through one or two books a year, although we must ensure that our pupils read a minimum amount. It is to introduce our pupils to writing, which they will enjoy, and which will perhaps be the beginnings of a process of a lifelong enjoyment. I presume that you do really think that books can provide this enjoyment and also an insight into the lives, thoughts and experiences of others, and that this insight is something worth having.

How shall we do it?

We do it by a sympathetic extension of the work on the various types of reading. Any class should read at least three “official” books a year. One of these should be read in detail and the other two in a more general way. They should all be read, not for their language value so much as for their plot, studies of human beings, presentation of situations, description of scenery and exciting or humorous events. The book read in detail will probably have to be read aloud in class, not as a reading exercise, but to ensure that everybody has read it. There is no harm in this as long as you do not make a hackneyed activity out of it. Introduce plenty of discussion at convenient points and use the book for composition exercises. The class will all the time be absorbing a background of a good prose and acquiring a wide vocabulary unconsciously.

There must be a great deal of reading, apart from the official “set books”, and the only advice to the teacher here is to give sympathetic encouragement to the pupils. Discussion in class of books read by pupils, written descriptions of them, and so on probably discourage more than they encourage pupils to acquire a taste for good reading. Example and suggestion are of much more use. If the pupils see the teacher always has reading matter with him, they may be tempted to do the same. A few enthusiastic words about a book the teacher has just read, or would like some of his class to attempt, or a remark about a book an enterprising member of the class has taken out of the library are valuable incentives.

We hope to introduce the child during his school life to the best and most useful experiences that are available. Certain pursuits in school are obviously utilitarian; others help the child to realize his position in the world in relation to other people. There is, however, a further side to human nature; the side of the emotions, the side to which beauty of form, colour, sound and movement make an appeal. This side cannot be suppressed; on the other hand it must be educated if an all-round development of personality is to be attained. The child cannot, without training and encouragement, appreciate these various manifestations of beauty. He has to be taught to recognize them, first through pleasant experience, and later by conscious study.

It has been mentioned above that our pupils must be trained to appreciate the sound of worthy literature. By skilful explanation, which does not help too much, by skilful execution, by sympathy and by enthusiasm the teacher can train his pupils to listen in the most useful way. There must be plenty of opportunities for listening. Read to your class. Read first of all things, which they will like and appreciate. Then gradually, if you are prepared to be enthusiastic about it, introduce more worthy material. Do not treat it as a formal exercise which will have to be reproduced by the class afterwards, although a certain amount of discussion should be forthcoming in order that the class learns to appreciate the niceties of the pursuit.

**Exercise 1. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. To make a choice is very difficult since there are hundreds of prominent writers in English literature.

2. Reading classics gives standards of taste for certain things.
3. The teacher's aim is to introduce the pupils to literature which they will enjoy.
4. What is absolutely essential is enthusiasm on the part of the teacher.
5. The teacher himself can set a good example, as far as reading literature is concerned.
6. It is enough for a teacher to have an in-depth knowledge of literature to teach it.
7. Literature is worth while for its own sake.

**Exercise 2. Answer the following questions.**

1. According to the article, what is the purpose of teaching literature in general?
2. According to the article, what is the purpose of teaching literature in the higher classes?
3. What is the teacher's role in teaching literature?
4. How many "set books" does a pupil have to read each year?
5. How can a teacher encourage pupils to read and discuss books?
6. How can pupils be taught to appreciate worthy literature?
7. What is the role of reading to a class?
8. What is the connection between books and emotions? Do you think books go directly to a person's emotions?

**Exercise 3. Discuss the following questions with your partner.**

1. Do you like reading books for their language value or for their plot?
2. In what way do you think pupils should be taught to appreciate worthy literature?
3. You have been in school for two or three years. During most of that time, as far as English is concerned, you have been busy learning the technique of the language – speaking, listening, reading and writing it. What is the place of English literature in this process?
4. Imagine that you are a teacher of literature. How do you feel about forcing a pupil to read, for example, something for which on no account of his age he has not the requisite mental development or with which he has no emotional contact. Do you think it is a good idea to criticize a pupil for not understanding it?
5. What can make the discussion of literature an enjoyable activity?
6. Some people say that poetry can give lasting enjoyment, which cannot be equalled except by that given by music and other forms of art. What is the role of poetry in the process of teaching literature? Can you appreciate poetry?

### UNIT 3. HOW TO WRITE ABOUT NOVELS

You will sometimes be asked to create a piece of writing based on the reading assignment. Whatever your text is, your written work should follow a set of certain guidelines, which are universal and can be easily applied to any type of task. When you write a composition or an essay, you are often asked to write your answer in the form of an article, a report, or a letter.

**Articles** are found in magazines or newspapers. All of the following can be written in the form of an article:

1. descriptive compositions about people, places, objects, etc;
2. narrative descriptions or stories about real or imaginary events which happened in the past;
3. discursive essays, about arguments concerning particular subjects (opinion essays or for-and-against essays).

**Reports** are similar to articles but have a more formal, factual style, and each kind has its own special format and features. Compositions in the form of reports include:

1. news reports about recent events;
2. assessment reports discussing the suitability of a person, a place, a proposed plan, etc;
3. reviews discussing a film, a book, etc.

**Letters** are written to a specific person/group of people for a specific reason. Compositions in this form include:

1. friendly letters to people we know, usually about personal matters, in informal style;
2. formal letters to officials/managers about official/business matters, in formal style;
3. postcards to friends or relatives.

#### **Composition instructions**

Composition instructions (the rubric) often describe an imaginary situation which you will write about. This may suggest who/what you are, what has happened, why are you writing, etc. The instructions also suggest the imaginary reader of what you write. This may be a specific person, or a general type of person. A composition should be written in a style which suits the particular reader. You will often be told to include a number of specific topics in your answer.

#### **Key words**

The key words in the instructions are those which tell you about the type of writing, the situation, the reader, and the specific topics. It is very useful to underline the key words, and make a list of specific topics.



## **Planning your composition**

1. List the specific topics mentioned in the composition instructions.
2. Brainstorm for ideas – write down any ideas, words/phrases you can think of which are related to the general subject.
3. Choose which of these you will use, and group them into main topics. Check that these include all the specific topics you have listed – you may include more topics, but you must not leave out any of the specific topics.
4. Choose suitable topics for the introduction and the conclusion.

## **Composition Layout**

Most compositions have three basic parts – an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.

**Introduction:** the introduction is a short paragraph in which we give the reader a general idea of the composition, and attract their attention so that they want to continue reading.

**Main body:** in the main body we develop points related to the subject of the composition. This part usually consists of two or more paragraphs, depending on the subject.

Each paragraph should deal with points related to the same topic. We start a new paragraph each time we begin to discuss a new topic. For example, in a for-and-against article, the main body will have one paragraph about advantages, and a second about disadvantages.

**Conclusion:** the conclusion is a short final paragraph in which we summarize the main idea of the subject, restate our opinion using different words, discuss the results of the main event, etc.

## **Topic Sentences**

In some type of compositions - especially articles and discursive essays – it is a good idea to begin each paragraph of the main body with a topic sentence. This is a sentence which introduces or summarizes the main topic of the paragraph, to give readers an idea of what they are going to read. This is followed by supporting sentences which give examples and details to develop and support the topic sentence.

## **Writing Techniques**

There are some writing techniques which we can use to make the beginning or the ending of the composition more interesting to the reader. For example, to begin or end an article, we can:

1. address the reader directly – to write as if we were speaking to the reader, using the word “you”;
2. use direct speech to give somebody’s exact words, or a quotation from a famous writer, celebrity, etc. In both cases we have to use quotation marks;

3. ask a rhetorical question – a question which does not expect an answer.

### **Writing style**

We do not use the same sort of writing style for every composition. There is a variety of styles we can use (formal, informal, personal, impersonal, descriptive, factual), and we must choose the most appropriate style for each writing task.

The appropriate style for a composition depends on the type of composition, the situation suggested in the rubric, and who the imaginary reader is. For example, a letter telling a friend our news should be personal, while a letter of application to the manager of a company should be formal, factual and polite.

The two main kinds of writing style are formal and informal, which usually include other features, such as impersonal, factual, etc.

**Formal:** formal expressions and vocabulary, little or no use of short forms, formal linking words/phrases.

**Impersonal:** frequent use of the passive; little or no descriptions of emotions.

**Factual:** facts and statistics; neutral description.

**Informal:** everyday expressions and vocabulary, idioms; frequent use of short forms; simple linking words/phrases.

**Personal:** first person, addressing the reader directly; frequent description/discussion of emotions.

**Descriptive:** variety of adjectives/adverbs for vivid descriptions.

### **Checklist**

1. Read the instructions and underline the key words. Identify the type of writing, the situation and the imaginary reader. Decide which style of writing is the most suitable, and list the specific topics which the rubric tells you to discuss.
2. Brainstorm for any ideas, words/phrases which are related to the general subject. Choose which ideas you will use and group these into main topics. Check that these include the specific topics given in the rubric.
3. Plan the layout of your composition and check that you have a separate paragraph for each main topic. Write a topic sentence for each paragraph of the main body.
4. Choose suitable topics for the introduction and the conclusion, and think of writing techniques to make the beginning and the ending more interesting.
5. Write your composition in the style which is most suitable for the reader and the situation. Use appropriate linking words/phrases to join short sentences and to show how your ideas, sentences and paragraphs are related.
6. Check your composition carefully and correct any errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.

### **Writing a short story**

Although you will probably not need to do any research if you are writing a short story, it is still important to plan your work carefully.

Write down an outline of the main events of your story in chronological order. Then decide where the story is to begin and how it is to develop. Will the events lead

to an inevitable conclusion or will you use the ‘twist-in-the-tale’ device? The unexpected ending can be very effective if well done.

There will not be room for any detailed description as everything that is written must move the story on. Your reader will want to know what happens next. In a short story there is no room for any unnecessary words so descriptions of people and places have to be by implication. There is no room for long ‘flowery’ passages of description (‘purple prose’).

A story is written to entertain, and in your story there should be conflict of some kind. It could be between a parent and child, or between two neighbors. It could be a spiritual conflict within a single character. The plot should be simple and there should only be one. There is no room in a short story for a sub-plot.

Plots are all around you. Your own experience or someone else’s could be woven into a short story or you could modernize the plot of a fairy story or a legend.

### **Exercise 1**

Read the tips and match them to the corresponding parts in the narrative essay.

1. Begin your narrative with a surprising statement or question, to grab the reader’s attention.
2. The style is informal and informative. Use *you/your* to address the reader directly.
3. Use time expressions to make it clear when the action takes place.
4. In paragraph 1, set the context for the narrativee – give information about where and when it happened and who is involved.
5. Use idioms and collocations to make your writing fluent.
6. Use a variety of tenses, for example, the past perfect to show an event before another event in the past, the past continuous to set the scene, the past simple for single actions, etc.
7. Use vivid descriptions to help the reader imagine what you saw, felt and experienced. Use strong adjectives to make your writing interesting.
8. End your narrative in a strong way. You can pose a question, make a prediction about the future or reflect on what you have learnt.

*Imagine you are twelve years old and you have always dreamt of travelling abroad. Then imagine your parents telling you they are taking you on holiday in Spain. This is what happened to me a few years ago and it was the best holiday of my life.*

*I was over the moon when I learned my dream of travelling was to come true. Furthermore, I had never been on an aeroplane before. I’ll never forget that feeling of anticipation when the plane took off. I could barely speak; I was so excited!*

*I had learned a little Spanish at school but I was nervous the first time I tried it out at a local market. I was absolutely thrilled to discover that people understood me! The single event set me on my current path of studying Spanish at university.*

*However, the highlight of the holiday was a visit to an aquapark. I don’t think I’ve ever laughed so much as during those hours we spent flying down water slides*

*and bobbing about in wave pools. At the end of the day, my brothers and I were exhausted but ecstatic, and we felt like a really special family.*

*Now my older brothers have left home and married and soon I'll go to university. It is unlikely we'll ever go on holiday as a family again but I'll always have my memories of that first trip abroad to remind me about fun, family and the thrill of new adventures.*

### **Exercise 2**

Make a list of strong adjectives, idioms and collocations used in the narrative. Add five more of your own to each of these three groups.

### **Exercise 3**

Read the task

*A magazine is producing a special collection of readers' reviews entitled 'The importance of distinct characters in novels. You decide to send in a review of the text you have read, in which you give relevant information on the main characters and evaluate how successfully the author differentiates these characters.*

Now read the answer and choose a suitable sentence opener to fit the spaces. There is one extra opener which does not belong anywhere.

- A. However, it has to be said that...
- B. The author achieves this...
- C. Last but not least...
- D. Similarly, ...
- E. Much as Kneale has tried...
- F. Throughout the novel...
- G. At the same time, the book...

*"English Passengers" is a meticulously-researched historical novel chronicling an expedition to Tasmania in 1857, where the theories of Darwinian evolution are juxtaposed with the religious beliefs of the day, often in a comical way. 1)... deals sensitively with the bigger historical picture of the tragic destruction of the Aboriginal islanders' way of life at the hand of white settlers, ex-convicts and religious 'do-gooders', who all in their separate ways contributed to the Aborigines' demise.*

*2)..., events are narrated by a cast of some twenty characters, whose 'first-hand' accounts span fifty years and combine to give the reader a truly epic novel, that is rich in detail and variety.*

*3)... largely through the varied use of language itself – from the formality of documents written by the island's governor, where the official policy is revealed, to the base and harsh language used by the convict Jack Harp. Shifty Captain Kewley incorporates words from his native Manx dialect into his vivid snapshots of the outward voyage, while the Reverend Geoffrey Wilson, the expedition's leader, has a predictably stiff style of narrating.*

*The pieces contributed by the expedition's doctor are written in scientific note-form, with judicious use of underlining to indicate his sinister concerns. This stylistic device, though hard to process at times, is most effective and develops as we learn more about Dr Potter's nefarious deeds. In the denouement, the notes become more truncated and you can almost see him underlining in rage. 4)..., when Wilson goes mad, the author is able to use subtle changes in language to reflect his sorry state.*

*Perhaps the most difficult character to portray credibly through language is Peevay, the Aboriginal hero. 5)... even here the author successfully adopts a distinct style, incorporating paradoxical expressions learned from settlers, such as 'tiding of joy'. 6)..., the third expedition member Timothy Renshaw matures in the course of the novel and becomes the voice of reason and common sense. Helped by Peevay when abandoned in the wilderness, his awakening to the beauty of the land and decision to stay on the island could be seen as a final reconciliation.*

#### **Exercise 4**

Read these sentence openers and decide on their function, writing

- A. for reference to the book
- B. for evaluation
- C. for comparison

- a) Up to this point
- b) In much the same way,
- c) Eventually,
- d) By and large,
- e) By the same token,
- f) Subsequent to this,
- g) To a certain extent,
- h) Within a matter of hours,
- i) On balance,
- j) As it turns out,
- k) For the most part,

Now write six sentences about the text you are studying, choosing some of these openers.

#### **Exercise 5**

The review refers to the book as a meticulously researched historical novel. Using adverb-adjective compounds like this will demonstrate your range of language. Make further adverb-adjective collocations from lists A and B and combine them with a suitable noun form list C. Only the adverbs should be used more than once.

A	B	C
annoyingly	accurate	characterization
exquisitely	compelling	chronicle
hauntingly	detailed	depiction
ingeniously	enigmatic	images
intensely	impressive	hero
painstakingly	intricate	individual
subtly	moving	interpretation
utterly	paradoxical	narrative
zealously	pompous	plot
	realistic	portrayal
	trivial	protagonist
	woven	storyline

### Exercise 6

Using the advice above, write the review outlined in Exercise 3, referring to the text you are studying. As a general rule, you should start a new paragraph for each character you introduce, but this will depend on the number of characters and level of detail you go into.

## UNIT 4. ABOUT A BOY

by Nick Hornby<sup>1</sup>

What do you know about Nick Hornby, the author of *About a Boy*? When was he born? What is he famous for? What books did he write? If you need some information to answer these questions, read the following article by Karen Hewitt.

### Biography

Nick Hornby was born in Redhill, a small town south of London, in 1957. He graduated from Cambridge University and taught English to foreign students while reviewing for magazines including *Time Out* and the *Literary Review*. His book about Arsenal Football Club called *Fever Pitch*, was published in 1992. It won the William Hill Sports Book of the Year Award and was adapted as both a play and a film. When he turned to fiction, he continued to explore male obsessions, crises and weaknesses. His first novel, *High Fidelity* (1995), is the story of an obsessive record collector. It was adapted as a film in 2000. His second novel, *About a Boy* (1998), focuses on a relationship between Will Freeman and Marcus, a twelve-year-old boy. A film version, starring Hugh Grant, appeared in 2002. His novel, *How to Be Good* (2001), examines contemporary morals, marriage and parenthood. His most recent books are *31 Songs* (2003), which celebrate songs of great significance to the author, and *A Long Way Down* (2005), a novel which was shortlisted for the 2005 Whitbread Novel Award.

Hornby has always been a popular writer; his achievement, especially with his later novels, has been to write fiction that has a mass appeal *and* is taken seriously by critics.

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<sup>1</sup> Hornby N. *About a boy* Penguin books, 2002.

## ASSIGNMENT 1

### Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-24)

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Bruce Springsteen* – an American singer-songwriter, who spoke for youthful exuberance in the early 1980s.

*Labour Party* – In 1993 the Labour Party had been a minority party since 1979. However, by this time the Conservative Party which was governing the country had become very unpopular. Regular Conservative voters were announcing that at the next election they would vote Labour. Suddenly it was fashionable to support the Labour Party.

*Polenta and shaved parmesan* – at that time in London it was very fashionable to eat simple peasant food and to pay a very high price for it.

*East Enders* – a popular BBC television soap opera set in the East End of London.

*Pinky and Perky* – puppets of two piglets in a children's television series of the 1960s.

#### **1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Расстаться, разорвать отношения (p.1); переключать каналы (p.2); козлиная бородка, эспаньолка (p.5); сойти с ума, сбрендить (p.6); беспорядок, бардак (p.7); изможденный, уставший (p.7); работать с утра до ночи (p.7); по непостижимым для него причинам (p.8); смотреть на кого-л. с ненавистью (p.9); наступить на горло своей гордости (p.10); избежать кучи проблем (p.10); портить кому-л. жизнь (p.13); находиться в постоянном поиске чего-л. (p.13); рассказать что-л. кому-л., поделиться (p.14); иметь совесть что-то сделать (p.14); убедиться на собственном опыте (p.17); сбрасывать со счетов (p.19); привязаться к кому-л (p.20); взять все в свои руки, взять быка за рога (p.22); безупречное прошлое (p.23); смириться (p.23); броситься очертя голову в новые отношения (p.23).

#### **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. He was, according to the questionnaire, sub-zero! He was dry ice! He was Frosty the Snowman! He would die of hypothermia! (p.6)

2. Will wondered sometimes – not very often, because historical speculation wasn't something he indulged in very often – how people like him would have survived sixty years ago. (p.6)

3. Jessica and Will split up when Jessica wanted to exchange the froth and frivolity for something more solid. (p.8)

4. The only other kind of person he could think of who didn't go to school was the Macaulay Culkin kind. (p.12)

5. Maybe children democratized beautiful single women. (p.20)



6. He never managed to strike up much of a rapport with Maisy, Angie's mysteriously somber five-year-old. (p.20)

7. In the end, the thing that swung it for him in his affair with Angie was that he was not Someone Else. (p.21).

8. This, for Will, was the clincher. (p.24)

### **3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. How did Fiona and her son Marcus take the separation with Roger? What were the two kinds of life Marcus was thinking about? Dwell upon the meaning of the last passage in chapter 1 (p.4).

2. What do you think about the questionnaire Will was reading and his attitude to it? How big was his involvement with the "mass culture" and "being cool"? Do you think being cool and fashionable is that important nowadays?

3. What is Will's opinion of having a family? What kind of relations did he normally have? What is your impression of Will's visit to his friends' place?

4. Why wasn't Marcus right for school? What made him and his mother "weird"? What is weird and what is normal in your opinion? Would changing schools improve his situation? What happened on the first day of school? Is bullying at school a necessary evil? Can it be helped?

5. Dwell upon the English class. Were Ms Maguire's teaching techniques satisfactory? What kind of mistake did she make during the discussion? How would you act if you were in her place?

6. How did Will get acquainted with Angie? How do you usually get acquainted? Recall the funniest or strangest episodes from your or your friend's life.

7. What made Will reassess his attitude to kids? Why did he find relations with single mothers so surprisingly profitable? Talk about Will and Angie's splitting up. Why was Will so surprised? What conclusion did he come to?

### **4. Give your opinion of the following utterance:**

You didn't have to have a life of your own any more; you could just peek over the fence at other people's lives, as lived in newspapers and East Enders and films and exquisitely sad jazz or tough rap songs. (p.6)

**5. Dwell upon the sentence** on p. 9, beginning with "He still saw her..." What can you say about its structure and syntax? What does it imply?

**6. Read the passage** on p.18 beginning with "She looked at him..." and name the stylistic device used in it. What did the author aim at while using it? Find another example of this SD in the chapters.

**7. Read and translate the passage** on page 14 beginning with "It wasn't all his mum's fault".

**8. Writing assignment.** Imagine you are a friend of Jessica. Write a letter to your friend about Will Freeman, his lifestyle and outlook, and why you eventually split up. Use at least 10 words/phrases from ex. 1.

## **ASSIGNMENT 2**

### **Chapters 5-8 (pp. 25-53)**

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Soup kitchen* – a place where free food is offered to the poor, usually by volunteers.

*VSO* – Voluntary service Overseas, a large international charity that sends volunteers to work in difficult and poor parts of the world.

*Lorena Bobbit* – famous in 1993 when she cut off her husband's penis with a kitchen knife while he was asleep in Virginia, USA.

#### **1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Поторопись, пошевеливайся (p.25); зачерстветь, испортиться, потерять свежесть (p.26); инстинкт самосохранения (p.27); сходить с ума (p.27); делать успехи (p.32); потакать прихотям (p.32); вывести на чистую воду (p.33); невротик (p.34); ниже своего достоинства (p.35); раскрыть свою подлинную сексуальную ориентацию (p.36); восстановить гармонию (p.36); время от времени (p.38); много шума из ничего (p.38); держаться от кого-л. Подальше (p.40); как гром среди ясного неба, абсолютно неожиданно (p.42); запутаться (p.47); жить на авторские отчисления (p.47); по праву гордиться чем-л. (p.48); самая суть (p.48); как медленно может тянуться время (p.49); принять за чистую монету (p.51).

#### **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. He's quite happily give up Coco Pops if she'd give up crying all the time. (p.26)

2. He though he's be led straight to it by the happy buzz of people forgetting their troubles and getting roaring drunk, but there was no happy buzz, just the distant, mournful clank of a bucket. (p.33)

3. So he was wrong to be prompt. He had more or less given himself away already. (p.34)

4. They liked his mother here, because she talked to them about the place where they came from; she had been there once, a long time ago, when she was a real hippy. (p.39)

5. This wasn't right. He was only a kid. He'd been thinking that more and more recently, as he got older and older. (p.40)

6. I'm doing what you said. I'm getting someone else to look after you. Suzie's much more capable than I am. (p.42).

7. Parents got pretty cut up about kids dying, and he'd find the requisite years of grief a real drain on his thespian resources. (p.45)

8. But nobody had ever mentioned anything about a Joni Mitchell revival. He felt dispirited. (p.50)

### **3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. What made Marcus really worried in the morning? Did he know how to react? What was his line of behaviour?

2. Speak about Marcus's so-called friends and their relationships. Why do you think Marcus was still attracted to them? Do you think he was right when he agreed that the boys should give up on their hanging out together? How does it characterize him?

3. Why did Will consider himself a good fraud? What was his lifestyle and what were the possible effects of it on socializing skills?

4. Dwell upon Will's acting as an imaginary single father. What were the things he was concerned about? What is the prevailing mode of this episode?

5. Why did Will call the SPAT members "angry women"? Do you think this support group was really helpful for single parents? Did Will fit in? How?

6. Talk about Marcus's relations with his father and his family. What do you make of the description of the weekend at Dad's place?

7. Give a gist of the conversation between Marcus and Fiona on page 41. Do you agree that children in single parent families grow older faster than their peers? Do you think Marcus made his point when explaining his worries to his mom?

8. How did Marcus and Will first meet? Did they like each other? Was Will feeling comfortable at the picnic? Did he make progress in his courting Suzie?

### **4. Give your opinion of the following utterance. What cultural references can you make out of it?**

"Oi, Mohammed," one of them shouted. That wasn't Mr Patel's name. "You ought to check his pockets. He's been thieving." (p.39)

**5. Dwell upon the sentence** on p. 36, beginning with "Men who took one look..." What can you say about its structure and syntax? What does it imply?

**6. Read the sentences** on p.46 beginning with "The thing was..." up to "... he was bound to be lucky next time" and name the stylistic device used in them. What did the author aim at while using it?

**7. Read and translate the passage** on page 26 beginning with "On the way to school...".

**8. Writing assignment.** Imagine you are Will Freeman who eventually made up his mind to start a job as a columnist in a men's magazine. Write a column on how to find attractive single women and chat them on. Remember who your reader is. Keep

it humorous and use Will's ideas from the text. Utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.

### **ASSIGNMENT 3** **Chapters 9-12 (pp.54-77)**

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*The Guardian* – a national daily newspaper which has a section once a week advertising jobs in the media.

CV – curriculum vitae, a document giving details of your education and qualifications and the jobs you have had in the past.

*In loco parentis* – (Latin) a legal term meaning “in place of the parent”

*The token sops to teens* – “sop” means “some soft and comforting food for an invalid” – which is here used metaphorically as something soft and sentimental to please teenagers.

#### **1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Умереть от инфаркта (p.54); сдать кого-л. полиции (p.56); заметить что-л. (p.57); плохо отразиться на ком-л. (p.58); отправить кого-л. домой (p.59); сдерживаться (p.60); промывать желудок (p.60); повеситься, покончить жизнь самоубийством (p.61); изгой, отверженный человек (p.62); в нужный момент (p.62); с меня хватит (p.65); нести чепуху (p.69); избирать кратчайший путь (p.72); когда на него находило настроение (p.72); упрямо (p.72); приукрашивание (p.73); прочитав от корки до корки (p.74); начать заниматься чем-л. (p.75); законопослушный (p.75); не уловить сути (p.77).

#### **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. They'd put two and two together and make five, and he'd be imprisoned for a crime he never committed. (p.54)

2. But this was the scariest thing he'd ever seen, by a million miles, and he knew the moment he walked in that it was something he'd have to think about forever. (p.58)

3. He would have liked nothing better than to pretend he had a flashing blue light on the top of the car, drive on the wrong side of the road and crash through as many red lights as he wanted, but he doubted whether either of the mothers ahead of him would thank him for it. (p.59)

4. That was his mother. When she wasn't crying over the breakfast cereal, she was laughing about killing herself. (p.65)

5. Two wasn't enough, that was the trouble. (p.66)

6. He could take an avuncular interest in them, give their lives a bit of shape and gaiety. (p.73).

7. So, there it was then: an enormous, happy, extended family. (p.74)

8. They were turning to crime and drugs and prostitution simply because they were on the menu now, an exciting, colourful and tasty new range of options that he had been denied. (p.75)

### **3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. What happened at the pond in the park? What line of behaviour did Will choose with the park-keeper? What makes this episode comic? Is there any other meaning to this episode?

2. Speak about the meaning and importance of the passage where Marcus sees his mother in the park? What did the author aim at by introducing this “vision”?

3. Dwell upon the suicide scene. What kind of setting is used? Which stylistic devices does the author utilize? True, suicide is a difficult issue to talk about, but what is your opinion of Fiona’s attempt to kill herself? Did she really mean it?

4. Why did the author call Marcus “the oldest twelve-year-old in the world”? What was the outcome of his mother’s suicide attempt on Marcus’s life and outlook? How did Will perceive the whole business? Talk about the emergency room and its connection to Fiona and Marcus. What is the connection there?

5. What do you think about Fiona’s suicide letter? Do you see the point in her words? Would it have made easier for Marcus to understand his mother?

6. Why did the movie “Groundhog Day” alarm Marcus so much? Why didn’t it worry Fiona? Speak about Fiona’s behaviour after her return from hospital. What did Marcus expect? Why did his expectations fail?

7. What were Will’s days like? How did he cope with the free time? Why couldn’t he impress the employers with his CV? Would you like to have a life like his?

8. Why did Marcus call Will first? What did Will do before going to pick Marcus and Fiona up?

**4. Give your opinion of the passage on p. 62 beginning with “Marcus nodded...”.**

### **5. Make up three sentences of your own after the patterns:**

1. *How come* he managed to pick the duck *that pathetic*?

2. *It was the days* that *tested* his patience.

**6. Read the passage** on p.61 beginning with “It was true” and talk about the stylistic devices the author employs to describe the waiting room.

**7. Read and translate Fiona’s letter** on page 64.

**8. Writing assignment.** Some people think that children in single-parent families mature faster. Do you agree or disagree? Use examples from the text to support your ideas. Utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.

## ASSIGNMENT 4

### Chapters 13-16 (pp.78-112)

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Tory* – the Conservative Party. In the Conservative governments of both Mrs Thatcher and John Major much emphasis was put on “family values”. They announced that parents should stay together and discipline their children, children should be obedient, hard-working, etc. The problem was that the country was full of children of divorced parents who were therefore being damned by politicians for something for which they were in no way responsible.

*A Kramer vs. Kramer kind of thing* – a reference to an American film about a divorce in which the parents were very antagonistic and fought for custody of the child.

*National Service* – compulsory military service for young men, which was established after the Second World War but abolished in the late nineteen-fifties.

#### **1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Заигрывать (p.79); выглядеть разбитым, жалким (p.79); придурковатый, чокнутый (p.80); быть честным с кем-л. (p.82); разоблачать кого-л. (p.83); добрые дела, благотворительность (p.88); мучительный (p.91); разрыдаться (p.92); вынюхивать, шпионить (p.92); странный, не в своем уме (p.94); приступ ярости (p.101); уйти в себя (p.103); уклоняться, уходить от темы (p.104); быть обескураженным чем-л. (p.105); заманивать кого-л. в ловушку (p.105); переделка, неприятная ситуация (p.106); заставить себя сделать что-то, побуждать (p.106); сдерживать улыбку (p.112).

#### **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. Marcus hated it when she made jokes to people who didn't know her very well. (p.80)
2. Nobody was going to get married to anybody at this rate. (p.81)
3. He had to say that the thing he found most attractive about her was that she had tried to kill herself. (p.87)
4. You had to be engaged to be a vegetarian; you had to be engaged to sing “Both Sides Now” with your eyes closed; when it came down to it, you had to be engaged to be a mother. (p.90)
5. He was one of life's visitors; he didn't want to be visited. (p.93)
6. Marcus was interested in that “old enough”. It wasn't something he was told very often. (p.100).
7. What and why he owed him he didn't know, but he could see he was serving some purpose in the kid's life at the moment. (p.103)
8. The triumph over nicotine addiction wasn't Marcus's triumph, exactly, but in a life that was at the moment decidedly triumphless it was the closest he had come for a while. (p.106)

9. He was not, as far as Will was aware, a visionary poet, or a primitive painter; he was probably stuck in some provincial solicitor's office, like everyone else from school. (p.111)

**3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. Why did Marcus decide to bring Will and Fiona together? Talk about their dinner together? How did everyone feel at dinner? How did Marcus try to break the ice? Do you find this scene comic?

2. What was Will's impression of Fiona? What did he like about her? What he didn't? What can you say about Fiona's character judging by her looks? What scared Will so much during the dinner at Fiona's place? What conclusion did it bring him to?

3. Why did Marcus make up his mind to pay Will a visit? Describe the scene. What did Marcus notice right away? Why didn't he give Will's secret away to Fiona and Suzie?

4. What are Will's and Marcus's ideas of "being cool"? Why did Marcus get used to coming to Will's place every day? Talk about their conversation as perceived by Will and by Marcus. Do you think they both found them useful? Was there any change in their relations? What indicates it?

5. Why did Will think that Marcus and Fiona belong to "another country"? How did he get involved into Marcus's life? Did it bring any good? What was Will's mistake?

6. Talk about "real stuff" and its shortage in Will's life. How did he try to compensate it? Compare Will's and Fiona's flats. What conclusion does it bring you to?

**4. Give your opinion of the passage on p. 91 beginning with "He went record shopping...". What kind of mood does it create? What stylistic devices does the author employ for this purpose?**

**5. Read the sentence** on p.107 beginning with "Will went back..." and name the stylistic device used in it. What did the author aim at while using it?

**6. Read and translate the passage** on page 90 beginning with "When he got home...".

**7. Make up a dialogue between a counselor (a psychotherapist) and Will, or Marcus. Discuss their relations and their attitude to them.**

**8. Writing assignment.** Write a narrative. Imagine you are Will Freeman, and you do not have to make a living, so time may hang on your hands. Describe a day in your life, and make a conclusion whether this lifestyle suits you or not. Utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.

## ASSIGNMENT 5

### Chapters 17-20 (pp.113-147)

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Sod's law* – (also known as Murphy's Law). A comic "scientific" law that states that things will go wrong if it's possible for them to go wrong. According to sod's law, if you drop a piece of bread and butter it will land butter-side down.

#### **1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Промокнуть насквозь (p.113); не иметь понятия (p.114); попробовать, попытаться (p.117); внезапно (p.119); хмуриться (p.123); осмелиться (p.124); наносить вред, напрашиваться (p.125); опека (p.127); договариваться (p.129); как гром среди ясного неба (p.130); заблудший, сбившийся с пути (p.130); заработать пощечину (p.137); прогульщик (p.140).

#### **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. Marcus had never thought of his mother in that way before, as someone who knew what she was doing. (p.118)
2. That's what life is, Marcus. You have to work out what you believe in, and then you have to stick to it. (p.120)
3. If the first thing he had thought of when he heard the busker at the tube station was his father, the unexorcizable ghost of Christmas past, the second was Marcus. (p.125)
4. She was so unworldly that she seemed to him to be an unlikely suicidal depressive, even though she sang with her eyes closed: surely anyone who floated that high above everything was protected in some way? (p.131)
5. He'd love to show his mum what happened when you tried to talk to another kid at school. (p.136)
6. But then she started talking about what she called "survival strategies", and that was when he got cross. (p.139)
7. Marcus was so locked into himself, so oblivious to everyone and everything, that affection seemed to be only possible response: the boy somehow seemed to be asking for absolutely nothing and absolutely everything all at the same time. (p.143)

#### **3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. What was Fiona's reaction to the stolen shoes? Describe the row at Will's apartment. How did Marcus try to protect his mother?
2. In what way was the row thought-provoking? What conclusion did it bring Marcus to? Dwell upon the questions he started asking himself. What do they denote?
3. How did Marcus manage to win the right to see Will?



4. Why did Will hate Christmas? How did he usually spend it? Why was this Christmas different?

5. Talk about Charles Freeman and his life as seen by his son eyes. Why did Will make a connection between Charles and Fiona?

6. Render Will and Fiona's conversation over the phone and in the pub. What was Fiona's point? What was Will's? What kind of revelation did Fiona have there? Why did it surprise Will so much?

7. Talk about the incident at the headmistress's office. Who did Marcus meet there? What was peculiar about their conversation? What provoked Marcus to skive? What kind of advice should the headmistress have given to Marcus instead?

8. Why did Will like driving? What did he feel when he saw Marcus in the street? What conclusion did Will come to after the conversation with Marcus about school?

**4. Give your opinion of the passage on p. 139 beginning with "As soon as he left Mrs Morrison's office..."**

**5. Read the passage** on p.143 beginning with "Will wrestled with his conscience..." and talk about the stylistic devices the author employs here.

**6. "He loved Nirvana, but at his age they were kind of guilty pleasure" (p.142)** What is a guilty pleasure? Do you have any?

**7. Writing assignment.** An opinion essay. Who should be responsible for fighting bullying at schools: teachers, headmasters, the police or a wider community? Answer the question and offer at least one solution to the problem. Use ideas from the text to support your arguments. Utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.

## **ASSIGNMENT 6**

### **Chapters 21-24 (pp.148-177)**

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Clive gave Fiona a Nick Drake cassette* – Nick Drake was an English singer of the early 1970s. The irony of the gift is that Drake suffered from depression throughout his life (often reflected in his lyrics) and killed himself from an overdose of antidepressants.

*Arty movers and shakers* - refer to people who initiate projects, get things moving, have ideas that they try to put into practice.

**1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Сбежать (p.148); немного шумно (p.149); иметь мужество (p.151); прекратить притворяться (p.152); в целости и сохранности (p.155); праздничный

(p.156); находиться в заблуждении (p.159); ссориться из-за пустяков (p.160); объяснять, растолковывать (p.161); проказничать (p.168); приводить в смятение (p.170); без взаимности (p.171); пригодиться (p.173); изгой (p.174).

## **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. But then he realized she was making one of these jokes he never got. (p.148)
2. Ellie had something they didn't have - or they had something Ellie didn't have, he didn't know which. (p.152)
3. If people couldn't live together, he reckoned, they should at least have the decency to loathe each other. (p.160)
4. Much later in that day, when common sense prevailed and everyone started squabbling, he learnt that smiling at people didn't even mean that you had to be friends for a day, but for a few hours he was happy to believe in an inverted universe. (p.160)
5. It wasn't even that he was choosing to seethe glass as half-full, either - Marcus's glass was full to overflowing, and he would have been amazed and mystified if anyone had attempted to tell him there were kids who would have hurled the hairy jumper and the sheet music back in the parental face and demand a Nintendo. (p.162)
6. 'Shut up, Marcus,' said everybody and then they all laughed. (p.166)
7. He hated the five-minute window of opportunity. (p.172)

## **3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. How did Marcus interpret the conversation by the vending-machine? What was Will's idea of it? Why did Ellie talk to Marcus and even came looking for him in his class? How did Marcus feel about it?
2. Why did Will accept the invitation? What surprised Will most of all at Fiona's Christmas party? What were the relationships like among the guests? What do you think of the Christmas presents? Why was Will so astonished by Marcus's attitude to his mother's presents?
3. What triggered the squabble? What made it worse? How was Marcus trying to defend Will? What did Will do in the end? Where are your sympathies and why?
4. Why did Will feel uncomfortable falling in love? How does Will's self-pity characterize him?
5. Will made it a point that understatement meant no harm. Do you agree that understatement is better than lies?

**4. Give your opinion of the sentence on p. 156 beginning with "So he would spend Christmas...".**

**5. Read the sentence on p.160 beginning with "On New Year's Eve he would make a resolution..." and talk about the stylistic device the author employs here.**

**6. "His line of work" (p.169)** What made Marcus so puzzled about this conversation? How do you call this stylistic device?

**7. Writing assignment.** A narrative. Describe a family reunion or a celebration, when you were especially happy, or when something interesting happened. Try to keep the reader engaged and utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.

## **ASSIGNMENT 7**

### **Chapters 25-28 (pp.178-211)**

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Red herring* – it's a common idiom meaning something, which seemed significant but turned out not to be.

**1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Расставить все на свои места (p.178); улигнуть, скрыться (p.179); сделать небольшой глоток (p.181); жалкий, вызывающий презрение (p.184); беспечно (p.186); неправильно что-то понять (p.186); эффективность, действенность (p.188); взаимный обмен (p.189); сила интеллекта, глубина ума (p.190); выиграть время (p.197); хныкать, всхлипывать (p.200); слабоумный (p.203); хрупкий, уязвимый (p.210).

#### **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. Will had told him to watch out for his mum on New Year's Eve. (p.180)
2. He could see now why his mum chose friends, instead of just putting up with anyone she happened to bump into. (p.183)
3. Marcus was right, of course, but being right was no use if the rest of the world was wrong. (p.187)
4. Will was beginning to come to the conclusion that he was not, as he had always previously thought, a good liar. (p.187)
5. One sentence, the first sentence she said, was all it took to bring the whole thing, the elaborate past, present and future he had created for the two of them, crashing to the floor. (p.194)
6. Suddenly Marcus could see why people like Rachel and Suzie - nice, attractive women who you thought wouldn't give someone like that the time of the day - might like Will. (p.201)
7. 'You don't mind being treated like a .... gerbil?' (p.205)
8. Will knew this was supposed to make him feel better about everything, but it didn't. (p.210)
9. He's been singing with his eyes closed soon, and there was nothing he could do about it. (p.211)

### **3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. Describe the New Year's party. Draw parallels between Marcus/Fiona and Ellie/her mother. What were the mothers doing? What were the kids occupied with? What were Marcus's impressions of his first real friendship?
2. Why did Will take Marcus to the amusement arcade? What did they talk about there? How did Will know that Rachel was special? How did Marcus feel about Ellie? Why did Marcus agree to help Will?
3. What is your impression of Rachel? Why did Will suddenly feel dispirited when Marcus and he arrived at Rachel's place?
4. Did Marcus and Ali have much in common? What happened in Ali's room? What do you think of Ali's behavior? What was the outcome of the incident?
5. What made Marcus fall in love with Ellie? What was Will's opinion of the whole affair? What do you think of Marcus/Ellie relationship?
6. Render the conversation between Rachel and Will in the cafe. What was so surprising about Rachel's reaction? Did Will like her reaction? What kind of questions did the conversation evoke in him?

**4. Give your opinion** of the suicide discussion on p. 182. What was the stumbling block for the kids? Who do you agree with, Marcus or Ellie?

**5. Read the sentence** on p.183 beginning with "He wanted to keep it going..." and find the similar passage in the book. What stylistic device is used here? Why did the author employ it?

**6. Writing assignment.** An article. What makes people fall in love? Do you think opposites attract? How true are these set notions about love? Write an article discussing the matters of love and use ideas from the text to support your arguments. Utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.

## **ASSIGNMENT 8**

### **Chapters 29-32 (pp.212-246)**

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Some sort of DIY thing* – do-it-yourself, making or repairing things for your home instead of paying someone to do it for you.

*Open University* - this is a university, founded in 1968, which provides courses only for external students who are studying at a distance. Most students are older than thirty; some are in their eighties. Because they are mostly studying part-time, it takes five or six years to obtain a first degree, but the standard is very high. Students read at home, write essays, which they post to their tutors, listen to special programs on the BBC, watch videos, use the Internet and sometimes go to summer schools or monthly tutorials. Many people enroll for shorter courses than a full degree - this seems to be what Fiona is doing.

**1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Предсказуемый (p.213); размышлять, обдумывать (p.213); тупой, бестолковый (p.215); головокружение (p.220); полностью соглашаться с кем-либо (p.221); расширяться (p.222); мечтательность (p.222); последняя надежда (p.223); свободный (p.224); очевидный для посторонних (p.224); небольшое сотрясение мозга (p.230); дать шанс, развязать руки, натравить кого-либо на кого-либо (p.232); обычный, приземленный (p.239); подвести, подставить (p.240); выдумка (p.245).

**2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. Back in the first breakfast crying time, hundreds of years ago, he was on his own; now, there were loads of people. (p.212)

2. Marcus suddenly felt sick. The moment he'd walked out of Will's flat the previous evening he'd been imagining this conversation with Ellie, and how she would cheer him up in a way that Will never could, and it wasn't like that at all; instead, the room was beginning to turn round slowly, and all the colour was draining out of it. (p.217)

3. Sometimes someone said something, and he did look down, and he was left with an irresistible urge to jump. (p.220)

4. I would never stick my head in a gas oven at the end of an evening with you. (p.225)

5. See, I was thinking about you. About how you have to be fairly tough in your head to do what you do. (p.224)

6. The best thing about it was that he really did have to look after Ellie, and he liked the feeling that brought with it. (p.237)

7. Suddenly Marcus could see a problem with his guided missile plan: the problem was that Ellie wasn't actually a guided missile. (p.238)

8. 'What's the matter?' He tried to say it as if he knew it were a big question, but it came out all wrong: the gravity sounded, to him at least, like tetchiness, as if there were a 'now' missing from the end. (p.241)

9. Ellie and Marcus weren't old enough to understand that, though. They would think it all meant something and that worried him. (p.246)

**3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. What was the whole point of having friends, according to Marcus? Was this point correct, after all? How did Will and Ellie behave when Marcus asked them for help?

2. The contents of Chapter 30 revolves around "the point". What is "the point" Will was thinking about? What was Rachel's idea of it? Being different from each other as they were, did Will and Rachel find anything in common in the end? Find quotations in the text to support your ideas.

3. What is *a big think*? Why did Fiona's mentioning it make Marcus so angry?

4. What happened on the day Marcus and Ellie were going to Cambridge? What did Marcus do to protect the girl? Why did Marcus perceive Kurt Cobain *as a member of a family* for once?

5. Do you think Rachel really set Will up? Why did she do that?

6. What did the conversation between Will and Fiona sum up to? How did Will feel at the beginning? at the end? What was the reason for Fiona's depression?

**4. Give your opinion** of the dialogue on p. 215 beginning with "Listen,' Will said...". What did Will try to communicate to Marcus? Did he manage to?

**5. Analyze the passage** on p.221 beginning with "People like Fiona..." and talk about various stylistic devices the author employs here and the idea they communicate.

**6. Writing assignment.** An opinion essay. Celebrities enjoy a vast coverage in the media and often serve as role models to millions of people. Should that be the case? Or should there be something done to prevent their influence? Discuss both views and share your opinion. Use ideas from the text to support your arguments and utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.

## ASSIGNMENT 9

### Chapters 33-36 (pp.247-278)

#### **Pre-reading cultural references:**

*Doppelganger* – a German word meaning someone who is so like you that he or she seems to shadow you and understand your mind. Normally used in sinister circumstances.

*Was Royston law the same as 'LA Law'?* Will wondered. - Fiona, in her anxiety, starts talking like a criminal in an American film: 'We're willing to cut a deal' which is something no English person would say, and certainly not to an English policeman.

**1. Find the English equivalents for the following words and phrases. Recall the situations in which they are used.**

Всхлипнуть (p.247); прибыть на станцию (p.250); чревоутоверитель (p.251); эксплуатация (p.252); путаница, неразбериха (p.252); понять намек (p.254); упрямый, своевольный (p.257); смириться с чем-либо (p.260); флюиды, атмосфера (p.260); набраться решимости что-л. сделать (p.263); с чистого листа (p.264); мямлить, бормотать (p.269); покидать, оставлять (p.274); осторожный, осмотрительный (p.275).

#### **2. Paraphrase or explain:**

1. It had been fine sometimes - at school, where Ellie's... *Elliness* could be contained. (p.247)

2. The policemen thought it was funny, which Marcus took as a good sign, although it made Ellie very angry indeed: she told them they were patronizing, and they looked at each other and laughed a bit more. (p.252)
3. He wished you could buy this stuff in bottles, so he could keep it in his desk at school and sip from it throughout the day. (p.254)
4. This air you could almost chew. (p.256)
5. They were the Undead. They couldn't live, not properly, and they couldn't die; all they could do was sit in a stranger's car and laugh about it. (p.258)
6. 'Your son,' hooted Ellie, but Fiona was still grim and silent. (p.261)
7. Will had to hand it to her: once she had decided to fight for her child she was unstoppable, however wrong-headed the decision, and however inappropriate the weapons. (p.263)
8. It only really worked, he realized, if you were convinced that being you wasn't so bad in the first place. (p.266)
9. But all three of them had had to lose things in order to gain other things. (p.278)

### **3. Questions and topics for discussion:**

1. What made Marcus that he didn't want Ellie to be his girl-friend? What do you think of the belief that 'opposites attract'? Where in the next chapter can you find the continuation of this idea?
2. Do you agree with Marcus that people like Ellie and Will had to invent trouble because they had never had them?
3. Why did Marcus decide to speak his mind? To what effect?
4. Speak about Will, Fiona and Katrina travelling together. Why did Will think of Marcus in the first place? What was the atmosphere like in the car?
5. Describe the scene at the police-station. Was it revealing in any respects? For whom and why?
6. What did Marcus and Clive talk about? What do you make of Marcus's new theory of human relationships?
7. How did the story end? What kind of transformation did each character have to undergo? What stylistic devices did the author use to describe this transformation? What was the result?

**4. Give your opinion** of the passage on pp. 267-268 beginning with "Clive carried moaning in the car...". Why did Marcus start thinking of God?

**5. Analyze the passage** on p.250 beginning with "He followed her..." and talk stylistic devices the author employs.

**6. Choose any stylistic device and give its examples from the given chapters. Explain the meaning.**

**7. Writing assignment.** An opinion essay. What is the best age to have children, before or after 30? Discuss both views and share your opinion. Use the ideas from the text to support your arguments and utilize at least 10 expressions from ex. 1.



## Final discussion

1. What are the main themes of the novel? Think of at least three of them and expand on the way the themes are developed in the book.
2. Who do you think is the real 'boy' of the title?
3. What is the author's idea of a single parenthood? What solution does he suggest in the book?
4. Although "About a Boy" is a comic novel, it does include some darker elements. What are they?
5. What role do fashion and music play in the novel. Use quotations to back up your point of view.
6. Like many distinguished English writers, Nick Hornby uses comedy to explore difficult issues such as family break-down, depression and frustrated anger. What are the most comic episodes in the book and how do they correspond with serious issues?
7. Comment on the structure and the narrative of the novel.
8. A good deal of the novel is devoted to bullying. What do you think of the nature of bullying? Is there a way for kids to avoid it? What are the ways of putting up with it mentioned in the book?
9. Give a character analysis of:
  - Will
  - Marcus
  - Fiona
  - Ellie
  - Rachel
10. Choose one stylistic device and analyze the way it is used throughout the novel. Comment on the author's peculiar style. Use quotations to illustrate the analysis.
11. Watch the film "About a Boy" (2002) and discuss the main differences in themes and motives. Which do you like better? Why?
12. The soundtrack to the film About a Boy was written by Badly Drawn Boy and produced as a CD. Imagine you were asked to choose the background music for the film. What would you choose?

13. Write an extra scene for the book. For example, Marcus thinks he sees his mother in the park but she isn't really there. He tells Will about it afterwards. Or Fiona meets Suzie after the Royston incident and tells her about it. Or use your own ideas.

14. You are Marcus. Write your diary for a day at the beginning of the story just after you have moved to London and started your new school. Then write your diary for a day after the end of the story. Compare them.

## Final test

1. Correct these sentences.

- (a) Will enjoys complicated relationships with his girlfriends.
- (b) He often spends his evenings watching TV quiz shows.
- (c) He thinks John and Christine are the happiest couple he knows.
- (d) He is very worried about Christine's tiredness.
- (e) He is very pleased when they ask him to be Imogen's godfather.

2. Marcus feels he is different from the other kids at school. In what ways is he different? Make a list. Compare it with another student's.

3. How does Will feel:

- (a) when Angie says that she wants to go out with him?
- (b) when she tells him that she has two small kids?
- (c) when he spends time with Angie?
- (d) when she ends their relationship?

4. Marcus is only 12 but he has a lot of problems at home and at school. If you were his friend, what advice would you give him? Work with a partner. One of you is Marcus. The other is his friend. Talk about Marcus's problems.

5. Answer the questions:

- (a) Why does Will like SPAT?
- (b) Why does Marcus hate SPAT?

6. Different characters say these things in the story. Which are the truth and which are lies?

- (a) 'And she's taken my car, too.'
- (b) 'I hate football.'
- (c) 'Most people.'
- (d) 'He's a really nice boy.'
- (e) 'I think I've killed a duck.'
- (f) 'Marcus loves ducks, don't you, Marcus?'

7. Marcus thinks he sees his mother in the park, but she isn't really there. Can you explain this experience? Talk to another student.

8. Describe each person's reaction to Fiona's body on the sofa.

- (a) Suzie
- (b) Marcus
- (c) Will

9. Answer these questions.

- (a) Fiona says she didn't think she'd ever have to remember the letter. Why not?
- (b) Why does Marcus think that two people in a family aren't enough?
- (c) Why does Will buy Time Out?
- (d) Fiona isn't Will's 'type of woman'. Why not?
- (e) How does Will feel when Fiona and Marcus sing an old pop song?

10. Which of these things happen in this chapter?

- (a) Marcus has his hair cut.
- (b) Will buys Marcus some Adidas trainers.
- (c) Will asks Fiona to be his girlfriend.
- (d) Marcus has his shoes stolen.
- (e) Marcus gets some new glasses.
- (f) Fiona finds out that Marcus is visiting Will.

11. What does Fiona learn about Marcus? Do you think she will change the way she looks after him? Why does she find it hard to understand Marcus?

12. Who:

- (a) doesn't exist?
- (b) is always in trouble at school?
- (c) likes Nirvana?
- (d) likes Joni Mitchell and Mozart?
- (e) rides a Harley Davidson?

13. Answer these questions.

- (a) Why does Ellie tell Marcus that Kurt Cobain is a Manchester United footballer?
- (b) Why doesn't Marcus tell Mrs Morrison who the bullies are?
- (c) Why does Will tell Marcus that it's no good asking him anything?
- (d) What kind of help can Will give Marcus?
- (e) Why does Ellie like Marcus?

14. How does Will feel:

- (a) about Christmas?
- (b) about spending Christmas with Marcus and Fiona?
- (c) when he sees Fiona's ex-husband and his girlfriend at Fiona's house?
- (d) when they're all watching TV after lunch?
- (e) when Suzie arrives with Megan?

15. You are Will. You decide not to go to Marcus's for Christmas. Plan your day.

16. Think of three things to buy Marcus for Christmas.

17. Answer these questions.

- (a) What is Rachel's job?
- (b) Why doesn't Ali like Marcus?
- (c) What do you think Rachel will say when she learns the truth about Will and Marcus?

18. Answer these questions.

- (a) Will never actually said to Rachel that Marcus was his son. Was he honest or not?
- (b) Will says he can choose trainers for Marcus but he can't make his mum feel better. Is he a good friend to Marcus?
- (c) Marcus is upset when Ellie tells him about Kurt Cobain. Why?
- (d) Why does Will decide to do something about Fiona?

19. Put these events in order.

- (a) Ellie gets out of the train at Royston.
- (b) Ellie opens her bottle of vodka.
- (c) Marcus and Ellie meet at King's Cross Station.
- (d) Marcus learns that Kurt Cobain is dead.
- (e) Marcus's dad falls down some steps.
- (f) She breaks the window of a music shop.

20. Lots of people crowd round Ellie and Marcus after they break the shop window. Describe the scene. Talk to another student.

21. Who:

- (a) can't understand the connection between Clive's broken arm and the music shop window?
- (b) is nearly sixteen?
- (c) gets a lift to Royston with Fiona and Will?
- (d) gives Ellie a big hug?
- (e) finds that he quite likes real life?

22. Which of the main characters grow up at the end of the story?

## UNIT 5. THE TAXI DRIVER'S DAUGHTER

by Julia Darling<sup>2</sup>

What do you know about Julia Darling, the author of *The Taxi Driver's Daughter*? When did she live? What was she famous for? What books did she write? If you need some information to answer these questions, read the following article by Karen Hewitt.

Julia Darling was born in 1956 and grew up in the south of England. She studied art and theatrical performance at Falmouth College. She then moved to the north-east of England which is recognized as a distinct region, culturally separate from Yorkshire and the counties of the northwest. Here Darling became a community arts organizer, responsible for developing arts projects (painting, music, poetry, plays and so on) in and around Newcastle. In different ways she continued her work throughout her life.

Her first book of poetry was published in 1988. She wrote poems, plays, short stories and edited the works of other writers. Much of her work was performed on BBC Radio 4, the channel for plays and fiction. She became widely known with her two novels: *Crocodile Soup* (1998) and *The Taxi Driver's Daughter* (2003). No doubt she would have continued to write novels, since both of them were highly praised and won prestigious prizes when they were published, but she had other problems to contend with. In 1995 she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. The earlier treatments were successful, but she knew the cancer could return, and with little time available, she was determined to involve more people in reading and writing poetry. In the late 1990s when she became ill again, she started writing poetry about her responses to illness, and organized workshops with doctors to look at the place of poetry in helping patients to cope with their condition. Her two collections of poems, *Sudden Collapses in Public Places* (2003) and *Apology for Absence* (2004) included many poems on the experience of living with breast cancer and facing an early death.

Darling also wrote plays, set in and around Newcastle, which were performed at theatres in the region. She was actively involved in productions, presentations, and readings. So her work as a community arts organizer and her full-time career as a writer fed into each other.

Julia Darling married and had two daughters; later she and her husband were divorced, and she lived with a lesbian partner and her own daughters until her death in 2005. They are the people to whom *The Taxi Driver's Daughter* is dedicated.

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<sup>2</sup> Darling J. *The Taxi Driver's Daughter* Penguin Books, 2004

**ASSIGNMENT I**  
**Chapters *Mac* – *Judgement Day* (pp. 2 – 31)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

artificial (p. 3)	knowledgeably (p. 22)
lavish (p. 10)	to loathe (p. 24)
a sleeping policeman (p. 15)	aisle (p. 25)
weird (p. 21)	precarious (p. 27)
to stand out (p. 21)	wobble (p. 31)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To feel left out (p.10)  
To confide in somebody (p.10)  
To top up (p.11)  
To earn one's living (p. 12)  
To be lost on somebody (p. 16)  
To put one's foot down (p. 17)  
To dye one's hair green (p.19)  
To be trapped (p.20)  
What's the point of doing something? (p.28)  
Assault (p.28)  
To need brushing (p.30)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. She feels as if her head is about to burst open (p.10).
2. But Caris found it hard to gasp with surprise and be grateful (p.10).
3. Nana Price thinks that Louise needs a holiday, and she says so, over and over again, to Caris, who is the only one who appears to be listening (p.11).
4. Caris waits for Louise to come out again and beg her to come back, but she doesn't come (p. 14).
5. She often feels like spitting or swearing these days (p. 25).

6. Mac watched barristers and solicitors pacing along the corridors in urgent discussions, looking, looking as if they knew everything, while he, Mac, knew nothing (p.29).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 3. Answer the following questions.**

1. When and where does the action take place?
2. In what way do the two sisters differ? What is the relationship between the two sisters like?
3. How did Caris receive Christmas gifts that year?
4. What did Caris think of her mother's act?
5. How did Nana Price try to justify what Louise had done?
6. How did Louise account for her act?
7. Why did Caris confide in Margaret?
8. Why did Caris regret confiding in Margaret about the shoplifting?
9. Why was the girls' friendship destroyed?
10. How did Caris feel on the day of her mother's trial?
11. How did Louise behave on that day?
12. Why did Caris stay away from school on the day of her mother's trial?

### **Exercise 4. Comment on the following.**

We're watching the Queen". (p.14)

### **Exercise 5. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about the main characters and the way they are introduced to the reader (Mac, Caris, Stella, Louise).
2. How can you account for the use of Present tense throughout the narration?

### **Exercise 6. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Stella and the policeman talking about Louise's arrest.
2. Between Margaret and Caris talking about the situation in the family and Louise's shoplifting.



**ASSIGNMENT 2**  
**Chapters *The Vale - Confession* (pp. 32 – 64)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

malice (p. 33)	endearments (p. 49)
agile (p. 37)	bedraggled (p. 54)
wink at (p. 39)	trendy (p. 58)
rehearsal (p. 45)	vehemently (p. 59)
remorse (p. 49)	allotments (p. 60)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To limp (p.40)  
Straight away (p.44)  
To feel like shouting (p.45)  
To be a bad influence (p. 48)  
To stay off school (p.48)  
To be down to earth (p.49)  
To get told off for doing something (p.50)  
To work somebody out (p. 53)  
To fancy somebody (p.57)  
To whirl out of control (p.58)  
To get a note (p. 58)  
To set off for (p.59)  
To change one's mind (p.59)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. She holds the bag upside down, and lets everything fall into the mud (p. 34).
2. Mac is suddenly filled with an urge to confess (p. 38).
3. She wants you to take her to the police station (p. 48).
4. Caris considers arguing, but doesn't (p. 52).
5. Caris strides to the base of the tree, and he looks down at her as if he has been waiting for her to arrive (p. 52).
6. It's a relief to laugh about it (p. 55).

## DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS

### Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.

1. What is it that Caris finds different now that Louise has been sent to prison?
2. What are Mac's feelings now that Louise got sent down?
3. Why does Mac feel guilty?
4. In what way is Degna different from the other passengers?
5. What was the letter from Louise like?
6. Why is Caris disturbed by her mother's letter?
7. How does Caris feel about her grandmother moving in?
8. How does Caris take revenge on Margaret and Layla?

### Exercise 5. Comment on the following.

1. "The other side of the Vale is where the big houses are..." (p.55).
2. "Mr Fortoba is talking about the GCSEs." (p.57).

### Exercise 6. Speak on the following.

1. Speak on the problem of school bullying.
2. Say what Caris thinks about the antibullying policy in their school.

### Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:

1. Between Caris and George when they first meet.
2. Between Mr Fortoba and Caris when Mr Fortoba tries to remonstrate with Caris.

## ASSIGNMENT 3

### Chapters *Fish And Chips* – *Writing On The Wall* (pp. 65 – 95)

## BUILDING VOCABULARY

### Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:

to show up (p.65)	glisten (p.78)
crumpled (p.66)	sneer (p.82)
unhygienic (p.67)	a fag (p.82)
queue (p.72)	ragged (p.86)
exhausted (p.76)	indelible (p.95)

### Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.

To rummage in something (p.66)  
To look humiliated (p.72)  
To busy oneself with (p.72)  
To need brushing (p.73)  
What's the point in doing something? (p.75)  
To arrange for somebody to do something (p.88)  
To dread doing something (p.89)

## **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

### **Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. They can hear Nana Price singing in the front room, joining in with a song on television (p. 67).
2. Caris feels like breaking something (p. 67).
3. She imagines them stealing an expensive car and riding away together (p. 69).
4. She watches her mother disappear into the curious world behind the door (p. 76).
5. Caris watches her climb into a polished car and start up the engine, examining her face in the mirror, and pushing her springy hair from her face (p. 79).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. What does Stella think about Caris' behavior?
2. Why is Mac frightened of school?
3. Why did Caris decide to stay off school?
4. Why was Caris attracted to George?
5. What feelings did Louise's call stir in Caris?
6. What does Caris think of Mr Fortoba?

### **Exercise 5. Comment on the following.**

1. "I'm going to tell him you wagged off." (p.67).

### **Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Stella and Caris's relationship.
2. A prison visit.
3. What happens Sunday morning.
4. Mac's anxieties regarding Caris.

### **Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Stella and Caris when Caris comes home.
2. Between Louise and Caris when the family comes to visit Louise in the prison.

## **ASSIGNMENT 4**

**Chapters *Friday Night – Light and Shade* (pp. 96 – 126)**

### **BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

quayside (p. 96)	patio (p.107)
sophisticated (p. 101)	desperation (p.108)
windscreen (p. 107)	ridiculous (p.122)
embarrassed (p. 124)	mean (p.122)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Try to recall the context in which they were used.**

- To consider doing something (p. 96)
- To get expelled from school (p. 97)
- What's wrong with being a taxi driver? (p. 99)
- To get bored with somebody (p. 102)
- To bring oneself to do something (p. 106)
- To go out on dates (p. 111)
- What's wrong with bowling? (p. 122)
- To be engrossed in something (p. 108)
- To feel sorry for oneself (p. 118)
- To look forward to something (p. 119)
- To be fascinated by something (p. 122)

### **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. She can almost hear his large heart beating (p. 96).
2. He broke his wrist and he wants you to take him home (p.98).
3. They had smart suitcases and Louise wore a bright-blue scarf that made her look sophisticated (p. 101).
4. They appeared to love each other (p.101).

5. Caris feels a rush of blood going to her cheeks (p. 102).
6. Caris glances up to see him pulling several notes out of his pocket (p. 103).
7. Caris longs for Mrs Featherly to shut up p. 105).
8. Waiting is part of his job he dreads most (p. 107).
9. He got Louise to borrow books about gardening and self-sufficiency (p. 108).
10. He imagines telling Caris that he is divorcing Louise (p. 111).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. What brought Layla and Margaret together?
2. Why do you think Caris wanted to see the tree?
3. In what way has the quayside changed over the past few years?
4. What does Mac think of driving a taxi?
5. What does Mac think about his family life?
6. How has Caris changed since Louise went to prison?
7. Why was George expelled from school?
8. What did Louise remember about her first part-time cleaning job?
9. What did you learn about Mr and Mrs Farrish from these chapters?

### **Exercise 5. Comment on the following.**

1. George doesn't tell her about Wilson (p. 115).
2. She tries to remember when it started (p. 119).

### **Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Mac's Friday night.
2. Louise's occupation in prison.

### **Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Caris and Mrs Featherly when they meet in the cafe.
2. Between Caris and Mac when he comes home from work.
3. Between George and Caris when Caris comes over to his place.

## **ASSIGNMENT 5**

### **Chapters *Love bites* – *Hanging Around Town* (pp. 127 – 150)**

## **BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

pat (p. 127)	to be due (p. 138)
vaguely (p. 127)	stained glass (p. 138)
a life-jacket (p. 130)	heart-bypass
	operation (p. 138)
a swot (p. 131)	magic properties (p. 142)
peer inside (p. 132)	dangle (p. 142)
quadrangle (p. 133)	posh (p. 145)
permeate (p. 136)	for good (p. 145)
persevering (p. 137)	dreary (p. 146)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To walk out (p. 129)  
 To get into trouble (p. 129)  
 To spell something out (p. 130)  
 To make it to school (p. 131)  
 To search for words (p. 134)  
 To get out of teaching (p. 134)  
 To bring oneself to do something (p. 135)  
 To join in the conversation (p. 135)  
 To take over (p. 137)  
 To get to know somebody (p. 139)  
 To have trouble with one's nerves (p. 139)  
 To be unfaithful to somebody (p. 140)  
 To keep out the smell (p. 143)  
 To mark off days (p. 143)  
 To be squeamish about something (p. 146)  
 Surveillance cameras (p. 147)  
 To catch a glimpse of something (p. 147)  
 To break into a house (p. 148)

## **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. Nana wants someone to look after her (p. 127).
2. Nana pats the bed and makes Caris come and sit next to her (p. 127).
3. He's trying to take control of his daughters, and the only way he knows how to do this is to drive them somewhere (p. 131).

4. He watches her walking, alone, towards the open mouth of the school (p. 132).
5. Looking at Caris makes him angry, and he has to look down at his hands, which are pale and delicate, like a girl's (p. 135).
6. Mr Fortoba looks over and sees her sitting there with her eyes closed (p. 135).
7. He hadn't expected her to be so persevering (p. 137).
8. Sometimes he let Louise drive, but the experience was so stressful that it was easier for him to take over (p. 137).
9. Mac laughs, but he doesn't feel like laughing (p. 139).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. What thoughts pass through Mac's mind as he urges Caris to go to school?
2. How does Caris feel about school?
3. Why does Mr Fortoba fail to tell Caris what he had intended to tell her?
4. What thoughts pass through Mac's mind as he sits in his taxi waiting for Degna?
5. How does Stella survive while Louise is in prison?
6. What memories does the pair of high-heeled boots evoke in Stella?
7. Why does Stella decide to hang shoes on the Shoe Tree?
8. How do George and Caris spend their days?
9. In what way has Caris changed since she met George?
10. What do people think of the tree filled with shoes?

### **Exercise 5. Comment on the following.**

1. Things get lost ... without you realizing that they are beginning to disappear (p. 129).  
He waits until she has disappeared then drives away, uncertain, guilty (p. 132).
2. She cries rough salt tears for all her mistakes, which are hardened in her now like fossils in an old quarry (p. 141)
3. She tells her about her success in Macbeth, the play that no one came to see (p. 142).
4. Miss Moss tells him to hand it over to the truancy officer (p. 146).

### **Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Mac's intention to divorce Louise.
2. Mac's driving Degna.

3. Caris and George hanging around the town.

**Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Degna and Mac when Mac when Mac picked her up outside the restaurant.

2. Between Nana Price and Mr Fortoba.

**ASSIGNMENT 6**

**Chapters *The Visitor – Stella, Margaret and Layla* (pp. 150 – 177)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

contempt (p. 155)

compassion (p. 155)

thistles (p. 164)

dandelions (p. 164)

smug (p. 170)

justice (p. 171)

indignant (p. 171)

remorse (p. 173)

translucence (p. 173)

vigour (p. 173)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

There is no knowing when that will be (p. 151)

To sort something out (p. 160)

To make it to the door (p. 160)

To put up with something (p. 162)

To do a course in computer (p. 163)

To feel out of place (p. 163)

To peter out (p. 166)

To feel frustrated (p. 169)

On purpose (p. 169)

To stay out late (p. 169)

To sit up straight (p. 170)

To be a disgrace (p. 171)

To be conscripted into an army (p. 172)

To have nothing to do with somebody (p. 173)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**



### **Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. She seems to represent his failure as a teacher, his inability to inspire his pupils (p. 150).
2. He thinks his motive is to save Caris, but he is embarrassed to admit that it's also to save himself (p. 150).
3. There is no knowing when that will be (p. 151).
4. Mr Fortoba hadn't meant it to be like this (p. 154).
5. All he wants is to buy some processed food, go home, eat it and shout at Caris (p. 158).
6. Mac feels his heart beating in slapping waves against his chest (p. 162).
7. Mac has never heard Louise swear (p. 170).
8. He wanted his words to have more power (p. 171).
9. He wants her to tell him that she's sorry (p. 172).
10. She enjoys knowing that she waits, and has no desire to hurry towards her (p. 173).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. How does Caris react to Mr Fortoba's visit?
2. How does Mac react when he learns about Mr Fortoba's visit?
3. How does the conversation with Caris make Mac feel?
4. Why do you think Louise feels restless on the visitor's day?
5. Why does Mac feel guilty on that day?
6. Why is Louise suddenly filled with rage?
7. What effect do Mac's words about divorce produce on Louise?

### **Exercise 5. Comment on the following:**

1. The day feels unfinished and undone (p. 150).
2. Caris sees them like a photograph ... Stella with her faces stuffed with moral rage (p. 154).
3. She knows that, whatever it is, neither of them have attended to it very much lately (p. 164).
4. She feels exposed (p. 165).
5. She wishes that she was lost but also wishes that someone would find her (p. 166).
6. Caris doesn't have words for things (p. 176).

### **Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about Mac's attempt to take control of Caris.

2. Speak about Mac doing a course in computers.
3. Mac's determination to get a divorce.
4. Speak about the relationship between George and Marina.

**Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Nana Price and Mr Fortoba.
2. Mac and Caris about her not being at school.
3. Between Mac and Louise about getting divorced.

**ASSIGNMENT 7**

**Chapters *Mac Goes Shopping* – *Falling* (pp. 178 – 191)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

to itch (p. 176)	driveway (p. 183)
to sulk (p. 176)	a burglar alarm (p. 184)
out of date (p. 179)	innards (p. 184)
illiterate (p. 179)	goofy (p. 184)
wheelbarrow (p. 182)	assertive (p. 186)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

- To be keen on somebody (p. 175)
- To make sense to somebody (p. 179)
- To end up doing something (p. 179)
- To tidy the place up (p. 181)
- To take down (p. 181)
- There is no stopping Ned (p. 182)
- To flick through a magazine (p. 184)
- To make somebody light up (p. 185)
- To smooth something out (p. 189)
- To spill out (p. 191)
- To be littered with something (p. 191)

## **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

### **Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. The music makes her feel glorious, assertive, and euphoric (p. 186).
2. The path confuses her, and she keeps bumping into branches, falling, and stinging her hands on nettles (p. 190).
3. She pictures Louise handing her a piece of toast with jam spread over it, saying, 'Eat up, love...' (p. 191).
4. She hears George shout, and then she's falling, down and down, and there's nothing to stop her (p. 191).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. Why does Stella feel sorry for Caris?
2. How do George and Caris get into the doctor's house?
3. What does Caris think of the people living in that house?
4. Why does Mac decide to go to a pub?
5. How does Mac find out about George?
6. Why does Caris think it useless to hang more shoes in the tree?
7. Why does Caris suddenly remember Louise when they are going to hang doctor's shoes in the tree?

### **Exercise 5. Speak on the following:**

1. Speak about Mac's shopping and how he feels about it.
2. Speak about park management.
3. Speak about Mac's coming home after the match.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following:**

1. What's happening? he thinks (p. 179).
2. 'You make me happy' (p. 187).

### **Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Maurice and Ned when they take down the shoes from the tree.
2. Between Caris and George when they break into the doctor's house.

**ASSIGNMENT 8**  
**Chapters *Waiting for Caris* – *Seeing the Doctor* (pp. 192 – 218)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

a neglected child (p. 194)	demeaning (p. 202)
familiar (p. 194)	mantelpiece (p. 202)
insurmountable (p. 198)	injustice (p. 207)
corpse (p. 199)	a ward (p. 208)
unconscious (p. 199)	

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Try to recall the context in which they were used.**

To bear no resemblance (p. 192)  
At Stella's suggestion (p. 195)  
To appreciate something (p. 197)  
To get oneself worked up (p. 199)  
To ache for somebody (p. 200)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. Lately she has found that the numbers seem to come from a long way off, and she has to work harder to keep up (p. 196).
2. Mac, Caris and Stella don't seem to appreciate her attempts to help (p. 197).
3. They are usually out, and she is forced to cook for herself, and to deal with teachers coming round (p. 197).
4. Louise had always had a sensation of waiting for someone to take her away (p. 200).
5. The thought seems to pass from him to the mother, who abruptly stops laughing and presses her lips back into a straight line (p. 204).
5. He wants someone to tell him what to do (p. 216).

## DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS

### Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.

1. What does Mac see in a dream and why does Stella's voice sound like a rescuer's?
2. How does Stella receive a present from her father?
3. What conclusion does Abdul make about Mac's family?
4. What does Mac learn about George from Abdul?
5. What does Mac think of the two daughters while comparing them?
6. What does the Farrishes's house remind Mac of?
7. What impression does the conversation with George's parents produce on Mac?
8. How does Mac feel about Caris's absence?
9. Why do you think Mac feels even more afraid for his daughter Caris after visiting the Farrishes?
10. Why does George leave Caris lying on the bench without trying to help her?

### Exercise 5. Comment on the following:

1. The word "dad" frightens Caris (p. 212).
2. It's too early for a lecture (p. 213).

### Exercise 6. Speak on the following:

1. Speak about Nana's resentment against her family.
2. Speak about Caris being taken to hospital.
3. Speak about finding Caris.

### Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:

1. Between Mac and Marina when Mac comes to George's house looking for Caris.
2. Between Mac and Caris when Mac finds her in the hospital.

## ASSIGNMENT 9

Chapters *Replenishment* – *Stella Makes a Wish* (pp. 219 – 245)

## BUILDING VOCABULARY

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words.**

littered (p. 219)  
crave (p. 221)  
loathe (p. 221)  
windscreen (p. 222)  
diary (p. 225)

concussion (p. 225)  
limp (p. 240)  
Imposing (p. 240)  
glint (p. 245)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To feel let down (p. 219)  
To be replenished (p. 219)  
To have a date (p. 223)  
To take one's time (p. 223)  
To be flooded (p. 224)  
To ground somebody (p. 225)  
To take something down (p. 227)  
To get into trouble (p. 227)  
To offer service (p. 229)  
To give in one's notice (p. 233)  
To turn somebody down (p. 238)

## **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. He smells of some kind of cheap hotel soap, and Mac longs for him to get out of his car so that he can be alone again (p. 222).
2. It takes hours to get through to the quayside traffic (p. 223).
3. He hears the man shout, 'Your taxi's here, Degna (p. 223).
4. Mac looks up to see Degna coming out of the restaurant door (p. 224).
5. She stops when she sees George and waits for him to come to her (p. 231).
6. Degna lets her shoes fall from her feet (p. 235).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

**Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. Why do you think Mac couldn't be bothered to be pleasant with his passengers?
2. What news did Stella give in her letter to Louise?
3. Why did Louise dream that she had no arms?
4. What is the tone of the conversation between Louise and Caris like?

5. Why did Caris hesitate when George urge her to leave the city and go somewhere?
6. What kind of wish did Stella make?

**Exercise 5. Comment on the following.**

1. She lies with her eyes closed in a room with whales singing, breathing in the scent of orange blossom and ylang-ylang, trying to visualize happiness and success (p. 229).
2. Stella takes off her sensible school shoes and ties the straps together and hurls them upwards, so that they catch on the highest branches (p. 245).

**Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Describe George's appointment with the Doctor.
2. Speak about Caris calling George and about the reasons why Caris decided to go out with him.
3. Speak about Mac's relationship with Degna.
4. Speak about how George and Caris broke into a house.

**Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Louise and Caris.
2. Between Caris and George after Caris was discharged from hospital.
3. Between Stella and Nana Price.

**ASSIGNMENT 10**

**Chapters *Making A Decision - Dawn* (pp. 246 - 264)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words.**

spontaneous (p. 219)	ornate (p. 251)
haphazard (p. 247)	secluded (p. 254)
banister (p. 250)	refugee (p. 254)
windscreen (p. 222)	furtively (p. 256)
mahogany (p. 251)	dilapidated (p. 263)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To run out (p. 254)

To fail somebody (p. 254)  
To side with somebody (p. 255)  
To take something in (p. 257)  
To feature as (p. 259)  
To turn over a new leaf (p. 262)  
To smell of something (p. 263)  
To ride on public transport (p. 263)  
To fiddle with something (p. 264)

## **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

### **Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. He can hear Jeannie telling them to walk home and stop wasting her time (p. 246).
2. In the distance a clock strikes, a tinny flat sound that makes them both jump (p. 249).
3. Their fear makes him feel superior (p. 255).
4. Caris hears a car purring along the street outside (p. 255).
5. She turns to Mac without answering, and he suddenly doesn't care if she goes to school or not (p. 260).
6. She feels their hot bodies pressed against her and squirms (p.264).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. How did Mac feel about his car?
2. What important decision did Mac take? What did his family think of it?
3. What did the other taxi drivers think of Mac's decision to give up driving taxis?
4. What made Nana Price so upset that she began to pack her suitcase?
5. How could you explain Mac's change of heart regarding Nana Price?
6. Did Mac have difficulty finding the house Caris was in?
7. How did Mac feel on finding Caris?
8. Do you think Caris deserves punishment?
9. What did Mac think of the Tree of Shoes when Caris showed it to him?
10. What emotions did the Tree of Shoes stir in Mac?

### **Exercise 5. Comment on the following.**

1. Suddenly Caris is afraid for Mac (p. 257).
2. Carol did in hair-and-beauty skills (p. 261).



**Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about the nightmare in the old lady's house.
2. Speak about Louise's release from prison.

**Exercise 7. Make up a dialogue:**

1. Between Mac and Nana Price when she begins to pack her things to go home.
2. Between Mac and Louise after Louise was released from prison.

## UNIT 6. THE SEA HOUSE

by *Esther Freud*<sup>3</sup>

What do you know about Esther Freud, the author of *The Sea House*? When was she born? What is she famous for? What books did she write? If you need some information to answer these questions, read the following article by Karen Hewitt.

### Biography

Esther Freud was born in 1963, the daughter of the artist Lucian Freud. She trained as an actress at the Drama Centre and has appeared in, and written for, various productions for both stage and television. She is also co-founder, with fellow actress and novelist Kitty Aldridge, of the women's theatre company 'Norfolk Broads'.

Her first novel, *Hideous Kinky* (1992), evokes the bohemian childhood of two young children accompanying their mother in search for freedom and adventure in Morocco in the 1960s. It was the response by critics and other readers to this novel that led to Esther Freud being named as one of the twenty 'Best of Young British Novelists' by *Granta* magazine in 1993.

Her second novel, *Peerless Flats* (1993), set in London in the 1970s, is centred around Lisa, a teenage drama student. *Gaglow* (1997) is told by an out-of-work actress as she is painted by her artist father, and is interwoven with the story of her German ancestors and their estate at Gaglow. Themes of family, step-family and childhood are again at the heart of *The Wild*, (2000). *The Sea House* (2003) is a love story set in a seaside village in Suffolk while her most recent novel is *Love Falls* (2007).

Esther Freud talks on the radio and elsewhere and writes regularly about contemporary literature.

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<sup>3</sup> Freud E. *The Sea House* Penguin Books, 2004

**ASSIGNMENT 1**  
**Chapters 1 – 4 (pp. 1 – 28)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

exaggerate (p.1)	elusive (p.10)
a mercy invitation	an amateur of
(p.1)	promise (p.10)
pang (p.1)	stern (p.13)
for kindling (p.7)	dilapidated (p.17)
bunker (p.7)	chime (p.17)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

The letter was dated May the 29th (p.1)  
To consider doing something (p.1)  
To make progress (p.2)  
From memory (p.3)  
To take a turning (p.3)  
To obscure the view (p.3)  
To get one's bearings (p.6)  
To set off on some errand (p.10.)  
To spring to mind (p.10)  
To live to be a hundred (p.14)  
To catch sight of (p.16)  
To take a detour (p.17)  
To mix in the same circles (p.19)  
To feel left out (p. 19)  
To be used to doing something (p.20)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. She started up, not knowing where she was (p.5).
2. I'm here in Frankfurt waiting for the plans to be approved (p.8).
3. You can only get to understand things by drawing them (p.14).
4. And the wardrobe in the alcove rattled, and she heard a thud of steps stumbling downstairs (p.15).

5. But at that moment Nick's other line started ringing and he transferred his attention to it without cutting her off (p.15).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. Why did Max Meyer come to Steerborough?
2. What did Max dream of? What was Max fascinated by?
3. Why did Lily rent a cottage in the seaside village of Steerborough? What was her 1<sup>st</sup> day in Steerborough like?
4. What was Fern Cottage like?
5. How did Lily get hold of Lehmann's letters?
6. Why did Lily choose to explore Lermann's architecture?
7. Why did Lily lie to Nick that the only phone box in the village was broken?
8. What was the reason why Max wouldn't start painting?
9. What did Max use to paint in the earlier years?
10. Why did Gertrude lie to Max that it was her own plan to invite him to Steerborough?
11. Why did Max decide to go home?
12. Read the description of the house on pp. 10 -11. Whose house do think is described? ("a strange lopsided building")
13. What kind of teacher was Henry Cuthbert?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Max comes to Steerborough, lonely and unhappy.
2. Max comes to Steerborough at Gertrude's invitation to do a painting of the village.
3. Heiderose is the holiday home of Max's family in Hiddensee.
4. Max is a dreamer fascinated by houses.
5. Max was forced to leave his home as a teenager.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

1. "Come in, COME IN" (p.1).
2. "He had made a map of his house Heiderose, when he was ten years old..." (p.2).

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about the 2 narratives in the novel.

2. Can you feel the change in Gertrude's attitude to Max throughout the chapters?
3. Do you think Nick would enjoy it in Steerborough?

## **ASSIGNMENT 2**

### **Chapters 7 – 10 (pp. 29 – 53)**

### **BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

mantelpiece (p.29)	plunge in (p. 39)
dizzying (p.30)	vision (p.42)
hedgerow (p.30)	a sketch (p.42)
outline (p. 31)	canvas (p.43)
to multiply (p.34)	fail (p.44)
to subtract (p. 34)	beneficial (p. 44)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents of the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To get away from (p.29)  
To outline something (p.31)  
To squeeze one's hand (p.31)  
Your paths never crossed (p.32)  
To set off after somebody (p. 38)  
To be in one's way (p.41)  
To somebody's delight (p.41)  
To ease one's grief (p.41)  
To use up something (p. 42)  
To be pleased with something (p.42)

### **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the complexes with the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. He could feel his feet pounding, batting away the questions they might ask (p.29).
2. He could feel the others watching him, see Elsa's lips parting as she smiled, and then a distant cog shifted in his brain (p.30).
3. Lily could still hear the man sawing (p.36).

4. Just then Lily saw the postman walk past her window and, her heart leaping, she jumped up and ran round to the side door (p.37).

5. She could hear his assistant, Tim, filling up the kettle, hear the water pounding into the metal drum (p.47).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. How did Max feel about meeting the Lehmanns?
2. Why do you think Max escaped from Marsh End when he heard that the Lehmanns were coming to dinner?
3. Why did Max try to hold Elsa in his view while they were having dinner?
4. What did Elsa remember about Max from their past life in Germany?
5. What did Elsa talk about after supper?
6. What memories did the talk overnight evoke in Max? (p.33)
7. What was Lily frightened by?
8. The sea is ever-present in the novel. When is the first time Lily notices the sea?
9. What do you think the Green is? Where is it located?
10. Do you think Lily enjoyed it in Steerborough? Refer to the text to prove it.
11. What was Marsh End like? What did Max think of the beauty of Marsh End?
12. How did Nick's letter make Lily feel?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Hiddensee is an island where Max and his family rented a house for the summer.
2. It looks as if the modern porch of Marsh End was designed by Klaus Lehmann.
3. Gertrude seems to know a lot about traumatized children.
4. It seems as if Lily and Nick have a complicated relationship.
5. It looks as if Steerborough is liable to flooding from the sea.
6. The Common is an open area of grassland.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

1. "Everyone laughed, but Max felt the coldness behind the other man's quick look." (p. 33).
2. "Em said 'it's a nuclear power station. They make power.' 'No.' Arrie was perturbed. 'They make bacon rolls.' (p. 52)

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Describe the way Lily went for a swim as she might have described it to a friend of hers.
2. Speak about Lily's relationship with Nick.
3. Describe the way Max painted Marsh End.
4. Talk about Lily's walk with the girls.

### **ASSIGNMENT 3**

#### **Chapters 11 – 13 (pp. 54 – 78)**

#### **BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

leave off (p.57)	marvel at (p. 58)
lopsided (p.58)	straight away (p.70)
promenade (p.65)	appreciate (p.77)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents of the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To be taken aback (p. 54)  
 To hold oneself aloof (p.55)  
 To take to doing something (p.55)  
 To stand out to more effect against the hedge (p. 56)  
 To be scarcely worth doing something (p.57)  
 Short notice (p 58)  
 To disappear from view (p. 58)  
 To run out of something (p.63)  
 First thing (p. 69)

#### **DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. His face was still and questioning and it occurred to her he was about to ask permission to go (p. 58).
2. He stood there for a moment, until he realized Klaus was waiting for him to speak (p.59).
3. 'That boy' – they seemed to be falling half out of their cart as they pointed at him, sitting on his step – 'that is a rather Jewish looking boy.'
4. To her surprise she saw two men playing billiards, a third reading a newspaper, a fourth doing nothing at all (p.65).

5. Lily felt Grae watching her, leaning into the frame of the door (p. 70).
6. 'And anyway', Em said, 'we saw you sunbathing' (p.71).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Answer the following questions.**

1. What did Gertrude think of Max's progress in painting?
2. Why was Kaethe worried about Max?
3. Did Gertrude think that Max overextended his visit?
4. What did you learn about Lehmann as an architect from Chapter 13?
5. In what way was Max's and Elsa's past life connected?
6. What distracted Lily while she was reading Lehmann's letters?
7. Why do you think Nick felt perfectly justified in staying in London? What conclusions can you make if you compare Nick's attitude with Lehmann's?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Lehmann seems to enjoy being in Steerborough.
2. Nick is a young amateur of promise.
3. Gertrude can't get the horrors of Nazi concentration camps out of her mind.
4. Lily seems to be fascinated by Grae.
5. Nick refused to acquire a mobile phone.
6. Max had not known anything about Lehmann before he came to Steerborough.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

1. "But Kaethe had been wrong about her brother (p. 56).
2. "I see...1938 was on the other side of history" (p. 57).
3. "Thank you, Adolf, for forcing us to Steerborough, where the sea is infinitely more refreshing, the summers full of ... shall I say suspense?" (p.62).

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Alf's relationship with Gertrude.
2. Henry's views on painting.
3. The garden party at the Lehmanns'.
4. Lily's preparations for Nick's visit and why he failed to come.



**ASSIGNMENT 4**  
**Chapters 14 – 17 (pp. 79 – 107)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words.**

carnation (p.79)	amber (p. 87)
larch (p.80)	incongruous (p. 104)
elaborate (p. 83)	seaweed (p.87)
stitches (p.85)	horde (p.105)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents of the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

to make do with something (p. 79)  
to be cut out to be an architect (p.80)  
to be worth much more (p. 80)  
to look out to sea (p.84)  
there was not much point in doing something (p.85)  
to take advantage of something (p.87)  
to peter out (p.91)  
to be cross with somebody (p103)  
incongruous (p104)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical function.**

1. She hadn't meant to write that, but since she'd been here she didn't know if she was the right person to redesign a kitchen (p.80).
2. She'd started working there part-time to supplement her art school grant (p.80).
3. Lily was forced to walk back through the garden and climb over the gate (p.84).
4. It was stubborn and stupid not to have called before, but then if he really was working so hard there wasn't much point in interrupting him, unless to wish him luck (p. 85).
5. Lily rushed into the house to find her keys (p. 85).
6. He didn't seem like a man capable of throwing someone down the stairs (p. 85).

## DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. How do the two narratives intersect in this part of the novel?
2. Why was Elsa sad (in chapter 14)?
3. Why did Lily begin to doubt that she was cut out to be an architect?
4. What had Lily done before she met Nick?
5. What did Nick think of Lily's paintings?
6. What did Nick think of the village of Steerborough?
7. Why did Lily decide to go back to college to study architecture?
8. Why did Max leave out Lehmann's house while painting Steerborough houses?
9. What new information about Klaus and Max's father did we get in this chapter?
10. How did it come about that Max's ears failed?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Nick seems to be an enthusiastic architect.
2. Lily didn't seem to enjoy being in Steerborough.
3. When Lily had first met Nick, she had been working as an architect.
4. Lily had no difficulty in finding Lehmann's house.
5. The Lehmanns' house was called Fern Cottage.
6. After the war Klaus Lehmann went into the Alps to have rest.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

"There were maps of East Anglia, local footpath maps, Ordnance Survey maps dating back over seventy years." (p. 82)

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about Nick and Lily's driving around London.
2. Speak about Lily's search for Lehmann's house.
3. Max's reminiscences of his childhood.

**ASSIGNMENT 5**  
**Chapters 18 – 20 (pp. 108 – 129)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words.**

dignitary (p.108)	relics (p. 115)
precarious (p.111)	the void (p.117)
to queue up (p.111)	jetty (p. 118)
to regret (p. 112)	permission (p.120)
spire (p.112)	skid (p.120)
an advert (p.113)	reproach (p. 123)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents of the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

to be worthy of (p.115)  
to date from (p. 115)  
at low tide (p. 115)  
to let go of something (p.119)  
to be absorbed in one's work (p.121)  
to have a word with somebody (p.121)  
to lose the faith (p.125)  
to decipher (p.125).

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the absolute participial phrase. Comment on its function.**

1. Grae appeared, swinging through the gate, the key cars spinning from one finger (p. 109).

2. 'Anyone want to go inside?' Grae offered, but the girls, lying across the back seat, the sun playing over the sand stripes of their skin, said 'nah' (p.109).

3. 'If you 're sure,' she said, her blood stilling, and at the same moment they both saw that the girl at the till was watching them, without impatience, a little swell of laughter at the corners of her mouth (p.111).

4. They stood there looking over at each other, the gulls between them shrieking and skittering, and then, as if with one thought, they both turned towards the river mouth and began to walk (p. 117).

5. Once white, and almost square, its stilts were higher than the others, its front door looking out to sea (p. 118).

6. Seagulls wheeled above him, their necks outstretched, their feet skidding out to land (p. 120).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. What prompted Lily to go for a drive with Grae and the girls?
2. Who came up with the idea of the local history exhibition?
3. What things were brought in for the local history exhibition?
4. How did Gertrude help out with the exhibition?
5. What houses did Max and Elsa look at? Which of the houses was Elsa's favourite?
6. What feelings did Max have for Elsa?
7. Why do you suppose Lily avoided Grae in chapter 20?
8. How would you describe the tone of Lehmann's letters on pp.121 -122?
9. How did Lehmann's letters influence Lily's attitude to Nick?
10. What did Lily like about the handwritten letters?
11. What does the letter on page 125 tell the reader about the extent of Lehmann's love for his wife?
12. What did Lily uncover in Lehmann's letters to his wife?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Lily recognized when she first met Grae that he was not an educated man.
2. Lily didn't expect Grae to have cultural or intellectual interests.
3. Gertrude took an active part in preparing for the local history exhibition.
4. It looks as if Gannon Room had been demolished by Lily's time.
5. Most people didn't take Hitler's theories seriously. Neither did Klaus Lehmann.
6. Lily had difficulty deciphering Lily's letters.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

"Am I the only one who has actually taken the trouble to read Mein Kampf, apart from the Semmels and Liebnitzes, of course, who have already left."

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about the role of children in the novel
2. Speak about how Max met Elsa near the sea.

**ASSIGNMENT 6**  
**Chapters 21 – 23 (pp. 130 – 152)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences with the following words:**

unruly (p.132)	questionnaire (p. 139)
to wither (p. 132)	to be frustrated (p. 140)
to wince (p.132)	undisturbed (p.133)
to swear (p.139)	refugee (p.149)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and word combinations. Recall the context in which they were used:**

To loot (p.132)  
To be decorated for bravery (p. 133)  
To come to a halt (p. 134)  
To lose sight of (p.135)  
To hold somebody hostage (p.138)  
To apply for a job (p. 138)  
To be in good spirits (p.139)  
To catch a glimpse of (p.143)  
To look gorgeous (p.146)  
To take a deep breath (p. 149)  
There is no stopping them (p.150)  
To make progress (p. 151)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Comment on the word order in the following sentences.**

1. Elsa he now saw every day (p. 131).
2. But hard as he tried to hold her she began to wither in his arms (p. 132).
3. Quickly, before she drifted into a daze of fields and trees and flatness, she opened her folder and pulled out some work. With it came Nick's letter (p. 137).
4. Quickly she retreated to the bedroom (p. 143).
5. Inside his coat, thrust deep into the pocket, was a wallet which contained the ten marks he was allowed (p. 148).
6. On the next table were a pair of Dutch clogs (p. 151).
7. Down at the harbor the fishermen were grouped together in their picked wool caps (p. 152).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. What were the reasons why Max's father was unwilling to emigrate from Germany when Hitler came to power?
2. Why did the government provide a new pair of shoes for Jos Meyer each year?
3. What project was Lily doing?
4. Why did Lily have to read Nick's letter several times? What is the general tone of his letter?
5. Judging by the letter, what would be the result if Lily's Pin Up were successful?
6. What did Lily think about the words "I love you"?
7. What kind of party was Nick arranging?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Max and Kaethe's mother died at Buchenwald.
2. The Meyers lived at Heiderose undisturbed and were not willing to emigrate without any promise of work.
3. During the war Max and Kaethe were interned.
4. Landing a big contract was a good reason for Nick's architects' company to celebrate.
5. Jewish children leaving Nazi Germany were not allowed to take any money with them.
6. Gertrude treated Max like a child.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

1. "Two years later, in an internment camp on the Isle of Man, Max met a man..." (p.134).
2. 'Soon. The word seemed to slip along the rails, up and over the rim of the grey platform' (p.148).

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak on Max's progress in speaking.
2. Speak on how Max's father was arrested.
3. Speak about the local history exhibition.
4. Speak about Max's leaving Germany.

**ASSIGNMENT 7**  
**Chapters 24 – 26 (pp. 153 – 176)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words.**

abandoned (p. 156)	eventually (p.160)
advertisement (p.157)	tentatively (p. 168)
a beacon (p.159)	to dangle (p. 173)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and word combinations. Recall the context in which they were used.**

Suggest doing something (p.153)  
To turn one's mind away from (P.153)  
To respond to somebody's emails (p.153)  
To take out a loan (p.153)  
To smell unpleasant (p.155)  
To distract oneself (p.156)  
To occur to somebody (p.158)  
To share a flat (p.162)  
To be in one's way (p.161)  
To keep one's word (p.162)  
To make it (p.167)  
To trespass (p.169)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the nominative absolute construction. Comment on its function in the sentence.**

1. Nick kept on walking, his eyes fixed on the lake (p. 153).
2. Max looked inland towards the Sea House, its windows open, figures, sitting, happy on its steps (p. 160).
3. They sat together for ten minutes, Alf examining his feet, Gertrude thinking, for once, about nothing at all, and then she roused herself (p. 164).
4. Lily stood, her legs still on the ladder, and twisting round, she found that she was in a boat (p. 169).
5. *My dear El*, Lily read, the sun striking in as it sank to the level of her window (p. 169).
6. Grae straightened up, a string of sausages dangling from one hand (p. 173).

7. Lily followed with Arrie, her cheek so silken-smooth against her own (p. 174).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. What did Nick accuse Lily of?
2. What do you know about Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens?
3. Why did Lily decide to keep the cottage on until the end of the summer?
4. How did Nick feel about Lily's keeping on the cottage until the end of the summer?
5. What was the reason why Lily was looking forward to going back to Steerborough?
6. How did Lily feel on getting back to Steerborough?
7. How did it come about that Elsa rented the Sea House?
8. How did Max feel in Elsa's company?
9. How did Gertrude feel when Max asked her about a cottage to rent?
10. Why did Gertrude feel bereft?
11. Why was Lily excited about the letters that arrived for her?
12. What prompted Lily to call Nick?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Hyde Park seems to be a popular place for both Londoners and tourists.
2. When Lily returned to Steerborough, she felt welcome.
3. Max felt that he had overextended his visit and asked Gertrude if she knew of a house that he could rent.
4. Gertrude was shocked to find that she was not ready to let Max go.
5. Lily was eager to find the Sea House after she read about it in Lehmann's letter.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

1. Even a child in lederhosen was now a symbol of rottenness and hate (p. 152).
2. Outside she scanned the shop window for anything that might resemble a job. There were cottages to let, a bike, a washing machine for sale, and on the door a handwritten notice. Money found in Palmers Lane. If the money is yours, please contact Mrs Townsend at Old Farmer (p.155).

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Give reasons why Elsa rented the Sea House.



2. Give reasons why Lily wanted to look for the Sea House.
3. Speak about what changes took place in Gertrude's attitude to Max.
4. Speak about Lehmann's letters to his wife.

## ASSIGNMENT 8

### Chapters 27 – 29 (pp. 176 – 204)

### BUILDING VOCABULARY

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences with the following words:**

sun dial (p.177)	genuine (p. 185)
luxurious (p.178)	shift work (p.193)
exhilaration (p.182)	gems (p.198)
peculiar (p.185)	equipment (p.200)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and word combinations. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To be adamant (p.178)  
 To dissolve (p.181)  
 To bear the suspense of waiting  
 To worship (p.180)  
 To pay one's call (p.181)  
 To squander one's chance (p.182)  
 To fix one's eyes on something (p. 182)  
 To track somebody down (p. 194)  
 To go missing (p.198)  
 To feel the need to do something (p.199)  
 In advance (p.200)  
 To show somebody round the house (p.202)

### DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS

**Exercise 3. Point out the complexes with the verbals. Comment on their functions in the sentence.**

1. Max felt himself grow heavy (p. 176).
2. Lily felt the water burn as it crept in under her costume, a cold well at her navel, ice in the tips of her bra (p. 187).
3. I seem to be reliving all the great moments of my life (p. 189).

4. She used to repeat that name to strangers to see if anyone might have heard him play, but instead they laughed and told her she was lucky she'd got her mother's name (p. 193).

5. There was a sharpness in the air that had not been there even the day before and it made her feel the need to start at something new (p. 199).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. How did Max feel on the day Elsa was to move into the Sea House?
2. How did Gertrude and Max spend that evening?
3. Judging from Lehmann's letters what conclusions can you make as to his relationship with his wife? Do you think Lily and Nick had a similar kind of relationship?
4. Why do you think Lily found herself seduced into a new life by Grae?
5. What kind of choice did Lily have to make?
6. What made Max think that Gertrude had purposefully shut him out?
7. Why did Gertrude feel the need to start at something new?
8. What excuse did Max make up for Gertrude to believe that he needed to see Elsa?
9. Did Elsa regret being unfaithful to her husband?

### **Exercise 5. Read the following statements. Decide whether each statement is true or false.**

1. Jews inherit their Jewish identity through their mother.
2. Max and Elsa often recalled their relatives and friends who did not escape and did not survive.
3. Grae has lived in Steerborough all his life.
4. Elsa rented the Sea House because the slope of the staircase of their house was being redone.
5. Max enjoyed walking with Gertrude.
6. Elsa was furious when Klaus said that he would not be able to come.

### **Exercise 6. Comment on the following.**

1. "Max let himself be led"(p.180).
2. "The light, he was sure of it, was on for him" (p.182).

### **Exercise 7. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about how Henry taught Max to paint.
2. Speak about how Gertrude helped Elsa move into the Sea House.

3. Speak about the time when Max and Elsa were at their happiest.
4. Describe the episode when Lily and Ethel went for a swim.

## ASSIGNMENT 9

### CHAPTERS 30 – 33 (pp. 205 – 236)

#### BUILDING VOCABULARY

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

revenge (p.206)	caution (p. 211)
an advert for (p. 206)	archives (p.213)
every other weekend (p. 207)	still life (p. 216)
pledge (p. 208)	refugee (p.218)
allotments (p. 211)	hammock (p. 219)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents of the following English words and expressions. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To raise money (p.206)  
 To shift from foot to foot (p. 211)  
 To set off for the weekend (p. 211)  
 To be called off (p. 215)  
 To catch defiance in one's face (p. 215)  
 To go missing (.p 219.)  
 To lift the ban (p. 219).  
 To give in (p. 221)  
 To take a course in something (pp. 218, 220)  
 To go ashore (p. 220)  
 To ignore somebody (p. 220)  
 To be startled by (p.225)  
 The last thing on one's mind (p. 231)  
 High tide (p. 233)  
 To be covered by the insurance (p. 234)

#### DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS

**Exercise 3. Point out the verbals. State their syntactical functions.**

1. Lily felt goose bumps spring up along her arm (p. 205).
2. She laughed, not wanting him to know the opposite was true (p. 210).
3. 'But you're never going to guess what the blasted fellow wants us to put in now?' (p. 211).

4. Lily caught snatched glimpses – women, hatted, leaning into the wind, and figures in army uniform, too quick to see which side (p. 212).

5. Bananas, he had heard, were impossible to find in London and he wanted to surprise Kaethe with the gift (p. 221).

6. Kaethe had been there to meet him, but at first it seemed the authorities would not let her take him home (p. 221).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions with your groupmates.**

1. Who was the man that had got stuck in the mud?
2. Why was so little known about Lehmann?
3. What did Lily find out about the Hidden House and Lehmann?
4. What life story did Max share with Elsa? Where had Max been sent before going to Australia?
5. Do you think Max considered it lucky to be sent away to Australia?
6. What was life in Australia like for Max?
7. What is the tone of Lehmann's letters on page 223? Give your reasons.
8. Judging by Lehmann's answer (p. 223) to Elsa's letter, what was Elsa's letter presumably about? Why was Elsa distressed?
9. What is the tone of Lehmann's letter on page 224?
10. How long did the Lehmanns plan to stay in the Sea house?
11. Judging by Lehmann's letter on page 225, what did Elsa tell him in her letter?
12. What is Lehmann's attitude to Max most probably like?
13. What kind of choice did Lily want to have in her relationship with Nick?
14. What happened to Nick's car?

### **Exercise 5. Comment on the following.**

1. "You are being most unusually thorough coming here." (p. 210).
2. "He sounded almost angry as he cranked open the door." (p. 214).
3. "I am not a criminal", I told him, but he answered that during wartime there were worse criminals than murderers and thieves". (p. 218).

### **Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Speak about Nick's visit.
2. Speak about Lily's relationship with Grae.
3. Speak about Lily's meeting with Albert Lehmann.
4. Speak about Gertrude's painting lessons with Thomas Everson.
5. Speak about Max's arrival from Australia
6. Speak about Lily's relationship with Nick.

**ASSIGNMENT 10**  
**Chapters 33 - 42 (pp. 237 - 276)**

**BUILDING VOCABULARY**

**Exercise 1. Find, read and translate the sentences which contain the following words:**

cacti (p. 240)	fete (p.243)
to match (p.238)	ooze (p.247)
gale (p. 239)	a raft (p. 247)
necklace (p.240)	life jackets (p. 247)
quilt (p. 241)	arson (p. 252)

**Exercise 2. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and word combinations. Recall the context in which they were used.**

To occur to somebody (p. 240)  
To decide on something (p. 241)  
To exhibit something (p. 243)  
To walk somebody home (p.244)  
To wade (p. 245)  
To shudder (p. 246)  
Out of habit (p. 250)  
A game of tug of war (p. 265)  
To deteriorate (p.267)  
To give birth to (p. 275)  
To fill in a form (p. 272)  
To give somebody a fright (p. 278)

**DEVELOPING GRAMMAR AWARENESS**

**Exercise 3. Point out the nominative absolute construction. Comment on its function in the sentence.**

1. Max began to run, lurching against the force of the gale, the earth oozing up water, puddles like lakes forming from below (p. 239).
2. She was laughing, her face dissolving into crescents, her eyes, her eyelids and her mouth (p. 239).
3. He tried to move them, throw off the quilt, but instead he had gone back to the art dealer in Cork Street, sweat pouring from his face as he listened to the man explain it was a buyer's market (p. 241).

4. His hair was plastered down, water dripping from his fringe (p. 241).
5. She had tried to get fish but, the weather being stormy, the men were unable to get out (p. 242).
6. The pie in fact was already ruining, the pastry sinking into the sauce (p. 244).

## **DISCUSSION OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **Exercise 4. Discuss the following questions.**

1. What kind of relationship did Gertrude develop with Thomas Everson?
2. Do you think Gertrude wanted Max to leave sooner?
3. How did it come about that Max and Elsa were caught by the tide?
4. What prevented Nick from staying in Steerborough?
5. Why couldn't Lily take on the Fern Cottage?
6. Why was Lily unwilling to leave Steerborough?
7. Why did Klaus Lehmann fail to come?
8. Judging by the letter, did Klaus Lehmann know that he was going to die soon?
9. What is the tone of Lehmann's letter on page 250?
10. Who saved Max and Elsa?
11. What did Gertrude do at the vicarage?
12. What did Lily see and do at the exhibition?
13. Why did Lily decide to begin painting again?
14. What was the Special Exhibit at the Millenium exhibition ?
15. What new information about Thomas Everson and Max Meyer did we learn in these chapters?
16. 17. Why do you think Max wouldn't change his mind when he got the bad news from Gertrude?
18. What house did Lily decide to rent and why?
19. How did Nick's letter on page 276 make Lily feel?

### **Exercise 5. Comment on the following.**

1. "All day he hurried back and forth, memorizing small sections of the building." (p. 240).
2. "It would be cheaper and easier to stay in Suffolk. Find work, find somewhere else to rent." (p. 249).
3. "Or was he ill? And then she knew, and it shocked her that she'd never been quite sure." (p.250).
4. "And when he discovered... well ... it was hard for him" (p. 252).

**Exercise 6. Speak on the following.**

1. Describe the dinner that Lily was arranging.
2. Speak about Max's progress in painting.
3. Elaborate on the reasons why Max Meyer decided to go to Australia.

## UNIT 7. PORTOBELLO

*by Ruth Rendell*<sup>4</sup>

What do you know about Ruth Rendell, the author of *Portobello*? When was she born? What is she famous for? What books did she write? If you need some information to answer these questions, read the following article by Karen Hewitt.

Ruth Rendell was born in 1930 in London. Since 1964 she has been publishing crime fiction for which she has received many awards. A prolific and much-admired writer of detective novels featuring Detective Chief Inspector Wexford, set in Kingsmarkham, a fictional English town. These include *Simisola* (1994), *Road Rage* (1997), *End in Tears* (2005), and *Not in the Flesh* (2007). Other novels examine particular districts of London, such as *The Keys to the Street*, set in the area around Regent's Park. In both the Kingsmarkham and London novels she deals thoughtfully with contemporary social problems and controversial issues.

Occasionally she writes novels which do not feature a detective and which stand alone. *Portobello* is one of these.

Her two books of collected short stories were published in 1987 and 2008. Many of her novels and short stories have been successfully adapted for television.

Ruth Rendell was awarded a CBE in 1996 and made a Life Peer in 1997.

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<sup>4</sup> Rendell R. *Portobello* Arrow Books, 2009



## ASSIGNMENT 1

### CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3 pp. 1-28

#### Exercise 1

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

mermaid (p. 5), to dread (p. 7), consciousness (p. 11), quest (p. 15), pharmacy (p. 15), obesity (p. 19).

#### Exercise 2

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

a cash dispenser (p. 8)  
to burgle a house (p. 8)  
to make up for something (p. 9)  
to be up to no good (p. 10)  
to assault somebody (p. 11)  
a heavy drinker (p. 14)

break-up (p. 14)  
to give up (p. 14)  
to put on weight (p. 14)  
to propose to somebody (p. 15)  
to disapprove of (p. 19)  
to be (a little) overweight (p. 19)

#### Exercise 3

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) There is nothing safe about the Portobello, nothing suburban (p. 2).
- 2) Joel brooded on Pa as he walked along, wondering in despair what made him tick, why he was so cruel and how it was possible that a man whose child had drowned could have *that* picture hanging up in his house (p. 8).
- 3) They wore jackets or coats with hoods pulled down over their eyes and Joel had learnt from newspapers he occasionally saw that hoods meant their wearers were up to no good (p. 10).

#### Exercise 4

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What kind of street is the Portobello Road?
- 2) What do we learn about Joel Roseman (his family, place of living, habits, etc.)?
- 3) What happened to Joel when he was walking home one day (pp. 9-12)?
- 4) Who is Eugene Wren? Speak about his age, appearance, marital status, occupation, financial status, addiction, etc.
- 5) How did Eugene Wren get the envelope with Joel's money (p. 16)? What did he decide to do with the money (pp. 27-28)?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) There is no use in **doing** something (p. 19).
- 2) to look forward to **doing** something (p. 28)

## **ASSIGNMENT 2**

### **CHAPTERS 4, 5 pp. 29-52**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

a hostage (p. 29), a burglar (p. 30), amateur (p. 35), surgeon (p. 41), anxious (p. 44), awkward (p. 47).

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

- |                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| to kidnap (p. 29)                  | to regain consciousness (p. 41) |
| to do no harm (p. 30)              | to have a heart attack (p. 41)  |
| to pay the mortgage (p. 31)        | sympathy (p. 43)                |
| virtue (p. 32)                     | to bully somebody (p. 43)       |
| to live on the benefit (p. 33)     | a GP (p. 46)                    |
| to be in need of fresh air (p. 35) | abyss (p. 46)                   |

#### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) Prison was an occupational hazard in his job and, after all, he must have spent about twenty years inside (p. 31).
- 2) This meant no more breaking of the eighth commandment (p. 31).
- 3) Beggars can't be choosers (p. 33).
- 4) an Agony Uncle (p. 33)
- 5) Don't beat about the bush (p. 36).

#### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What do we learn about Gilbert Gibson? (his past, his occupation, his house, his religious views, his attitude to Lance)?

- 2) What do we learn about Lance's way of life?
- 3) What do we learn about Joel (his heart attack, his childhood, his relations with his parents)?
- 4) What do we learn about Ella Cotswold?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) to feel like doing something (p. 30)
- 2) can't help doing something (p. 35)
- 3) to be worth doing (p. 42)

## **ASSIGNMENT 3**

### **CHAPTERS 6, 7 pp. 53-88**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

cough (p. 60), lettuce (p. 61), cheque (p. 67), fiancé (p. 67), pint (p. 68), bearable (p. 69), champagne (p. 74), awesome (p. 77), malice (p. 84).

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| to take advantage of (p. 63)     | a layabout (p. 82)                 |
| to take private patients (p. 68) | to lose one's temper (p. 82)       |
| to spare no expense (p. 74)      | to persuade sb. to do sth. (p. 83) |
| to be over the moon (p. 78)      | to make oneself at home (p. 84)    |
| to mug sb. (p. 79)               | deadline (p. 85)                   |
| a jobseeker (p. 81)              | to stalk sb. (p. 85)               |

#### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

1. People like the guy didn't even see people like him except after dark when they thought people like him were going to mug them (p. 79).
2. Waste not, want not (p. 87).

#### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What were the relations between Uncle Gib and Lance?
- 2) Speak about Lance's visit to Eugene Wren's house.
- 3) What did Lance do the next day?
- 4) Speak about Ella's meeting with Joel at the hospital.
- 5) Why did Gemma part with Lance?
- 6) Who were Ian Pollitt and Feisal Smith? Speak about their visit to Uncle Gib's place.
- 7) What did Uncle Gib decide to do? (pp. 86-88)?

#### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) to regret (not) **doing** something (p. 69).

### **ASSIGNMENT 4**

#### **CHAPTERS 8, 9 pp. 89-112**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

rumour (p. 90), luxurious (p. 90), conscious (p. 95), purchase (p. 99), hoodie (p. 104), disguise (p. 104), exhausted (p. 106).

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

- |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| to make smth up (p. 92)         | to come in useful (p. 103)        |
| an imaginary friend (p. 95)     | to lose one's nerve (p. 104)      |
| to make an appointment (p. 96)  | to offer a reward (p. 105)        |
| to move in with sb (p. 99)      | to outstay one's welcome (p. 106) |
| to discourage burglars (p. 101) | to save the fare (p. 106)         |
| a challenge (p. 101)            | to make a mess of (p. 108)        |
| state-of-the-art (p. 101)       |                                   |

### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) Pa bought the place lock, stock and barrel (p. 91).
- 2) Was this because being an addict implied weakness of mind whereas to be diabetic meant only a pancreatic deficiency beyond one's control? (p. 100).
- 3) Spoiling Ella, he had decided, was to be an ongoing feature of his marriage and he intended to get into practice (p. 101).
- 4) Uncle Gib was as good as his word (p. 102).

### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) Why did Ella decide to visit Joel?
- 2) What kind of place did Joel live in?
- 3) What experience did Joel tell Ella about?
- 4) Who rented a room in Uncle Gib's house?
- 5) What did Ella and Eugene do at the weekend?
- 6) What do we learn about Lance and his relatives?
- 7) What did Lance do at the weekend?
- 8) What happened to Lance after he burgled the house?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) He **sounded as if** he had been sitting by it for the past three hours (p. 90).
- 2) Are you **well enough to go out**? (p. 96).

## **ASSIGNMENT 5**

### **CHAPTERS 10, 11 pp. 113-136**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

invisible (p. 115), a couch (p. 117), conscious (p. 119), urgent (p. 121), sympathetic (p. 123), a psychiatrist (p. 124), thoroughly (p. 124), dreadful (p. 128), a bruise (p. 129), luxury (p. 133)

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

to give noisy parties (p. 116)  
police interrogations (p. 117)

to rehearse (p. 124)  
to confide in sb (p. 124)

to make an effort (to do sth) (p. 119)  
to take measures (p. 120)  
to make light of sth (p. 121)  
to resist the temptation (p. 121)  
relief (p. 122)

to have a nightmare (p. 129)  
to discharge sb (p. 129)  
a ward (p. 129)  
to encounter sb (p. 136)  
on purpose (p. 136)

### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) He had no one, which was normal, and when Jemma came in he thought he was seeing things because all that kicking and punching had done his head in (p.129).
- 2) Saving the environment suited Uncle Gib. He had lived frugally long before global warming became an issue (p. 135).

### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What do we learn about Joel and his mother?
- 2) What was stolen during the burglary? What do they think about Lance's role in the burglary?
- 3) Describe Joel's visit to the psychotherapist.
- 4) What did Joel think about the people in the streets? (p. 118)
- 5) What are Ella and Eugene's plans for the wedding?
- 6) Who visited Lance in the hospital?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) in order to do sth (p. 117).
- 2) She **did** phone (p. 118). I **did** find it (p. 127).
- 3) **It was the first time he had called** her by her given name (p. 125).

## ASSIGNMENT 6

### CHAPTERS 12, 13 pp. 137-158

#### Exercise 1

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

venue (p. 137), jealous (p. 138), humiliate (p. 139), prescribe (p. 141), murmur (p. 144), injury (p. 144), suspicious (p. 153), threat (p. 154), entertain (p. 154), pneumonia (p. 155)

#### Exercise 2

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

withdrawal (p. 138)	an allowance (p.
in every respect (p. 139)	142)
a dignified man (p. 139)	in the rush hour
to make up one's mind to	(p. 148)
do sth (p. 139)	to ban (p. 150)
to have a check-up (p.	to take up
140)	smoking (p. 157)
an insurance company	to mind the baby
(p. 142)	(p. 157)
to drop out (p. 142)	to have an affair
	(p. 157)

#### Exercise 3

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) I left school but my A levels weren't very good. I got into one of those universities with a name no one had ever heard of and I stuck it for nearly two years. Then I dropped out. (p. 142)
- 2) He felt excluded, isolated and lonely. (p. 146).

#### Exercise 4

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What kind of wedding did Ella and Eugene want to have?
- 2) Could Eugene cope with his addiction to Chocorange?
- 3) What did Joel tell Ella about his life? What did Ella want him to do?  
What was Joel's problem?
- 4) What did Lance do to get some money?
- 5) Who is Elizabeth Cherry? What do we learn about her?

6) How do the relations between Lance and Jemma develop?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

1) He's seeing a psychiatrist. (p. 138)

2) to make sb hear/shudder (p. 140), to get sb to do sth (p. 141), to want sb to do sth (p. 143), to expect sb to do sth (p. 145), to force oneself to do sth (p. 147), to make sb believe (p. 152)

## **ASSIGNMENT 7**

### **CHAPTERS 14 pp. 159-179**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

inevitable (p. 161), inadequate (p. 162), tenant (p. 165), major (p. 165), laundry (p. 166), geriatric (p. 166), ravenous (p. 167), cautiously (p. 168), nausea (p. 168), senile (p. 169), flood (p. 175)

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

to be careless about security (p. 159)	to be relieved (p. 169)
absent-minded (p. 160)	to take a stand (p. 170)
to part with (p. 161)	to be under the weather (p. 170)
to be a substitute for real food (p. 162)	to come to a quick decision (p. 174)
to get rid of (p. 165)	to pass long lonely days (p. 175)
to be equipped with (p. 166)	to do community service (p. 179)

#### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

1) No pain, no gain (p. 166).

2) Eugene was trying to think up something witty to say about having one's cake and eating it (p. 170).



#### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) How did Ella happen to find two packets of Chocorange?
- 2) Did Eugene cope with his addiction?
- 3) Whose house did Lance burgle? What did he steal?
- 4) Describe Ella's visit to Joel.
- 5) Why did Uncle Gib want to insure his house? Did he do it?
- 6) What was Lance planning to do?

#### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) What's the point of doing something? (p. 159) There is no point in **doing** something (p. 165).
- 2) to be unusual for sb to do sth (p. 167)
- 3) What do you think is wrong with you? (p. 173)

### **ASSIGNMENT 8**

#### **CHAPTERS 15, 16 pp. 180-204**

##### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

despair (p. 182), impertinent (p. 184), ridiculous (p. 184), exhibition (p. 185), emergency (p. 194), rubbish (p. 195), scary (p. 198), hijab (p. 203)

##### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

to cancel an appointment (p. 180)	in sb's vicinity (p. 196)
in broad daylight (p. 180)	a steady job (p. 196)
to overdo (p. 180)	to give a lot of thought to sth (p. 203)
to lose an argument (p. 183)	to fail to do sth (p. 203)
to hold an exhibition (p. 184)	to be on bad terms with sb (p. 203)
to pull oneself together (p. 190)	to fancy sb (p. 203)

to be out of the  
question (p. 190)

### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) Total denial was impossible. You were supposed to enjoy your honeymoon. (p. 185)
- 2) 'But I know you won't forget,' which was a nicer way of putting it than, 'Please don't forget.' (p. 189).

### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) How is Joel getting on? Who is going to look after him?
- 2) What is Eugene worried about?
- 3) What is Elizabeth Cherry going to do?
- 4) Why is Fize watching Uncle Gib's house?
- 5) What happens to Reuban Perkins at the meeting?
- 6) Why is Dwayne on bad terms with Fize? Is he going to help Lance?
- 7) Describe the party Ella and Eugene give to their friends.

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) To be supposed to do sth (p. 185)
- 2) To consider doing sth (p. 188)
- 3) I wish it was you coming. (p. 191)

## **ASSIGNMENT 9**

### **CHAPTERS 17, 18 pp. 205-232**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

treasure (p. 210), haul (p. 211), coincidence (p. 219), indigestion (p. 222), solitude (p. 222), consequence (p. 223), contempt (p. 224), jewellery (p. 225)

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

mentally ill (p. 206)  
the disabled (p. 206)  
to take one's mind off one's  
troubles (p. 210)  
to alert the police (p. 211)  
a getaway car (p. 211)  
a holidaymaker (p. 220)  
in total darkness (p. 221)

to back out (p. 224)  
strongbox (p. 225)  
to sb's credit (p. 227)  
to occur to sb (p. 227)  
to indulge one's neighbours (p. 230)  
to be out of sight (p. 231)

### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) It's no good beating about the bush (p. 205).
- 2) Ian Pollitt had helped himself to two squibs from his teenage brother's stock for the forthcoming Guy Fawkes Day (p. 223).
- 3) Many happy returns of the day, darling (p. 232).

### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) Why did one carer refuse to look after Joel?
- 2) What did Lance do to prepare for the burglary?
- 3) Did Uncle Gib enjoy the trip? Why/why not?
- 4) What happened to Uncle Gib the night after the trip?
- 5) What did Feisal Smith and Ian Pollitt do that night?
- 6) Did Lance burgle Elizabeth Cherry's house? What did he steal? Did anyone see him?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) To be used to sth (p. 226)
- 2) He must have dozed off (p. 216)

## **ASSIGNMENT 10**

### **CHAPTERS 19, 20 pp. 233-256**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

vehicle (p. 235), trauma (p. 242), route (p. 245), dahlia (p. 245), draught (p. 247), precise (p. 248), alleged (p. 251), arson (p. 256), naïve (p. 256)

## **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

hard done-by (p. 236)  
arsonist (p. 236)  
to be on the benefit (p. 237)  
a clue (p. 237)  
to set fire to the house (p. 239)  
to work for one's living (p. 239)  
a warrant (p. 243)  
to release sb on police bail (p. 244)

to keep an eye on sb (p. 245)  
custody (p. 250)  
perpetrator (p. 250)  
pickpocket (p. 252)  
a split personality (p. 252)  
to be moved (p. 254)  
on a charge of murder (p. 256)

## **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) Helping the police with their enquiries brought Uncle Gib a lot of pleasure. It was a new experience for him to find himself, so to speak, on the right side of the law (p. 236).
- 2) Like most members of a large extended family, particularly those who are employed and in possession of a home, she lived in mild dread of her relatives wanting to move in with her (p. 239).

## **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What happened that night?
- 2) What happened to Uncle Gib, Dorian Lupescu and Lance during the fire?
- 3) Who did Lance turn to for help?
- 4) What did Lance do with the stolen things?
- 5) What did the police suspect Lance of? Why couldn't he prove his innocence?
- 6) Did Joel feel better?
- 7) What did Elizabeth Cherry find out after she returned from holiday?

## **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) There is no knowing where he is now (p. 237).
- 2) Only when he had moved in with Gemma, now more than a year ago, had any householders actually welcomed Lance into their home (p. 238).

## ASSIGNMENT 11

### CHAPTERS 21, 22 pp. 257-283

#### Exercise 1

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

bachelor (p. 262), porcelain (p. 263), gradually (p. 265), exasperated (p. 266), meadow (p. 282)

#### Exercise 2

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

paramedic (p. 258)

to recover (p. 259)

to take one's own life (p. 262)

to indulge oneself in sth (p. 262)

to foretell sb's future (p. 264)

cold turkey (p. 265)

solicitor (p. 271)

to betray (p. 273)

a charge (p. 273)

to be aware (p. 274)

to take over (p. 2810)

vague (p. 282)

#### Exercise 3

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) You know what she is, a real Iron Lady (p. 261).
- 2) Foolishly, she admitted, she revolted against the waste of it even when she knew keeping stuff you would never use was mere hoarding for hoarding's sake (p. 274).

#### Exercise 4

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What did Joel do one day? Why did he do it?
- 2) What did Ella and Joel's mother talk about?
- 3) Why did Lance have to tell his nan and her boy-friend about the burglary?
- 4) Were Lance's parents happy to have him stay in their home? Why? What did they do most of the time?
- 5) Were the police going to arrest Lance?
- 6) What was Eugene worried about?
- 7) How did Ella feel about getting married soon?
- 8) What happened one day when Ella was alone in Eugene's house?

#### Exercise 5

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) To mean to do sth (p. 266)
- 2) I'm always trying (p. 268).
- 3) If the police were serious they would have done something about it by now (p. 269).

## **ASSIGNMENT 12**

### **CHAPTERS 23, 24 pp. 284-308**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

hospitable (p. 284), abrupt (p. 287), sneeze (p. 290), corpse (p. 293), deny (p. 295), a lawyer (p. 295), secure (p. 296), source (p. 297), profound (p. 300), subtle (p. 300)

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

to come across sb (p. 285)	law-abiding (p. 297)
to be out on one's own (p. 286)	to keep a low profile (p. 297)
honeymoon destination (p. 287)	with a sinking heart (p. 299)
to be unlikely (p. 288)	to dismiss sth from one's mind (p. 301)
to run out of sth (p. 290)	to cut down on sth (p. 305)
to give sb an allergy (p. 290)	to discover a carefully guarded
to charge sb (p. 295)	secret (p. 307)
to have a vivid memory of doing sth (p. 297)	

#### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) Uncle Gib, in one of his biblical phrases, would have said that the scales fell from his eyes (p. 286).
- 2) In his cell [...] he took a philosophical view (p. 299).
- 3) How are the mighty fallen! Perhaps to be brought so low was good for his character (p. 300).

#### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) What happened to Lance that made him think that he was out on his own?
- 2) How did Ella happen to find the sweets that Eugene was fond of?
- 3) Why did Lance want to see Uncle Gib? What did he discover in the Perkinses' house?
- 4) What happened to Lance? What was he charged with?
- 5) How did Ella discover Eugene's secret? What happened after she tried to discuss it with Eugene?

#### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) Seldom did Lance have occasion to go into a pharmacy (p. 289).

### **ASSIGNMENT 13**

#### **CHAPTERS 25, 26 pp. 308-326**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

enormous (p. 308), a guardian (p. 308), monotonous (p. 310), memoirs (p. 310), fur (p. 312), hoarse (p. 315), obituary (p. 318), dilemma (p. 325)

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| to lie awake for much of the night (p. 308) | to break an engagement (p. 315)      |
| to pass the time (p. 309)                   | to search for words (p. 315)         |
| to leave sb alone (p. 310)                  | to one's heart's content (p. 316)    |
| to harass sb (p. 310)                       | to see to everything (p. 316)        |
| to be haunted by (p. 311)                   | to confront a new challenge (p. 318) |
| reluctant (p. 312)                          | to come to one's senses (p. 319)     |
| to cancel arrangements (p. 315)             | to have revenge on sb (p. 323)       |

#### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) ... but now it was as if he had been hollowed out and only a shell of that man in the hospital remained (p. 311).
- 2) 'I'm good,' said Lance, not because he felt well or happy but because this was what he always said when asked this question (p. 313).
- 3) Gemma was what they called articulate (p. 324).

#### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) How did Ella feel after the incident with Eugene?
- 2) What change did Ella find in Joel's house? What did she think of Joel's state now?
- 3) How did Jemma learn about the burglary?
- 4) What did Eugene tell Ella?
- 5) What happened to Reuben Perkins?
- 6) How did Ella feel?
- 7) How did Fize feel about the arson and murder? What did he decide to do?

#### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) We are not to be married (p. 320).

### **ASSIGNMENT 14**

#### **CHAPTERS 27, 28 pp. 327-348**

##### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

incompatibility (p. 328), sympathetic (p. 330), schizophrenia (p. 335), sympathetic (p. 330), delirious (p. 340), sweat (p. 340), avian flu (p. 341), muscle (p. 344), lethal (p. 346)

##### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

to exchange glances (p. 328)  
 infidelity (p. 328)  
 to fulfill a purpose (p. 328)  
 to lose interest in real food (p. 328)  
 to check out of a hotel (p. 329)

a cosy domestic scene (p. 338)  
 to give in (p. 339)  
 to break a commandment (p. 339)  
 under the weather (p. 340)  
 in vain (p. 340)



a forced smile (p. 330)  
to sb's surprise (p. 336)

dizzy (p. 340)  
to be detained against one's will (p. 341)

### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) Joel might be mad in the recognized sense of that term but Eugene's was also a kind of madness, inexplicable, absurd, utterly destructive (p. 342).
- 2) But most people are like that. They prefer the doubt to the fact (p. 343).

### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) How did Eugene feel after he cancelled the wedding (morally and physically)?
- 2) Where did Joel move to? Why?
- 3) What did Ella think about Joel's change?
- 4) What did Fize talk about with Ian? Why did he want to go to the police?
- 5) What did Ian do?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) But by the evening, **his appetite gone**, [...] he knew this was more than being depressed (p. 340).

## **ASSIGNMENT 15**

### **CHAPTERS 29, 30, 31 pp. 349-376**

#### **Exercise 1**

**Transcribe, pronounce and translate the following words:**

fiancee (p. 350), antibiotics (p. 350), waltz (p. 351), prescription (p. 353), a fortnight (p. 354), jovial (p. 356), nausea (p. 359), decade (p. 361), alibi (p. 373), prestigious (p. 374), identity (p. 374).

#### **Exercise 2**

**Look up the following words and expressions in the dictionary and recall the situations in which they were used in the chapters under discussion:**

to split up (p. 350)

to make short work of (p. 355)

obsession (p. 351)  
to become commonplace (p. 352)  
a catwalk (p. 352)  
to be in mourning for (p. 353)  
to take its toll (p. 353)  
to ring a bell (p. 353)

to do without sth (p. 362)  
to keep sb awake (p. 362)  
a paragon (p. 364)  
to intimidate (p. 369)  
to nag sb (p. 373)  
the pressure of work (p. 374)

### **Exercise 3**

**Explain what is meant by:**

- 1) His temperature turned out to be a hundred and one (p. 350).
- 2) The owner pays less than the minimum wage, which is illegal, but he tells Lance that if he doesn't like it there will be plenty of people from Rumania and Bulgaria who will (p. 373).

### **Exercise 4**

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1) How did Eugene feel? What did he think about his future life? What did he realize one day?
- 2) Did Ella feel like going to work? How did she feel?
- 3) What did Jemma tell Ella about? How did Jemma feel?
- 4) What did Ella realize when Jemma came to see her two weeks later? What did she do after that? What happened?
- 5) What changes happened in Uncle Gib's life?
- 6) How did Lance's life change?

### **Exercise 5**

**Study the following patterns and make up your own sentences using them.**

- 1) The owner pays less than the minimum wage, **which** is illegal (p. 373).

## UNIT 8. BLACK SWAN GREEN

*by David Mitchell*<sup>5</sup>

What do you know about David Mitchell, the author of *Black Swan Green*? When was he born? What is he famous for? What books did he write? If you need some information to answer these questions, read the following article by Karen Hewitt.

David Mitchell was born in 1969 and grew up in Melvern, Worcestershire. He studies English and American literature at the University of Kent, before moving to Hiroshima, Japan, where he taught English to Japanese students for eight years. He has published five novels: *Ghostwritten* (1999), *number9dream* (2001), *Cloud Atlas* (2004), *Black Swan Green* (2006) and *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* (2010). All five novels have been lavishly praised in Britain where Mitchell is regarded as one of our finest youngest writers. He now lives with his family in Ireland.

Four of the novels are notable for their exotic settings, intricate structures and huge casts of characters. Each one is a feast of storytelling in different genres, often touching on different historical periods. *Black Swan Green* stands out in this list as different from the other novels in both subject matter and style. It is a novel which, on one level, tells the realistic story of a thirteen-year-old boy through his own voice. On another level it is an exploration of rural-suburban England in the early 1980s, full of instantly recognizable period details for the English reader old enough to remember them. But it is possible to think about *Black Swan Green* as a novel which evokes other genres and raises questions that go far beyond the hero's domestic worries. Despite the age of the hero and the colloquial voice of his narration, this is an adult and demanding novel which we hope you will find enriching and satisfying to read.

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<sup>5</sup> Mitchell D. *Black Swan Green* Sceptre, 2006

## ASSIGNMENT 1

### JANUARY MAN

#### Exercise 1

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

to set foot (p. 1)	to steer clear of (p. 11)
to be up to sth (p. 3)	arrogance (p. 13)
book tokens (p. 5)	a venue for (p. 13)
to get a/the knack of doing sth (p. 5)	revision (p. 15)
to get concussion (p. 5)	to revise (p. 17)
to pay close attention (p. 9)	to give sb the silent treatment (p. 16)
to loathe (p. 10)	to make a swap (p. 20)
	to make out (p. 23)

#### Exercise 2

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

#### Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. So I went in, thinking of the bride going into Bluebeard's chamber after being told not to. (p. 1)
2. That was a strategic mistake. (p. 3)
3. ... but names aren't just names. (p. 4)
4. Or if I called Moron 'Dean' in front of everyone, it'd damage my own standing. (p. 4)
5. Accidentally on purpose (p. 7)
6. Julia hovered in the doorway, scenting blood. (p. 15)

#### Exercise 4

Answer the following questions:

1. Where and when is the scene laid?
2. Who is the main character?

3. What do we learn about Jason and his family?
4. What problems does Jason face?
5. Which episode/passage do you like best? Which one do you find amusing / poetic / gripping / enjoyable / funny / boring / depressing / delightful / keeping in suspense / humourous, etc.? Comment on it.

### **Exercise 5**

Give a summary of the chapter.

## **ASSIGNMENT 2**

### **HANGMAN**

#### **Exercise 1**

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

execution (p. 28)	to make sense (p. 39)
to tell sb off (p. 28)	surveillance (p. 41)
apart from (p. 31)	posh (p. 42)
a laughing stock (p. 33)	to sort sth out (p. 42)
to work out (p. 33)	to listen in (p. 43)
to hibernate (p. 34)	to retaliate (p. 45)
to eavesdrop (p. 34)	follow-up (p. 52)
to grass on sb (p. 39)	

#### **Exercise 2**

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

#### **Exercise 3**

Explain what is meant by:

1. Quarter past four. Sixteen hours and fifty minutes to live. (p. 30)
2. It's social suicide! (p. 34)
3. ... and he's Irish as Hurricane Higgins, but my word, that lad hasn't kissed the Blarney Stone, he's bitten off chunks of it. (p. 39)

4. Talk of the gift of gab! Craig Salt dropped by while I was there to instill some God-fearing discipline into the troops, but Danny had him *eating out of his hand* in five minutes flat. (p. 39)
5. Life must be brill for Julia. (p. 44)
6. If I was the pope I'd've made Mrs de Roo a saint. On the spot. (p. 50)

#### **Exercise 4**

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe Jason's visit to the speech clinic. What is his speech problem? What kind of person is Mrs de Roo?
2. What is the new challenge that Jason has to face? How does he feel about it? What is a School Assembly?
3. Speak about Julia. What does the reader learn about her from this chapter?
4. Comment on the way Mr Kempsey speaks to Jason. How does his speech characterize him?
5. How is Jason doing at school? What is the teachers' attitude to him?

#### **Exercise 5**

Give a summary of the chapter.

### **ASSIGNMENT 3**

#### **RELATIVES**

##### **Exercise 1**

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

horticulturist (p. 54)  
intrepid (p. 54)  
geriatric (p. 56)  
to lay off (p. 58)  
condiments (p. 58)  
subtlety (p. 61)

maturity (p. 61)  
with flying colours (p. 63)  
to network (p. 64)  
to jump to conclusions (p. 67)  
recession (p. 68)  
to stand up to sb (p. 81)

##### **Exercise 2**

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

### **Exercise 3**

Explain what is meant by:

1. The Lambs go to an independent school in Richmond where you get picked on not if you're posh but if you're not posh enough. (p. 53)
2. ... the pig came before the wife... (p. 54)
3. When the Lambs visit, salt and pepper magically turn into 'the condiments'. (p. 58)
4. It's not the taking part that matters. It's the winning that counts! (p. 72)
5. The Crème Eggs were insurance against you. (p. 79)
6. This "not today" attitude of yours *is* a cancer. (p. 81)

### **Exercise 4**

Answer the following questions:

1. Who are the relatives? What kind of people are they?
2. What do we learn about the relations between Jason's parents?
3. Comment on the episode in the shop.
4. What do you make of Hugo?

### **Exercise 5**

Give a summary of the chapter.

## **ASSIGNMENT 4**

### **BRIDLEPATH**

#### **Exercise 1**

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

bridlepath (p. 87)  
to swear (p. 98)  
to show one's true colours (p. 101)  
traitor (p. 103)

survival techniques (p. 116)  
mistletoe (p. 117)  
to leave smb in the lurch (p. 118)  
to inflict (p. 119)

to be better off (p. 105)  
to endure (p. 108)  
to sneak (p. 115)

lunatic (p. 120)  
to coax (p. 120)

## **Exercise 2**

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

## **Exercise 3**

Explain what is meant by:

1. Okay, but poisoned. (p. 90)
2. Human beings need to watch out for reasonless niceness too. (p. 90)
3. That *No* turned the three feet between into three miles. (p. 100)
4. There're gaps between me and Dawn Madden. (p. 108)
5. Say if you hunt for Christmas presents in mid-December, find what you're hoping to get, but then on Christmas Day there's no sign of it in your pillowcase. That's how I felt. (p. 115)

## **Exercise 4**

Answer the following questions:

1. What kind of day is it? What are Jason's plans for the day? What is a bridlepath?
2. Who does he meet on the way? Comment on each encounter.
3. Does the plot of the chapter remind you of any folktale?
4. There are a lot of descriptions of nature in the chapter. Quote some lines which you find interesting, beautiful, imaginative, etc.

## **Exercise 5**

Give a summary of the chapter.



## ASSIGNMENT 5

### ROCKS

#### Exercise 1

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

breadwinner (p. 124)	to bear a grudge (p. 139)
withdrawal (p. 126)	a character reference (p. 139)
to be out of bounds (p. 129)	condolence (p. 139)
to put one's finger on sth (p. 130)	to end up doing sth (p. 141)
to take out a loan (p. 130)	a stand-off (p. 142)
utility bills (p. 130)	gullible (p. 143)
to make a nuisance of oneself (p. 134)	to go bankrupt (p. 146)

#### Exercise 2

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

#### Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. Ordinary polite words shouldn't be so toxic but they can be. (p. 128)
2. Julia asked how I *knew* we weren't being lied to? 'We're British,' I told her. (p. 132)
3. A lot to be said for tradition. Far too easy to throw the bath water out with the baby. (p. 133)
4. However, I also hope that you will give Thomas's family sufficient space in which to grieve. (p. 140)
5. Tom Yew's death killed the thrill of the war. (p. 140)
6. Do you know what a "pyrrhic victory" is, Dad? (p. 144)

#### Exercise 4

Answer the following questions:

1. Speak about the Falklands War and the way it affects the life in Black Swan Green. Use the information from the "*Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell. A Commentary with annotations" (pp. 12-13).
2. Discuss the behaviour of Jason's parents in this chapter.

3. Comment on the last paragraph of the chapter. Do you agree with Jason?

### **Exercise 5**

Give a summary of the chapter.

## **ASSIGNMENT 6**

### **SPOOKS**

#### **Exercise 1**

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

prank (p. 150)	to have an eye for (p. 162)
to get justice (p. 158)	to get sb's point (p. 163)
the golden mean (p. 158)	nettle (p. 165)
loft (p. 161)	greenhouse (p. 171)
to name-drop (p. 161)	to abandon (p. 177)
to be the making of someone (p. 161)	to traipse (p. 178)

#### **Exercise 2**

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

#### **Exercise 3**

Explain what is meant by:

1. 'Pearls before swine!' (p. 159)
2. But Mum did a proper recipe this evening, and it wasn't even anyone's birthday. (p. 160)
3. Dad went all Clint Eastwood. (p. 161)
4. 'Kate says if you haven't lived in Black Swan Green since the War of the Roses, you'll never be a local.' (p. 163)
5. Disappointing 'cause what was the point of joining the Spooks if losers like Moran're being recruited too? (p. 165)
6. I care too much, that's my problem. (p. 174)

#### **Exercise 4**

Answer the following questions:

1. What new position does Jason have in school? Why?
2. What do we learn about Jason's mother?
3. Who are the Spooks? How does Jason feel about becoming a Spook?
4. What moral problem does Jason face? How does he solve it?
5. Comment on the last paragraph of the chapter.

### Exercise 5

Give a summary of the chapter.

## ASSIGNMENT 7

### SOLARIUM

#### Exercise 1

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

endangered species (p. 181)  
to feel giddy (p. 183)  
ludicrous (p. 184)  
atrocious (p. 184)  
pins and needles (p. 190)  
to pester (p. 190)

barbarian (p. 194)  
despondency (p. 201)  
high and low (p. 207)  
to pull the wool over sb's eyes (p. 208)  
truth will out (p. 208)  
to keep oneself to oneself (p. 209)

#### Exercise 2

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

#### Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. "Eva, in Great Britain your 'Madame' is too onions-and-beret." (p. 181)
2. Belgian. The destiny of discreet neighbours is to be confused with the noisy ones next door. (p. 188)
3. ... speaking one language only is *prison*! (p. 4)
4. Getting caught with a French novel would send me to the electric chair. (p. 205)

5. She wasn't getting a 'Sorry' from *me*. (p. 208)
6. But it's an ill wind, I always say. (p. 209)

#### **Exercise 4**

Read 'Beauty and Art' (pp. 17-18 from 'A commentary with annotations') and answer the following questions:

1. Why does Jason go to Madame Crommelynck?
2. What kind of person is she?
3. What do they talk about?
4. Why are these meetings so important for Jason?
5. What happens to Madame Crommelynck and her husband at the end of the chapter?
6. How does Jason feel about it?

#### **Exercise 5**

Give a summary of the chapter.

### **ASSIGNMENT 8**

#### **SOUVENIRS**

##### **Exercise 1**

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

Omniscience (p. 219),  
 foster parents (p. 221),  
 to beat around the bush (p. 222),  
 rain check (p. 224),  
 to stand up to sb (p. 225),  
 defiant (p. 232),  
 to bring up a topic (p. 232),

to come by sth (p. 239),  
 to scurry (p. 239),  
 to be on the verge of tears (p. 244),  
 to intimidate (p. 244),  
 to press charges (p. 245),  
 to turn out (p. 247)

##### **Exercise 2**

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

### Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. Girls're from another planet. (p. 217)
2. But back in Cork I do live in a turf hut with a leprechaun called Mick in my potato plot. (p. 219)
3. Why mope around going, like, "Woe is me!"? (p. 222)
4. Keep your cards closer to your chest than *that*, honey. (p. 238)
5. Good moods're as fragile as eggs. (p. 246)

### Exercise 4

Answer the following questions:

1. Divide the chapter into episodes.
2. Describe what happens to Jason in each of the episodes. Comment on the way he feels.

### Exercise 5

Give a summary of the chapter.

## ASSIGNMENT 9

### MAGGOT

#### Exercise 1

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

to stand a chance (p. 250)  
ready, set, go (p. 251)  
leper (p. 252)  
to malingering (p. 254)  
to have what it takes (p. 253)  
ring leader (p. 254)

to grass (p. 257)  
a sense of decorum (p. 258)  
to trample (p. 258)  
a student teacher for (p. 262)  
sinister (p. 266)  
to push sb around (p. 274)

#### Exercise 2

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

### Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. Mr McNamara's inexperience showed itself again. (p. 255)
2. I felt sorry for Mr McNamara. He's me, in a way. (p. 257)
3. These jokes the world plays, they're not funny at all. (p. 260)
4. Miss Lippetts's no idiot. Sending Gary Drake to Mr Nixon'd've turned his joke into today's main headline. (p. 264)
5. Teachers're always using that 'in your own words'. I hate that. (p. 265)

### Exercise 4

Answer the following questions:

1. Why are the boys making fun of Jason?
2. How do they learn about his stammer?
3. What book are they reading? Have you read this book?
4. What other problems does Jason have to face during this school day?

### Exercise 5

Give a summary of the chapter.

## ASSIGNMENT 10

### KNIFE GRINDER

#### Exercise 1

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

out of the blue (p. 277)

to run out of (p. 281)

layabout (p. 282)

harsh assessment (p. 282)

to hush up (p. 282)

on the sly (p. 284)

to break out (p. 286)

in itself (p. 287)

in vogue (p. 288)

to slot (p. 288)

vagrancy (p. 288)

the powers that be (p. 289)

standing ovation (p. 289)

a fire drill (p. 290)

to maim (p. 293)

#### Exercise 2

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

### Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. I was still too poisoned by Wilcox to pick the last watery blackberries of 1982. (p. 278)
2. Poems are lenses, mirrors and X-ray machines. (p. 283)
3. *God, I wish I'd said yes.* (p. 285)
4. ... the villagers *wanted* the gypsies to be gross, so the grossness of what they're not acts as a stencil for what the villagers are. (p. 288). I'd been thinking how gypsies *wanted* the rest of us to be gross, so the grossness of what they're not acts as a stencil for what they are. (p. 304)
5. Black Swan Green villagers learnt you can have smoke without fire on Wednesday. (p. 293)
6. The Triple Invisible Boy, that's Jason Taylor. (p. 296)

### Exercise 4

Answer the following questions:

1. Comment on the knife grinder's visit.
2. What is the villagers' attitude to the gypsies? Describe the emergency meeting. What happens during the meeting?
3. How does Jason find himself in the wood? Does he enjoy being there?
4. Where does Jason meet the gypsies? How does he feel about it?

### Exercise 5

Give a summary of the chapter.

## ASSIGNMENT 11

### GOOSE FAIR

#### Exercise 1

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

prosecution (p. 307)  
to arrive at a verdict (p. 307)  
ally (p. 309)

to vanish (p. 318)  
vicious (p. 318)  
to stash away (p. 319)

a cripple (p. 313)  
to carry on the search (p. 315)  
ET (p. 316)

to mean to do sth (p. 321)  
to occur to sb (p. 326)  
to cartwheel (p. 326)

## Exercise 2

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

## Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. If your words're true, they're armed. (p. 311)
2. "Son, if I'd just been fightin' for the *vonga*, for the *money*", he told me, "that Welsh bastard'd've beat me". (p. 314)
3. Leopards changing their spots, is it? (p. 315)
4. They was the straw what broke the camel's back. (p. 318)
5. It's the perfect revenge. (p. 319)
6. So important, I've got no idea what it was. (p. 320)

## Exercise 4

Answer the following questions:

1. What is a Goose Fair?
2. What does Jason find? What does he do with it? Why?
3. What do we learn about Ross Wilcox's family?
4. What problems does Ross Wilcox face?
5. Why does Jason return the wallet to Ross?
6. What message do you think the author wants to convey by having Ross Wilcox badly injured in an accident?

## Exercise 5

Give a summary of the chapter.



## ASSIGNMENT 12

### DISCO

#### Exercise 1

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

vice (p. 328)	to stamp on (p. 333)
premises (p. 328)	to let in on a secret (p. 334)
extortion (p. 329)	to be in the know (p. 336)
alleged (p. 330)	ambiguous (p. 338)
to get on with homework (p. 331)	morbid (p. 341)
intimidation (p. 332)	to pick on sb (p. 343)
to feign incomprehension (p. 333)	blur (p. 349)

#### Exercise 2

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

#### Exercise 3

Explain what is meant by:

1. But misfortunes are commonplace, Taylor, and relative. (p. 329)
2. That 'alleged' warned me the jury was still out. (p. 330)
3. Better to let someone else blow the whistle, sir. (p. 332)
4. Miss Lippetts *loves* her job, on good days. (p. 339)
5. 'Your crush had evaporated?'  
'Yeah. Into thin air. How does *that* happen?' (p. 342)
6. 'A human punchbag?' (p. 349)

#### Exercise 4

Answer the following questions:

1. What did Jason do at metalwork class? Why do you think he did it?
2. How did the teachers and Mr Nixon react to that? Comment on Miss Lippett's lesson.
3. Why did Jason's father lose his job?
4. What things happened at the disco?
5. What did Jason and his father talk about?

## **Exercise 5**

Give a summary of the chapter.

## **ASSIGNMENT 13**

### **JANUARY MAN**

## **Exercise 1**

Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases using an English-English dictionary:

to beat around the bush (p. 353)  
adulterer (p. 353)  
to have a breakdown (p. 354)  
to do a feature on sth (p. 354)  
removal men (p. 355)  
brand-new (p. 355)  
on the market (p. 356)

on the house (p. 356)  
to split up (p. 357)  
judgemental (p. 358)  
a toddler (p. 359)  
docile (p. 367)  
to petrify (p. 369)

## **Exercise 2**

Recall the situations in which the words and phrases from Exercise 1 were used in the chapter under discussion.

## **Exercise 3**

Explain what is meant by:

1. ... doubtless having scented something rotten in the state of Sweden, as it were ... (p. 354)
2. Mrs Rhydd had the decency to look mortified. (p. 354)
3. Dad's expression was a mountaineer's, the moment his rope snaps. (p. 357)
4. The world never stops unmaking what the world never stops making. (p. 360)
5. The world's a headmaster who works on your faults. (p. 367)
6. If I don't jump one way or the other I'm going to fall into bottomless blackness. (p. 371)

## **Exercise 4**

Answer the following questions:

1. What is happening to Jason's family?
2. How do people in the village react to the news?
3. Describe Jason's meeting with his father and Cynthia.
4. Who does Jason meet in the forest? What does he find out?
5. How does Julia treat Jason?

### Exercise 5

Give a summary of the chapter.

## ASSIGNMENT 14

The journal *Footpath* invites Russian students to contribute their essays devoted to contemporary British novels to the journal. Excellent essays should fulfil clear criteria. The editors ask the following questions.

- Has this student read the work carefully?
- Does he or she have original ideas?
- Is there a real connection between the ideas and the text?

In 2010, they published an essay by a student from Magnitogorsk. Read the essay below and discuss how the essay fulfils the criteria. Do you find the student's ideas interesting?

Write your own essay on the book.

### **On *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell**

*Gennady Kovshenin*  
fifth-year student  
Magnitogorsk State University

Jason Taylor is a 13-year-old kid from a small motionless village in South Worcestershire, England. Thirteen chapters, thirteen self-contained short stories, thirteen months from January 1982 to January 1983, which David Mitchell often ends in the middle of the action leaving the reader with questions, thoughts and emotions, and an urge to continue reading up to the very end.

Throughout the novel, Jason is confronted by many worries, foremost of which are his debilitating stammer problem and his reputation among Black Swan Green kids. His parents' failing marriage, his sister, sex and girls, poetry, the War, and his broken Omega Seamaster watch give Jason a hard time as well.

Jason's reputation with his schoolmates is dynamic. Starting off as an average ranked kid, having built up some respect in the chapter 'Spooks', loses it immediately after his initiation into the secret gang, and becomes the school 'Stutter Boy' in the brutal chapter 'Maggot', where he not only becomes an outcast, but gets systematically bullied and laughed at by most of the kids. In 'Disco', Jason stands up

to his bullies, regaining the respect of the people who mattered to him, and gets to kiss a girl.

A happy ending, it seems. The last chapter, though, 'January Man', shocks the reader as much as it shocks Jason with the news of his parents' divorce. The relationship between his parents is wobbly throughout the novel, with several awkward and uncomfortable episodes. In 'Souvenirs', Jason gets to spend a few days 'with' Dad in Lyme Regis in the first half of the chapter, and another few days with Mum in Cheltenham in the second half of the chapter. Both parts start with almost the same words and actions, which is ironic and somewhat amusing. Nevertheless, the endless quarrels over Mum's 'pile of rocks' and Dad's secret remortgage, the 5-star quarrel rating that Julia and Jason developed, show us that Helena's and Mike's is heading for the worst.

Jason's endeavours at coping with his stutter are very interesting to follow. He is in constant battle with Hangman. There are three voices inside Jason: Unborn Twin (the candid and blunt, braver and stronger Jason), Maggot (the shifty wimp), and the most dreaded - Hangman (the one who chooses when Jason stammers). Jason tells us how he outsmarts Hangman by testing unsafe words and replacing them with synonyms-on-the-fly. The short pauses and parenthesized comments are of utmost interest and curiosity.

*Black Swan Green* is filled with emotion; a perfect balance of joy and grief, laughter and tears. Jason's subtle observations, for instance, are truly enjoyable. They are the result of Mitchell's skill with dramatic irony which frequent and truly funny. An example of an entertainingly funny episode from 'Souvenirs' would be the one where Jason stumbles into an antiques shop and a woman, whom Jason takes for the shop assistant, starts telling Jason of her son for quite a while, until Jason finds out that she is not the shop assistant. On the other hand, the final episode in 'Disco', encompassing a conversation between Dad and the naïve Jason alone at home, is one of the most heartbreaking episodes in the book. Jason can hardly hold his tears back when they're moving out with Mum in the last chapter, and neither can the reader.

Mitchell shows pure mastery in the evoking of laughter, tears, sympathy and amusement. I was captivated by this enthralling book which, even when, superficially, nothing of great import is happening, has the gift of truth which holds the attention without fail. 'So there are no swans in Black Swan Green?'

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