PART 1

Class, Colonialism, and the Great War

“What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of guns.”

—Wilfred Owen, “Anthem for Doomed Youth”
Connecting to the Reading Selections

What is the best way to respond to a person in need? The four selections compared here—a short story by Katherine Mansfield, an essay by Bessie Head, a parable from the Bible, and verses from the Qur’an—explore this issue and offer insights about life.

Katherine Mansfield

*A Cup of Tea* .......................................................... short story .......... 1045
A chance meeting—a painful realization

England, 1922

Bessie Head

*Village People* .......................................................... essay .......... 1054
Sharing the individual’s pain

Botswana, Africa, 1967

King James Version of the Bible

*The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man* .... parable .......... 1057
The tables turned

England, 1611

*from the Qur’an*

What is true generosity? .............................................. sacred text .......... 1059

Arabia, c. 650

COMPARING THE Big Idea Class, Colonialism, and the Great War

Wealth and poverty can generate rigid classes that divide people and erode society. The writers of these selections examine the misery of poverty, the power of wealth, and the true meaning of compassion.

COMPARING Tone

Tone is a reflection of the writer’s attitude toward a subject as conveyed through such elements as word choice, punctuation, sentence structure, and figures of speech. These four selections reflect different attitudes toward poverty and the poverty-stricken.

COMPARING Past and Present

Though advances in technology have improved the quality of life for many people throughout the world today, the widening gulf between the haves and the have-nots is still a grim reality. These selections reveal how different cultures of the past viewed wealth and poverty.
A Cup of Tea

MEET KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Katherine Mansfield lived for only thirty-four years, but in her short life she became one of the greatest short story writers and an innovator in the form. Her stories have been called delicate, beautiful, and profound. She revolutionized the concept of the short story, moving it away from the strictures of plot and external action. She was able to capture the meaning of a relationship in a series of sensations, illuminating the inner truth of a character's life.

“Life is, all at one and the same time, far more mysterious and far simpler than we know.”

—Katherine Mansfield

Setbacks and Success  Born Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp in Wellington, New Zealand, she was the daughter of a domineering father and an aloof mother. As a young child, Mansfield was nurtured primarily by her maternal grandmother. She tasted her first literary success at age nine: first prize in a school composition contest. When she was fourteen, her family sailed to London, and she enrolled in Queen’s College. There, she edited the school magazine and, to her delight, discovered such authors as Oscar Wilde.

Mansfield returned briefly to New Zealand, but in 1908 moved to England for good. Her life there got off to a rough start. She married hastily, then left her husband after only a few days, suffered a miscarriage, and became increasingly disillusioned. Then in 1911 her life improved—Mansfield published her first book and met the man who would become her second husband, John Middleton Murry, editor of two magazines in which she published her stories. Though a member of a literary circle that included D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf, Mansfield often felt alienated from it, and she criticized the intellectual snobbery she perceived in some of her artist friends.

The death of her soldier brother in 1915 affected Mansfield deeply. Dedicating herself to preserving her memories of him and their shared childhood, she wrote a series of short stories that beautifully portray her family life in New Zealand. Regarded today as masterpieces of the short-story form, these stories were published in 1920 in the collection Bliss and Other Stories.

Illness and Critical Acclaim  Never in good health, Mansfield contracted tuberculosis in her early thirties. Despite her illness, she continued to write, producing some of her best works, including “A Cup of Tea,” while desperately seeking a cure for her illness. During this period, she published the critically acclaimed collection The Garden Party. She completed her last story only months before her death. Two more collections of stories, The Dove’s Nest and Something Childish, were published posthumously. Literary historian Saralyn Daly offered this assessment of Mansfield’s work: “In her variety of treatment, depth of perception, and formal precision, but most of all in the continuing aliveness and immediate relevance of her stories, rests [Mansfield’s] claim to a place in literary history.”

Katherine Mansfield was born in 1888 and died in 1923.

Author Search  For more about Katherine Mansfield, go to www.glencoe.com.
Connecting to the Story
What motivates someone to be charitable toward a person in need? In Mansfield’s short story, the main character helps a destitute young woman she meets on the street. As you read, think about the following questions:

- What prompts you to help others?
- What acts do you consider altruistic, or done with unselfish regard for the good of others?

Building Background
This short story is set in England at the beginning of the twentieth century. At this time, people from different social classes did not socialize with one another, and it was considered improper for upper-class women to work inside or outside the home.

Mansfield is credited with writing a new kind of short story—one more concerned with the emotions and psychological makeup of its characters than those of the past. Through the use of images, dialogue, monologue, and metaphors, Mansfield focused on her characters’ emotional states, subtle shifts of mood, and epiphanies—that is, their sudden, significant realizations.

Setting Purposes for Reading
**Big Idea** Class, Colonialism, and the Great War
As you read, consider what this story suggests about the upper class and class conflict in early-twentieth-century Britain.

**Literary Element** Motivation
A character’s motivation is his or her reason for acting, thinking, or feeling in a certain way. This motivation may be stated in the story or implied. As you read, consider the motivations of the characters in this story.


Reading Strategy Connecting to Contemporary Issues
One reason that great literature endures is that generations of readers recognize its relevance to their own times. When you connect literature to contemporary issues, you relate events and issues in a story to those in society today.

Reading Tip: Identifying Connections Use a chart to record connections between Mansfield’s story and contemporary issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event in Story</th>
<th>Contemporary Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A stranger asks</td>
<td>Homeless people today sometimes ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary for money.</td>
<td>passersby for handouts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary

- **quaint** (kwânt) adj. pleasingly unusual or odd; p. 1047 Tourists are amused to find a quaint bungalow nestled among the downtown skyscrapers.
- **odious** (ô’ dê as) adj. causing hate, disgust, or repugnance; p. 1048 The odious sight of the garbage dump offended us.
- **exotic** (i/gə’stik) adj. strangely beautiful or fascinating; p. 1048 I had never before seen that exotic flower, with its unusual leaves and petals.
- **retort** (ri tört’) v. to reply in a witty, quick, or sharp manner; p. 1052 When her father refused to agree with her, the frustrated teen retorted sarcastically, “You always take my side.”

Vocabulary Tip: Analogies An analogy is a likeness between two things that are unlike in other ways.

**OBJECTIVES**
In studying this selection, you will focus on the following:
- analyzing motivation
- connecting literature to contemporary issues
Rosemary Fell was not exactly beautiful. No, you couldn’t have called her beautiful. Pretty? Well, if you took her to pieces . . . But why be so cruel as to take anyone to pieces? She was young, brilliant, extremely modern, exquisitely well dressed, amazingly well read in the newest of the new books, and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people and . . . artists—quaint creatures, discoveries of hers, some of them too terrifying for words, but others quite presentable and amusing.

**Vocabulary**

| **quaint** (kwânt) adj. pleasingly unusual or odd |

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**Literary Element**

**Motivation**

Why do you think Rosemary invites “really important people” to her parties?
Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck\(^1\) of a boy. No, not Peter—Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off, which is odious and stuffy and sounds like one’s grandparents. But if Rosemary wanted to shop she would go to Paris as you and I would go to Bond Street.\(^2\) If she wanted to buy flowers, the car pulled up at that perfect shop in Regent Street, and Rosemary inside the shop just gazed in her dazzled, rather exotic way, and said: “I want those and those and those. Give me four bunches of those. And that jar of roses. Yes, I’ll have all the roses in the jar. No, no lilac. I hate lilac. It's got no shape.” The attendant bowed and put the lilac out of sight, as though this was only too true; lilac was dreadfully shapeless. “Give me those stumpy little tulips. Those red and white ones.” And she was followed to the car by a thin shopgirl staggering under an immense white paper armful that looked like a baby in long clothes . . .

One winter afternoon she had been buying something in a little antique shop in Curzon Street. It was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself. And then the man who kept it was ridiculously fond of serving her. He beamed whenever she came in. He clasped his hands; he was so gratified he could scarcely speak. Flattery, of course. All the same, there was something . . .

“You see, madam,” he would explain in his low respectful tones, “I love my things. I would rather not part with them than sell them to someone who does not appreciate them, who has not that fine feeling which is so rare. . . .” And, breathing deeply, he unrolled a tiny square of blue velvet and pressed it on the glass counter with his pale fingertips.

Today it was a little box. He had been keeping it for her. He had shown it to nobody as yet. An exquisite little enamel box with a glaze so fine it looked as though it had been baked in cream. On the lid a minute\(^3\) creature stood under a flowery tree, and a more minute creature still had her arms around his neck. Her hat, really no bigger than a geranium petal, hung from a branch; it had green ribbons. And there was a pink cloud like a watchful cherub floating above their heads. Rosemary took her hands out of her long gloves. She always took off her gloves to examine such things. Yes, she liked it very much. She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it. And, turning the creamy box, opening and shutting it, she couldn’t help noticing how charming her hands were against the blue velvet. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too. For he took a pencil, leaned over the counter, and his pale bloodless fingers crept timidly towards those rosy, flashing ones, as he murmured gently: “If I may venture to point out to madam, the flowers on the little lady's bodice.”\(^4\)

“Charming!” Rosemary admired the flowers. But what was the price? For a moment the shopman did not seem to hear. Then a murmur reached her. “Twenty-eight guineas, madame.”

“Twenty-eight guineas.” Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. “Well, keep it for me—will you? I’ll . . .” But the shopman had already bowed as though keeping it for her was all any human being could ask. He would be willing, of course, to keep it for her forever.

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1. Here, duck probably means "a darling" or "a dear," although it could also mean "funny thing" or "odd but harmless person."
2. Bond Street—as well as Regent Street and Curzon Street mentioned later—was, and continues to be, an elegant London street lined with shops that sell expensive items.
3. Minute means "tiny."
4. A bodice is the fitted part of a dress from the waist to the shoulder.
5. A guinea was a unit of money equal to one pound and one shilling (or twenty-one shillings).
6. Here, vague means "uncertain."
The discreet door shut with a click. She was outside on the step, gazing at the winter afternoon. Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps looked sad. Sad were the lights in the houses opposite. Dimly they burned as if regretting something. And people hurried by, hidden under their hateful umbrellas. Rosemary felt a strange pang. She pressed her muff to her breast; she wished she had the little box, too, to cling to. Of course, the car was there. She'd only to cross the pavement. But still she waited. There are moments, horrible moments in life, when one emerges from shelter and looks out, and it's awful. One oughtn't to give way to them. One ought to go home and have an extra-special tea. But at the very instant of thinking that, a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy—where had she come from?—was standing at Rosemary's elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: “Madame, may I speak to you a moment?”

“Speak to me?” Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, someone quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

“M-madame,” stammered the voice. “Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?”

“A cup of tea?” There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn't in the least the voice of a beggar. “Then have you no money at all?” asked Rosemary.

“None, madam,” came the answer.

“How extraordinary!” Rosemary peered through the dusk, and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dostoevsky, this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard herself saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: “I simply took her home with me,” as she stepped forward and said to that dim person beside her: “Come home to tea with me.”

The girl drew back startled. She even stopped shivering for a moment. Rosemary put out a hand and touched her arm. “I mean it,” she said, smiling. And she felt how simple and kind her smile was. “Why won't you? Do. Come home with me now in my car and have tea.”

“You—you don’t mean it, madam,” said the girl, and there was pain in her voice.


The girl put her fingers to her lips and her eyes devoured Rosemary. “You’re—you’re not taking me to the police station?” she stammered.

“The police station!” Rosemary laughed out. “Why should I be so cruel? No, I only want to make you warm and to hear—anything you care to tell me.”

Hungry people are easily led. The footman held the door of the car open, and a moment later they were skimming through the dusk.

“There!” said Rosemary. She had a feeling of triumph as she slipped her hand through the velvet strap. She could have said, “Now I've got you,” as she gazed at the little captive she had netted. But of course she meant it kindly. Oh,
more than kindly. She was going to prove to this
girl that—wonderful things did happen in life,
that—fairy godmothers were real, that—rich
people had hearts, and that women were sisters.
She turned impulsively, saying: “Don’t be
frightened. After all, why shouldn’t you come
back with me? We’re both women. If I’m the
more fortunate, you ought to expect . . .”

But happily at that moment, for she didn’t
know how the sentence was going to end, the car
stopped. The bell was rung, the door opened, and
with a charming, protecting, almost embracing
movement, Rosemary drew the other into the
hall. Warmth, softness, light, a sweet scent, all
those things so familiar to her she never even
thought about them, she watched that other
receive. It was fascinating. She was like the little
rich girl in her nursery with all the
cupboards to open, all the boxes to
unpack.

“Come, come upstairs,” said
Rosemary, longing to begin to be gen-
erous. “Come up to my room.” And,
besides, she wanted to spare this poor
little thing from being stared at by the
servants; she decided as they mounted
the stairs she would not even ring for
Jeanne, but take off her things by her-
self. The great thing was to be natural!

And “There!” cried Rosemary again,
as they reached her beautiful big bed-
room with the curtains drawn, the fire
leaping on her wonderful lacquer furni-
ture, her gold cushions and the prim-
rose and blue rugs.

The girl stood just inside the door;
she seemed dazed. But Rosemary didn’t
mind that.

“Come and sit down,” she cried,
dragging her big chair up to the fire,
“in this comfy chair. Come and get
warm. You look so dreadfully cold.”

“I daren’t, madam,” said the girl, and
she edged backwards.

“Oh, please,”—Rosemary ran for-
ward—“you mustn’t be frightened, you
mustn’t, really. Sit down, and when I’ve taken off
my things we shall go into the next room and have
tea and be cosy. Why are you afraid?” And gently
she half pushed the thin figure into its deep cradle.

But there was no answer. The girl stayed just
as she had been put, with her hands by her sides
and her mouth slightly open. To be quite sincere,
she looked rather stupid. But Rosemary wouldn’t
acknowledge it. She leaned over her, saying:
“Won’t you take off your hat? Your pretty hair is
all wet. And one is so much more comfortable
without a hat, isn’t one?”

There was a whisper that sounded like “Very
good, madam,” and the crushed hat was taken off.

“Let me help you off with your coat, too,” said
Rosemary.
The girl stood up. But she held on to the chair with one hand and let Rosemary pull. It was quite an effort. The other scarcely helped her at all. She seemed to stagger like a child, and the thought came and went through Rosemary’s mind, that if people wanted helping they must respond a little, just a little, otherwise it became very difficult indeed. And what was she to do with the coat now? She left it on the floor, and the hat too. She was just going to take a cigarette off the mantelpiece when the girl said quickly, but so lightly and strangely: “I’m very sorry, madam, but I’m going to faint. I shall go off, madam, if I don’t have something.”

“Good heavens, how thoughtless I am!” Rosemary rushed to the bell.

“Tea! Tea at once! And some brandy immediately!”

The maid was gone again, but the girl almost cried out. “No, I don’t want no brandy. I never drink brandy. It’s a cup of tea I want, madam.” And she burst into tears.

It was a terrible and fascinating moment. Rosemary knelt beside her chair.

“Don’t cry, poor little thing,” she said. “Don’t cry.” And she gave the other her lace handkerchief. She really was touched beyond words. She put her arm round those thin, birdlike shoulders.

Now at last the other forgot to be shy, forgot everything except that they were both women, and gasped out: “I can’t go on no longer like this. I can’t bear it. I shall do away with myself. I can’t bear no more.”

“You shan’t have to. I’ll look after you. Don’t cry any more. Don’t you see what a good thing it was that you met me? We’ll have tea and you’ll tell me everything. And I shall arrange something. I promise. Do stop crying. It’s so exhausting. Please!”

The other did stop just in time for Rosemary to get up before the tea came. She had the table placed between them. She plied the poor little creature with everything, all the sandwiches, all the bread and butter, and every time her cup was empty she filled it with tea, cream and sugar. People always said sugar was so nourishing. As for herself she didn’t eat; she smoked and looked away tactfully so that the other should not be shy.

And really the effect of that slight meal was marvelous. When the tea table was carried away a new being, a light, frail creature with tangled hair, dark lips, deep, lighted eyes, lay back in the big chair in a kind of sweet languor, looking at the blaze. Rosemary lit a fresh cigarette; it was time to begin.

“And when did you have your last meal?” she asked softly.

But at that moment the door handle turned. “Rosemary, may I come in?” It was Philip.

“Of course.”

He came in. “Oh, I’m so sorry,” he said, and stopped and stared.

“It’s quite all right,” said Rosemary smiling.

“This is my friend, Miss—”

“Smith, madam,” said the languid figure, who was strangely still and unafraid.

“Smith,” said Rosemary. “We are going to have a little talk.”

“Oh, yes,” said Philip. “Quite,” and his eye caught sight of the coat and hat on the floor. He came over to the fire and turned his back to it. “It’s a beastly afternoon,” he said curiously, still looking at that listless figure, looking at its hands and boots, and then at Rosemary again.

“Yes, isn’t it?” said Rosemary enthusiastically. “Vile.”

Philip smiled his charming smile. “As a matter of fact,” said he, “I wanted you to come into the library for a moment. Would you? Will Miss Smith excuse us?”

The big eyes were raised to him, but Rosemary answered for her. “Of course she will.” And they went out of the room together.

“I say,” said Philip, when they were alone. “Explain. Who is she? What does it all mean?”

Rosemary, laughing, leaned against the door and said: “I picked her up in Curzon Street. Really. She’s a real pick-up. She asked me for the price of a cup of tea, and I brought her home with me.”

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8. *Languor* means “a dreamy, lazy mood or quality.”
9. *Languid* means “lacking energy or vitality.”

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**Literary Element** | **Motivation** | **Whose needs are uppermost in Rosemary’s mind?**
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**Literary Element** | **Motivation** | **Why does the young woman identify herself as “Smith”?**
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“But what on earth are you going to do with her?” cried Philip.

“Be nice to her,” said Rosemary quickly. “Be frightfully nice to her. Look after her. I don’t know how. We haven’t talked yet. But show her—treat her—make her feel—”

“My darling girl,” said Philip, “you’re quite mad, you know. It simply can’t be done.”

“I knew you’d say that,” retorted Rosemary. “Why not? I want to. Isn’t that a reason? And besides, one’s always reading about these things. I decided—”

“But,” said Philip slowly, and he cut the end of a cigar, “she’s so astonishingly pretty.”

“Pretty?” Rosemary was so surprised that she blushed. “Do you think so? I—I hadn’t thought about it.”

“Good Lord!” Philip struck a match. “She’s absolutely lovely. Look again, my child. I was bowled over when I came into your room just now. However . . . I think you’re making a ghastly mistake. Sorry, darling, if I’m crude and all that. But let me know if Miss Smith is going to dine with us in time for me to look up The Milliner’s Gazette.”

“You absurd creature!” said Rosemary, and she went out of the library, but not back to her bedroom. She went to her writing room and sat down at her desk. Pretty! Absolutely lovely! Bowled over! Her heart beat like a heavy bell. Pretty! Lovely! She drew her check book towards her. But no, checks would be no use, of course. She opened a drawer and took out five pound notes, looked at them, put two back, and holding the three squeezed in her hand, she went back to her bedroom.

Half an hour later Philip was still in the library, when Rosemary came in.

“I only wanted to tell you,” said she, and she leaned against the door again and looked at him with her dazzled exotic gaze, “Miss Smith won’t dine with us tonight.”

Philip put down the paper. “Oh, what’s happened? Previous engagement?”

Rosemary came over and sat down on his knee. “She insisted on going,” said she, “so I gave the poor little thing a present of money. I couldn’t keep her against her will, could I?” she added softly.

Rosemary had just done her hair, darkened her eyes a little, and put on her pearls. She put up her hands and touched Philip’s cheeks.

“Do you like me?” said she, and her tone, sweet, husky, troubled him.

“I like you awfully,” he said, and he held her tighter. “Kiss me.”

There was a pause.

Then Rosemary said dreamily, “I saw a fascinating little box today. It cost twenty-eight guineas. May I have it?”

Philip jumped her on his knee. “You may, little wasteful one,” said he.

But that was not really what Rosemary wanted to say.

“Philip,” she whispered, and she pressed his head against her bosom, “am I pretty?”

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10. A milliner is one who makes or sells women’s hats. A gazette is a newspaper.

Big Idea Class, Colonialism, and the Great War How would you characterize the upper-class marriage portrayed in this story?

Vocabulary retort (ri tört’) v. to reply in a witty, quick, or sharp manner

Literary Element Motivation What is the real reason why Rosemary cut Miss Smith’s visit short?
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. Do you sympathize with Rosemary? Why or why not?

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) Why does Rosemary enjoy shopping at the antique store? (b) How would you characterize Rosemary from her thoughts and actions while she is shopping?
3. (a) Describe Curzon Street as it appears to Rosemary. (b) What do Rosemary’s impressions of Curzon Street suggest about her emotional state?
4. (a) What does Rosemary ask her husband at the end of the story? (b) What does her question to Philip reveal about their relationship? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

Analyze and Evaluate
5. “I picked her up in Curzon Street,” Rosemary explains to Philip. “She’s a real pick-up.” In what ways is Miss Smith like the other things Rosemary picks up on Curzon Street? How is she different?
6. (a) What do you think is the climax in this story? (b) How does this event contribute to the story?
7. (a) Why might Mansfield have used dashes and ellipses in the story? (b) Do you find them effective? Explain.

Connect
8. Big Idea Class, Colonialism, and the Great War What do you think is Mansfield’s opinion of the upper class? Do you think she was sympathetic to the plight of the lower class? Support your answers with details from the story.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element Motivation
Revealing characters’ motivations helps to make the characters believable and their actions realistic.
1. What does Rosemary believe is her reason for helping Miss Smith? What is her real motive?
2. Why does Philip discourage his wife from helping Miss Smith? Why do you think he comments on Miss Smith’s beauty?

Interdisciplinary Activity: Math
The enamel box Rosemary wishes to buy costs twenty-eight guineas. Rosemary gives Miss Smith three pound notes. What is the difference between her gift and the price of the box? Find out how much twenty-eight guineas and three pounds in the early 1900s would equal today in U.S. dollars. What do your discoveries tell you about Rosemary’s “generosity” toward Miss Smith?

READING AND VOCABULARY

Reading Strategy Connecting to Contemporary Issues
Review the chart you made on page 1046, and then answer the following questions.
1. In your experience, how do most people behave toward the homeless today?
2. How has the role of women in society changed since the time of this story?

Vocabulary Practice
Practice with Analogies Complete each analogy.
1. stiff : formal :: quaint :
   a. ancient  b. unusual  c. foreign
2. unpleasant : enjoyable :: odious :
   a. repulsive  b. intense  c. attractive
3. shout : yell :: retort :
   a. reply  b. sing  c. whisper
4. cloudy : overcast :: exotic :
   a. predictable  b. unusual  c. typical

Web Activities For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.
Poverty has a home in Africa—like a quiet second skin. It may be the only place on earth where it is worn with an unconscious dignity. People do not look down at your shoes which are caked with years of mud and split so that the toes stick out. They look straight and deeply into your eyes to see if you are friend or foe. That is all that matters. To some extent I think that this eye-looking, this intense human awareness, is a reflection of the earth all about. There is no end to African sky and to African land. One might say that in its vastness is a certain kind of watchfulness that strips man down to his simplest form. If that is not so, then there must be some other, unfathomable reason for the immense humanity and the extreme gentleness of the people of my village.

Poverty here has majority backing. Our lives are completely adapted to it. Each day we eat a porridge of millet in the morning; a thicker millet porridge with a piece of boiled meat at midday; and at evening we repeat breakfast. We use our heads to transport almost everything: water from miles and miles, bags of corn and maize, and firewood.

This adaptation to difficult conditions in a permanently drought-stricken country is full of calamity. Babies die most easily of starvation and malnutrition: and yet, within this pattern...
of adaptation people crowd in about the mother and sit, sit in heavy silence, absorbing the pain, till, to the mother, it is only a dim, dull ache folded into the stream of life. It is not right. There is a terrible mindlessness about it. But what alternative? To step out of this mindless safety, and face the pain of life alone when the balance is heavily weighted down on one side, is for certain to face a fate far worse. Those few who have are insane in a strange, quiet, harmless way: walking all about the village, freely. Only by their ceaseless muttering and half-clothed bodies are they distinguishable from others. It is not right, as it is negative merely to strive for existence. There must be other ingredients boiling in the pot. Yet how? We are in the middle of nowhere. Most communication is by ox cart or sledge. Poverty also creates strong currents of fear and anxiety. We are not outgoing. We tend to push aside all new intrusions. We live and survive by making as few demands as possible. Yet, under the deceptive peace around us we are more easily confused and torn apart than those with the capacity to take in their stride the width and the reach of new horizons.
Do we really retain the right to develop slowly, admitting change only in so far as it keeps pace with our limitations, or does change descend upon us as a calamity? I merely ask this because, anonymous as we are, in our favor is a great credit balance of love and warmth that the gods somewhere should count up. It may be that they overlook desert and semidesert places. I should like to remind them that there are people here too who need taking care of.

The Old Woman

She was so frail that her whole body swayed this way and that like a thin stalk of corn in the wind. Her arms were as flat as boards. The flesh hung loosely, and her hands which clutched the walking stick were turned outwards and knobbled with age. Under her long dress also swayed the tattered edges of several petticoats. The ends of two bony stick-legs peeped out. She had on a pair of sand-shoes. The toes were all sticking out, so that the feet flapped about in them. She wore each shoe on the wrong foot, so that it made the heart turn over with amusement.

Yet she seemed so strong that it was a shock when she suddenly bent double, retched and coughed emptily, and crumbled to the ground like a quiet sigh.

“What is it, Mmm? What is the matter?” I asked.

“Water, water,” she said faintly.

“Wait a minute. I shall ask at this hut here if there is any water.”

“What is the matter?” they asked.

“The old lady is ill,” I said.

“No,” she said curtly. “I am not ill. I am hungry.”

The crowd laughed in embarrassment that she should display her need so nakedly. They turned away; but old ladies have no more shame left. They are like children. They give way to weakness and cry openly when they are hungry.

“Never mind,” I said. “Hunger is a terrible thing. My hut is not far away. This small child will take you. Wait till I come back, then I shall prepare food for you.”

Then, it was late afternoon. The old lady had long passed from my mind when a strange young woman, unknown to me, walked into the yard with a pail of water on her head. She set it down outside the door and squatted low.

“Good-day. How are you?” I said.

She returned the greeting, keeping her face empty and carefully averted. It is impossible to say: what do you want? Whom are you looking for? It is impossible to say this to a carefully averted face and a body that squats quietly, patiently. I looked at the sky, helplessly. I looked at the trees. I looked at the ground, but the young woman said nothing. I did not know her, inside or out. Many people I do not know who know me, inside and out, and always it is this way, this silence.

A curious neighbor looked over the hedge.

“What’s the matter?” she asked.

I turned my eyes to the sky again, shrugging helplessly.

“Please ask the young woman what she wants, whom she is looking for.”

The young woman turned her face to the neighbor, still keeping it averted, and said quietly:

“No, tell her she helped our relative who collapsed this morning. Tell her the relatives discussed the matter. Tell her we had nothing to give in return, only that one relative said she passes by every day on her way to the water tap. Then we decided to give a pail of water. It is all we have.”

Tell them too. Tell them how natural, sensible, normal is human kindness. Tell them, those who judge my country, Africa, by gain and greed, that the gods walk about her barefoot with no ermine and gold-studded cloaks.

In your opinion, is Head disillusioned by the events that take place or are her ideals reinforced by them? Discuss this question in a small group. Use specific details from the essay to support your opinions. Then share your conclusions with the class.
Building Background

The King James Version of the Bible was the first English-language translation to receive widespread, lasting acceptance among English-speaking people. It consists of the books of the Old Testament, originally in Hebrew, and the New Testament, originally in Greek.

A parable is an illustrative story answering a question or pointing to a moral or religious lesson. The most famous parables are those told by Jesus, such as the one you are about to read. In this parable, Lazarus, whose name comes from the Hebrew word meaning "God Has Helped," is a diseased beggar. At that time many people believed that the diseased and destitute were to blame for their afflictions, perhaps because they or an ancestor had sinned. This parable also mentions Father Abraham, an Old Testament patriarch regarded as the founder of the Hebrew people.
There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house:

For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.


Quickwrite

How do you respond to the role reversal that takes place in this parable? What does the parable imply about the lives of Lazarus and the rich man, and how does that lesson apply to all humans? Write a paragraph in which you address these questions.
Attend to your prayers, render the alms levy, and kneel with those who kneel. (2:43)

Those that give their wealth for the cause of God and do not follow their almsgiving with taunts and insults shall be rewarded by their Lord; they shall have nothing to fear or to regret. (2:262)

As for those needy men who, being wholly preoccupied with fighting for the cause of God, cannot travel the land in quest of trading ventures: the ignorant take them for men of wealth on account of their modest behavior. But you can recognize them by their look—they never importune men for alms. Whatever alms you give are known to God. (2:273)

You shall never be truly righteous until you give in alms what you dearly cherish. The alms you give are known to God. (3:92)

God does not love arrogant and boastful men, who are themselves tight-fisted and enjoin others to be tight-fisted; who conceal the riches which God of His bounty has bestowed upon them (We have prepared a shameful punishment for the unbelievers) . . . (4:37)

Alms shall be only for the poor and the destitute; for those that are engaged in the management of alms and those whose hearts are sympathetic to the Faith; for the freeing of slaves and debtors; for the advancement of God’s cause; and for the traveler in need. That is a duty enjoined by God. God is all-knowing and wise. (9:60)
The true believers, both men and women, are friends to one another. They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil; they attend to their prayers, and render the alms levy, and obey God and His apostle. On these God will have mercy. God is mighty and wise. (9:71)

Tell My servants, those who are true believers, to be steadfast in prayer and to give alms in private and in public, before that day arrives when all trading shall cease and friendships be no more. (14:31)

Give to the near of kin their due, and also to the destitute and to the traveler in need. Do not squander your substance wastefully, for the wasteful are Satan’s brothers; and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord. (17:27)

You are called upon to give in the cause of God. Some among you are ungenerous; yet whoever is ungenerous to this cause is ungenerous to himself. Indeed, God does not need you, but you need Him. If you pay no heed, He will replace you by others who shall bear no resemblance to yourselves. (47:38)

Have you thought of him that denies the Last Judgment? It is he who turns away the orphan and has no urge to feed the destitute. (107:1)

Discussion Starter

Which verses from the Qur’an convey the Muslim attitude toward compassion and generosity? How is the message in this selection similar and dissimilar from those in the other selections in this Comparing Literature feature? Consider how the message is conveyed in each selection. Discuss these questions with a group of classmates.
Wrap-Up: **Comparing Literature Across Time and Place**

**Comparing the Big Idea**

**Class, Colonialism, and the Great War**

**Writing** Read the following quotations. Then write a brief essay in which you compare the messages about class conflict and the insights about life conveyed in two or more of the selections.

“‘Come, come upstairs,’ said Rosemary, longing to begin to be generous.”
—Mansfield, “A Cup of Tea”

“Tell them, those who judge my country, Africa, by gain and greed, that the gods walk about her barefoot with no ermine and gold-studded cloaks.”
—Head, “Village People”

“Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”
—King James Version of the Bible

“whoever is ungenerous to this cause is ungenerous to himself.”
—Qur’an

**Comparing Tone**

**Group Activity** With a small group of your classmates, discuss each of the above quotations. How would you describe the tone of each quotation?

**Comparing Past and Present**

**Visual Display** How does British culture today view wealth and poverty? Does that view differ from the one suggested by Mansfield’s short story? Research the ways in which Britain currently addresses the needs of the poor. Then create a visual display, such as a chart or a collage, to represent your findings.

**Objectives**
- Compare and contrast authors’ messages.
- Analyze tone.
- Compare and contrast cultures.
Media Link to Class, Colonialism, and the Great War

Preview the Article

"Down and Out in Europe" examines the reasons behind the rise of homelessness in Europe and what is being done to solve the problem.

1. Scan the subheads, or smaller headlines within the article. What clues do they give you about the content of the article?
2. Examine the photograph on page 1064. Based on this image, do you think homelessness in Europe is a serious problem? Explain.

Set a Purpose for Reading

Read to learn how homelessness has become a major concern for many European countries and what solutions have been proposed to help alleviate the problem.

Reading Strategy

Analyzing Text Structure

When you analyze text structure, you determine a pattern of organization within a piece of writing. Most informational texts are organized by chronological order, cause-and-effect order, or compare-and-contrast order. Use a chart similar to the one below to identify the pattern in each subsection of the article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Homeless Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Pattern</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OBJECTIVES

- Read to analyze how a writer uses text structure.
- Relate informational text to literary and historical periods

The number of homeless in Western Europe is at its highest level in 50 years—and rising. What should be done?

By APARISIM GHOSH

Big Sid tells lies. During the course of a single three-hour conversation on a London street corner, he relates his life story four times, each version more fantastical than the last. In one, he swims to the middle of the Thames in midwinter to rescue a drowning dog. In another, he defeats a band of armed skinheads with his bare hands. Sid is a black man who says his parents came to Britain from the Caribbean. But the specific biographical details he serves up vary so dramatically he might easily be talking about three or four completely different people; the narrative of inconsistencies mounts as he works his way through a two-liter bottle of hard cider. By the halfway point, he’s contradicting himself almost every other sentence, and lapsing into incoherent repetitions of his two favorite phrases: “short-term” and “long-term.”

Depending on which version of the saga you believe, Big Sid was born in South London, or in Yorkshire—a county in England; he’s a high school dropout or played football at college; he was married (and divorced) twice, or never. He may be 35, or 40. He claims to be utterly alone in the world, an orphan with no relatives at all, but asked if he will allow himself to be photographed for this article, he balks. “I have family, man,” he says, his high voice abruptly dropping to an embarrassed whisper. “I don’t want them to pick up your magazine and see me in this condition.”

His condition is the one certain, cruel, truth about Big Sid: he is homeless. On this bitterly cold winter night, he will make a bed of flattened cardboard boxes in the recessed doorway of a music store, squeeze into a fluorescent green sleeping bag that’s too small for his angular 6-foot-6-inch frame, and rest his bald head on an old mail carrier’s sack that contains his every possession. He’s been sleeping on the streets for much of his adult life,
WHERE THE HOMELESS ARE
FEANTSA, a Brussels-based umbrella body of
domestic organizations, estimates that over 3
million people in Western Europe are homeless.
Numbers for specific countries are hard to get.
Some countries simply don’t bother to count,
while others have different definitions for
homelessness. The numbers below are estimates
based on data from government and private
sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH RATES</th>
<th>MEDIUM RATES</th>
<th>LOW RATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 per 1,000</td>
<td>1-3 per 1,000</td>
<td>&lt;1 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: NO CREDIBLE DATA IS AVAILABLE FOR THE
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES NOT LISTED.

That Europe’s homelessness problem is
roughly the same as America’s
IS A SHOCK.
After all, Europe
sees itself as
cinder, gentler,
and more socially
responsible than
the U.S.

That Europe’s homelessness problem is
roughly the same as America’s—and that one of
the fastest-growing segments of Europe’s
homeless population is families—is
a shock. After all, Europe sees itself
as kinder, gentler, and more socially
responsible than the U.S. The
continent has an extensive,
expensive social safety net that’s
designed to help and protect its
most vulnerable citizens—the kind
of people who are thrown to the
wolves in winner-take-all America.
But that might just be the point: It’s
easier to be homeless in Europe,
where even the down-and-out get
social-welfare checks.

Activists and experts, however,
don’t like to make a direct cause-and-effect connection between
welfare and homelessness. They
point, instead, to inadequate and
sometimes senseless social-welfare policies that throw money at the
problem but don’t do enough to
move the homeless from the streets
and shelters into jobs and permanent
housing. “The safety net is failing
some of the most vulnerable sections
of European society,” says Freek
Spinnewijn, FEANTSA’s director.
“A lot of people are falling through—people with mental-
health problems, drug and alcohol
problems, and people who have
suffered [from] abuse.”

Homeless Women
Most homeless people in Europe are
single or separated men, like Big
Sid. But voluntary agencies say the
fastest-growing segments among the
homeless are like Christelle: young,
female, and part of a family. The
explanations range from the predictable (the scarcity of jobs) to
the counterintuitive (women’s
independence may be a contributor:
more assertive women are more
likely to dump abusive husbands
and move into homeless shelters).
When the numbers were small,
Europe did well by homeless families
and women, giving them priority
in temporary and permanent
government housing. But as their
counts swell, housing is being
stretched thin. Spinnewijn says that
single women with children make
up the majority of homeless families
in Europe. “One of the main reasons
for the increasing number of
homeless families is divorce,” says
Spinnewijn. “There has been a rise
in the number of divorces, and
often, divorced women with
children find it very difficult to have
an economically sustainable life.”

Christelle, originally from
northwestern France, has been
living in a Paris shelter for five
months. According to the French
government’s rules, she can only
stay six months, which means she
must find a new place to stay.
Christelle is worried about the

wandering from city to city. Once or
twice a year, he will go to a shelter
for homeless people, to get out of
nasty weather or to have a doctor
look at the sores on his feet. But
these interludes rarely last more
than a few days because Sid finds
constant human company stressful,
and is deeply suspicious of anything
that smacks of officialdom. “The
shelters are okay for short-term, for
a bath and medical treatment,” he
says, “but they aren’t for long-term,
man, not for me.”

A Huge Challenge
Finding long-term solutions for
people like Big Sid is an enormous—
and growing—challenge for Western
Europe, where homelessness has
quietly been climbing to levels not
seen since the end of World War II.
Hard numbers are scarce, but
according to the European Fed-
eration of National Organizations
Working with the Homeless
(FEANTSA), a Brussels-based
group of homeless organizations, at
least 3 million Western Europeans
are homeless. And between one-
fifth and one-third of them are
members of homeless families. Only
a small number, less than 10%, sleep
on the streets like Big Sid. Most
Informational Text

deadline, but is optimistic that she will have a job and an apartment soon. With no friends in Paris and what appears to be a distant relationship with her family, who live several hours away, she contacted a social-aid worker who placed her in a shelter.

Résumé in hand, she goes out each day looking for work. “I’d like a job in the hospitality industry, maybe as a receptionist,” she says. But the job market is tight, and so she tries to hide her circumstances from possible employers, to duck prejudice against homeless people. “Nobody knows I don’t have my own home, and I don’t tell them,” she says. That includes her husband from whom she is separated, and her family. When she calls her parents, she lets them believe she has a place to live.

The music of Jennifer Lopez plays on the radio in the background, and Christelle says what she’d really like to do is live in the U.S. “I dream of Los Angeles,” she says. “Things just seem better there.” But for the moment, it’s enough to care for her daughter and keep going out every day looking for a job. “When I was young I would see people from shelters and thought it must not be easy to live like that, without a place of your own,” she says with an awkward smile. “Now I know.”

Heading for a Normal Life

It’s hard to know what is tormenting the short, stocky man slouched on a bench in a Berlin metro station at 11 P.M. one freezing winter night. His blue eyes are bloodshot from alcohol, his brown beard mottled. Asked for his name by a worker from the Berlin City Mission—a homeless organization—he comes up with “O’Brien,” although he’s plainly German. He agrees to be taken to a shelter run by the Mission, which is sponsored by the Lutheran Church. There, he is required to surrender the black table lamp that he jealously guards at all times. He’s then handed a bowl of hot soup, but screams out that he wants spaghetti. After some soothing words from the kitchen volunteers, he begrudgingly takes his bowl of soup to the almost-empty dining room.

A drunken tantrum is nothing more than a small nuisance for those who work with the homeless. Volunteers routinely encounter hostility, even violence, particularly from men who sleep on the streets. “Those who’ve been on the streets for years get very uncomfortable when they are suddenly in a confined space, surrounded by lots of people,” says Susan Fallis. She is the project manager at a West London hostel, one of several run by the charity Broadway. “They are suspicious and angry, and get put off by even the simplest things.”

Residents at Fallis’s hostel are provided hot meals, clean bedrooms, even well-being services like foot massages and aromatherapy. If any of the residents are substance abusers, they are encouraged to sign up for government programs to help them. The hostel receives around $940 a week from the British government for each of its 30-odd residents. It also charges them a small fee, about $15 a week, for things like electricity, water, and gas. It’s a small amount they can afford to pay from their welfare checks. The fee has another function: It is meant to help residents deal with simple real-world chores like paying bills. “They need to take small steps toward a normal life,” Fallis says.

Money Isn’t Enough

Europe’s traditional response to homelessness has been to throw money at the problem, in the form of benefits. Unemployed single French citizens over the age of 25 and with no children are entitled to an allowance of around $480 a month. In Britain, people can claim $60–96 per week in unemployment benefits. In Germany, the homeless are entitled to an allowance of $11 a day. Social researchers know that “it’s not a matter of giving someone [money each month] and expecting them to find a place to live and make a life,” says Martin Hirsch. He is the president of Emmaus France, a voluntary organization that runs shelters and provides housing across the country. “Money isn’t enough for people with problems—physical,
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. What do you think can be done to solve the problem of homelessness in Europe and in our own society?

Recall and Interpret

2. (a) Who is “Big Sid”? (b) Aside from his homelessness, what problems does Big Sid appear to be suffering from?

3. (a) What is the estimated number of Western Europeans who are homeless? (b) Why is it “easier” to be homeless in Europe than in the United States?

4. (a) Why are women the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population? (b) Why do you think those who have suffered abuse or have mental health issues are more likely to be homeless?

Analyze and Evaluate

5. (a) What kind of assistance is available to the homeless in Europe? (b) Why do most social researchers believe that providing money is not enough to eradicate homelessness?

6. (a) What possible solutions for homelessness does the writer suggest? (b) What evidence does the writer cite to support the viability of these suggestions?

7. (a) What kinds of text structures are used in “Down and Out in Europe”? (b) How does the structure show the short- and long-term effects of homelessness?

Connect

8. How do the profiles of homeless people in this article help you understand the class divisions in Katherine Mansfield’s story “A Cup of Tea”?

Can Europe fix its homelessness problem? Not before it acknowledges that the problem is far more serious than officials currently admit. Social researchers say an accurate count of the homeless is as crucial as an accurate national census. Central governments would be smart to pass that job on to local authorities; they’re closer to the problem and better able to quantify it. This is shown by the experience of Germany’s states, which under German law are responsible for dealing with homelessness. As a result, Germany provides the most accurate picture of the problem among the major European countries. After peaking at 590,000 in 1997, the number of homeless Germans fell to 390,000 in 2000. The decline also suggests that local authorities do a better job, not just of counting the homeless but of getting them off the streets.

Other countries are coming around to the idea that workable solutions for homelessness must come from local authorities. England’s Homelessness Act came into force in 2002, requiring each of its 354 local-government housing authorities to develop a homelessness plan.

So far, the response from voluntary groups has been mixed. Alastair Jackson, director of policy for the housing organization Shelter, says the law has already “improved the quality of help” available to homeless people. But he and others worry that better coordination and cooperation among central and local governments and volunteer organizations must take place. And yes, European governments will still need to throw more money at the problem—to pay for more affordable housing, more shelters, and for the detox, rehabilitation, and therapies many homeless people need to overcome their serious personal problems.

Big Sid doesn’t think that’s possible. It’s been two weeks since he went to a shelter, and now he’s back on the streets of London after a trip to the beach resort of Brighton where he begged on the streets for money. He’s still telling tall tales, but they’ve taken on a much darker tone, with him playing the victim instead of the hero. The villains, inevitably, are representatives of the state, from doctors in public hospitals who don’t give him the medicines he wants to police officers who beat him up for no reason.

“Governments hurt people,” he says, recounting years of abuse he endured—or did he?—in a state-run correctional school 20 years ago. “Government programs are all short-term, and nothing good comes of short-term.” Finding long-term solutions for the Big Sids of Europe may be the hardest part of dealing with homelessness.

The Modern British Short Story

“Short-story writers see by the light of the flash; theirs is the art of the only thing that one can be sure of—the present moment.”

—Nadine Gordimer, from “The Flash of Fireflies"

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the short story gained international popularity. Pioneers of the form included Hawthorne, Poe, and Irving in the United States; Balzac, Flaubert, and Maupassant in France; and Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov in Russia. Yet in Victorian England the climate that fostered the development of the novel stifled that of the short story. Story writer and critic H. E. Bates wrote that the short story “cannot tolerate a weight of words or a weight of moral teaching, and it is highly significant that these two factors are dominant characteristics of the Victorian English novel.” Around 1880, however, the British began to seriously question the Victorian values and conventions that had unified their country (and empire) for the last fifty years. Writer Frank O’Connor suggests that the short story is typically a product of a fragmented society. Thus, as the Victorian world fell apart, writers focused on the individual and the present moment rather than on society and historical continuity. Suddenly, the concentrated form of the short story made sense.

Toward Realism

British fiction during the 1880s and 1890s reflects the transition from Victorian literary conventions to twentieth-century Realism. The short stories of Thomas Hardy, for instance, reflect a melancholy attitude and a shift toward Realism; yet, the reality Hardy presents is undermined by the artificiality of the Victorian language he uses. Similarly, Rudyard Kipling’s short stories were criticized for their focus on brief episodes and use of literary “tricks.” Indeed, the short story form was widely criticized as too episodic and formulaic to contain any moral force. Joseph Conrad’s short stories, on the other hand, unite the aims of Realism and Romanticism by using concrete, realistic details to suggest deeper symbolic and philosophical meaning. According to critic Charles E. May, it was Conrad who, “because of the profundity of his vision and the subtlety of his use of language, effectively made the transition” and mastered the modern short story form.

Modernism

Both public literacy and the availability of reading material increased drastically during the Victorian and early modern periods. These factors broadened
and fractured the reading public; writers could no longer take for granted a unified audience. The growing alienation between the artist and society during the 1890s became the dominant force of the Modernist movement. Many Modernist writers deliberately opposed popular tastes and trends.

After the turn of the century, prevailing assumptions about the individual, faith, history, materialism, and knowledge shattered. Writers no longer saw reality as a recognizable constant; rather, reality depended on each person’s fragmented perception of it. “Look within,” suggested Virginia Woolf. Woolf and other writers, including Katherine Mansfield, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence, concentrated on writing about “an ordinary mind on an ordinary day”—that is, about the mental consciousness of a character. Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis contributed to this focus on the internal life and spurred literary innovations, such as stream-of-consciousness writing.

Furthermore, many modern short stories are known for depicting seemingly trivial “slices of life” that depend on important moments and the manipulation of mood rather than plot to reveal meaning. For example, in his stories, Joyce established theme through realistic detail and atmosphere. He often used *epiphany*—or a moment of revelation in which something commonplace is seen in a new light—to unify and bring his stories to a close.

**Mid-Twentieth-Century Style**
The events of the early twentieth century, particularly the world wars and the Great Depression, irrevocably destroyed many British conventions and ideals. Like earlier Modernist writers, Elizabeth Bowen and Graham Greene wrote stories that focused on the internal psychological and moral struggles within characters. However, Bowen and Greene often linked their characters to contemporary political and social settings.

For the modern short story writer, any subject will do, and nothing needs to “happen.” Yet, due to the constraints of the form, every detail must contribute to a story’s meaning. As William Faulkner noted, “In a short story . . . almost every word has to be almost exactly right.”

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**RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY**

1. According to H. E. Bates and Frank O’Connor, what delayed the rise of the British short story?

2. How did Conrad’s short story techniques advance the modern short story in a way that Hardy’s and Kipling’s did not?

3. Why might the short story be a fitting form to capture “reality” as the Modernists understood it?
Miss Youghal’s Sais

MEET RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling reportedly read in a magazine that he had died. Kipling’s literary reputation has suffered a similar fate, having been buried and resurrected numerous times both in his lifetime and since his death. Readers critical of Kipling are uncomfortable with his staunch defense of British imperialism, which grew from his sincere belief that it was Britain’s duty to introduce European culture to societies he believed to be less civilized. Supporters of Kipling admire the keen observations that characterize his depiction of Anglo-Indian life and find inspiration in the themes of courage, self-sacrifice, and loyalty in his works.

Childhood Influences Born to English parents living in Bombay, India, Kipling grew up speaking Hindustani better than English. His happy childhood in India made a deep impression on him and contributed to his romantic treatment of India in his fiction. When he was only five years old, Kipling was sent to live with a hired foster family in England—a common practice among British families living in India. It was an unhappy experience for Kipling, who felt deserted by his parents. At the age of twelve, he was enrolled at the United Services College, a boarding school in Devon. His experiences there instilled in him an admiration for individualism, discipline, and order—qualities that strongly influenced his thinking and writing in later years.

“The magic of Literature lies in the words, and not in any man.”
—Rudyard Kipling

Literary Success At seventeen, Kipling returned to India, where he worked as a journalist. He traveled widely and began to publish his first stories and poems about military life and Indian culture under British rule. In 1889 Kipling returned to England and continued his successful and prolific writing career. In 1892 Kipling married American Caroline Balestier and settled in Vermont. Over the next few years, he wrote extensively, including the novels Captains Courageous and Kim, as well as his beloved children’s classic The Jungle Book and its sequel, The Second Jungle Book. Kipling returned to England in 1897.

A Genius of Narrative In 1907 Kipling became the first English author to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. At the award ceremony, Kipling was praised as “the greatest genius in the realm of narrative that [England] has produced in our times.” In later years, however, Kipling’s defense of British imperialism became unfashionable among more liberal-minded thinkers in England, and his popularity declined. English novelist George Orwell’s assessment of Kipling’s literary reputation echoed the debate that continues today: “I worshipped [him] at thirteen, loathed him at seventeen, enjoyed him at twenty, despised him at twenty-five, and now again rather admire him.”

Rudyard Kipling was born in 1865 and died in 1936.

For more about Rudyard Kipling, go to www.glencoe.com.
Connecting to the Story
This story is about the lengths to which some people will go to be near the person they love. As you read, think about what you would be willing to sacrifice to win the love of someone you care about.

Building Background
For more than one hundred years prior to gaining independence in 1947, India was a colony of the British Empire. When India was a colony, most aspects of Indian society were dominated by the British. Kipling’s literature, which reflects this imperialism, has drawn attacks from critics. Yet even those who condemn Kipling’s political attitudes have come to recognize the respect he showed for native cultures and the careful attention he gave to detailing Indian life. The story you are about to read was written early in Kipling’s career, during the time he spent in India working as a journalist. It was published in one of his first collections of short stories, *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

Setting Purposes for Reading
**Big Idea**  
Class, Colonialism, and the Great War
As you read “Miss Youghal’s Sais,” look for details that reveal Kipling’s attitude toward Indian culture and the British presence in India.

**Literary Element**  
Narrator
In literary works such as stories, novels, and narrative poems, the narrator is the person who tells the story. The narrator may be a character in the story or someone outside the story. In “Miss Youghal’s Sais,” the narrator is a character in the story. As you read, look for details that reveal who the narrator is, how he is related to the protagonist (hero), and what purpose he serves.


**Reading Strategy**  
Identifying Assumptions
An assumption is an idea or belief that one takes for granted without any actual proof. As you read, watch for characters in this story who make assumptions that color their perception of the events that take place.

**Reading Tip: Taking Notes** Look for assumptions as you read and note which ones change during the course of the action.

**Vocabulary**

**unsavory** (un sər vər ē) adj. sinister; morally questionable; p. 1071 The unsavory stranger curled his lip and stared with cold, piercing eyes at the frightened children.

**compensation** (komˈpən ən ən) n. something that offsets, counterbalances, or makes up for; p. 1073 Seeing her favorite performer in person was compensation enough for the problems Linda encountered getting to the concert.

**suppressing** (sa presˈ in) n. prohibiting publication or circulation; censoring; p. 1073 Fearing a backlash from voters, the politician favored suppressing news of the tax increases he planned.

**farce** (fär스) n. a humorous drama in which the situation and characters are greatly exaggerated; p. 1074 The farce we performed featured jealous lovers, mistaken identity, meddling parents, and silly complications.

**Vocabulary Tip: Word Parts** You can figure out the meanings of some unfamiliar words by examining their parts.
Rudyard Kipling

Miss Voughal's Sais

Pushkar Blues (2), c. 21st century. Bella Easton. Oil on panel, 153.6 x 137 cm. Private collection.
When Man and Woman are agreed, what can the Kazi do?

—Proverb.

Some people say that there is no romance in India. Those people are wrong. Our lives hold quite as much romance as is good for us. Sometimes more.

Strickland was in the Police, and people did not understand him; so they said he was a doubtful sort of man and passed by on the other side. Strickland had himself to thank for this. He held the extraordinary theory that a Policeman in India should try to know as much about the natives as the natives themselves. Now, in the whole of Upper India there is only one man who can pass for Hindu or Mahommedan, hide-dresser or priest, as he pleases. He is feared and respected by the natives from the Ghor Kathri to the Jamma Musjid; and he is supposed to have the gift of invisibility and executive control over many Devils. But this has done him no good in the eyes of the Indian Government.

Strickland was foolish enough to take that man for his model; and, following out his absurd theory, dabbled in unsavory places which no respectable man would think of exploring—all among the native riff-raff. He educated himself in this peculiar way for seven years, and people could not appreciate it. He was perpetually “going Fantee” among natives, which, of course, no man with any sense believes in. He was initiated into the Sat Bhai at Allahabad once, when he was on leave; he knew the Lizard-Song of the Sansis, and the Hálí-Hukk dance, which is a religious can-can of a startling kind. When a man knows who dance the Hálí-Hukk, and how, and when, and where, he knows something to be proud of. He has gone deeper than the skin. But Strickland was not proud, though he had helped once, at Jagadhri, at the Painting of the Death Bull, which no Englishman must even look upon; had mastered the thieves’-patter of the chângars; had taken an Eusufzai horse-thief alone near Attock; and had stood under the sounding-board of a Border mosque and conducted service in the manner of a Sunni Mollah.

His crowning achievement was spending eleven days as a faqir or priest in the gardens of Baba Atal at Amritsar, and there picking up the threads of the great Nasiban Murder Case. But people said, justly enough, “Why on earth can’t Strickland sit in his office and write up his diary, and recruit, and keep quiet, instead of showing up the incapacity of his seniors?” So the Nasiban Murder Case did him no good departmentally; but, after his first feeling of wrath, he returned to his outlandish custom of prying into native life. When a man once acquires a taste for this particular amusement, it abides with him all his days. It is the most fascinating thing in the world—Love not excepted. Where other men took ten days to

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1. A kazi (kā’ zê) is a civil judge.
2. A Mahommedan is a Muslim.
3. The Ghor Kathri (gōr kā trē’), in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan, was once a Buddhist monastery and was later a sacred Hindu temple.
4. The Jamma Musjid (jā’ mā mās jid’ ) is the Principal Mosque in Delhi. A mosque (mosk) is the Muslim place of worship.
5. Going Fantee (fān’ tē) means “mixing with the natives and conforming to their habits.”

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6. Sat Bhai (sā’ br̥’) literally means “seven brothers.”
7. Allahabad (āl’ ā ha bā’d), a city in north-central India, is a Hindu pilgrimage site.
8. The Sansis (sān sēz’ ) are a low-caste people of the Indian state of Punjab (pun jā’ b̥’). The caste system is a rigid social division characterized by hereditary status, hereditary occupation, and fixed social barriers.
9. The can-can is a Parisian dance characterized by exaggerated high kicking.
10. Jagadhri (jā gā’ drē) is a town in the Punjab.
11. The Eusufzai (ū soo’ zī) are a tribe of northwest Pakistan.
12. A Sunni Mollah (sōō’ nē’ ma lā’ ) is a Muslim religious leader or teacher.
13. Amritsar (ām’ rit’ ser) is a city in northwestern India and the center of the Sikh (sēk) faith. Sikhs believe in one God and are disciples of the ten gurus (gōō’ rōōz), or teachers.
the Hills, Strickland took leave for what he called *shikar*, put on the disguise that appealed to him at the time, stepped down into the brown crowd, and was swallowed up for a while. He was a quiet, dark young fellow—spare, black-eyed—and, when he was not thinking of something else, a very interesting companion. Strickland on Native Progress as he had seen it was worth hearing. Natives hated Strickland; but they were afraid of him. He knew too much.

When the Youghals came into the station, Strickland—very gravely, as he did everything—fell in love with Miss Youghal; and she, after a while, fell in love with him because she could not understand him. Then Strickland told the parents; but Mrs. Youghal said she was not going to throw her daughter into the worst paid department in the Empire, and old Youghal said, in so many words, that he mistrusted Strickland’s ways and works, and would thank him not to speak or write to his daughter any more. “Very well,” said Strickland, for he did not wish to make his lady-love’s life a burden. After one long talk with Miss Youghal he dropped the business entirely.

The Youghals went up to Simla in April. In July Strickland secured three months’ leave on “urgent private affairs.” He locked up his house—though not a native in the Province would wittingly have touched “Estreekin Sahib’s” gear for the world—and went down to see a friend of his, an old dyer, at Tarn Taran.

Here all trace of him was lost, until a sais groom met me on the Simla Mall with this extraordinary note:

DEAR OLD MAN,—Please give bearer a box of cheroots—Supers, No. 1, for preference. They are freshest at the Club. I’ll repay when I reappear; but at present I’m out of society.—Yours,

E. STRICKLAND.

I ordered two boxes, and handed them over to the sais with my love. That sais was Strickland, and he was in old Youghal’s employ, attached to Miss Youghal’s Arab. The poor fellow was suffering for an English smoke, and knew that, whatever happened, I should hold my tongue till the business was over.

Later on, Mrs. Youghal, who was wrapped up in her servants, began talking at houses where she called of her paragon among saises—the man who was never too busy to get up in the morning and pick flowers for the breakfast-table, and who blacked—actually blacked—the hooves of his horse like a London coachman! The turn-out of Miss Youghal’s Arab was a wonder and a delight. Strickland—Dulloo, I mean—found his reward in the pretty things that Miss Youghal said to him when she went out riding. Her parents were pleased to find she had forgotten all her foolishness for young Strickland, and said she was a good girl.

Strickland vows that the two months of his service were the most rigid mental discipline he has ever gone through. Quite apart from the little fact that the wife of one of his fellow-saises fell in love with him and then tried to poison him with arsenic because he would have nothing to do with her, he had to school himself into keeping quiet when Miss Youghal went out riding with some man who tried to flirt with her, and he was forced to trot behind carrying the blanket and hearing every word! Also, he had to keep his temper when he was

15. From 1865 to 1939, *Simla* (sēm’ lā) was India’s summer capital and is still a popular summer resort.
16. In colonial India, *Sahib* (sā héb’) was a respectful form of address for a European man.
17. A *sais* (sā ˈsā’) is a servant who attends to horses; a groom, or an attendant who follows on foot behind a mounted rider or carriage.

**Visual Vocabulary**

*An Arab* is an Arabian horse prized for its speed and purity of breed.

**Reading Strategy** Identifying Assumptions What assumptions does the narrator make about Miss Youghal and her knowledge of Strickland?

**Literary Element** Narrator Who is the narrator? How do you know? Why might Mrs. Youghal be proud that her daughter’s sais blacked the horse’s hooves?

**Big Idea** Class, Colonialism, and the Great War Why does the narrator write to Strickland?
slanged\(^\text{20}\) in the theater porch by a policeman—especially once when he was abused by a Naik\(^\text{21}\) he had himself recruited from Isser Jang village—or, worse still, when a young subaltern\(^\text{22}\) called him a pig for not making way quickly enough.

But the life had its compensations. He obtained great insight into the ways and thefts of saises—enough, he says, to have summarily convicted half the population of the Punjab if he had been on business. He became one of the leading players at knuckle-bones,\(^\text{23}\) which all jhampánies\(^\text{24}\) and many saises play while they are waiting outside the Government House\(^\text{25}\) or the Gaiety Theater of nights; he learned to smoke tobacco that was three-fourths cowdung; and he heard the wisdom of the grizzled Jemadar\(^\text{26}\) of the Government House grooms. Whose words are valuable. He saw many things which amused him; and he states, on honor, that no man can appreciate Simla properly till he has seen it from the sai’s point of view. He also says that, if he chose to write all he saw his head would be broken in several places.

Strickland’s account of the agony he endured on wet nights, hearing the music and seeing the lights in “Benmore,” with his toes tingling for a waltz and his head in a horse-blanket, is rather amusing. One of these days Strickland is going to write a little book on his experiences. That book will be worth buying, and even more worth suppressing.

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20. Slanged means “attacked with abusive language.”
21. A Naik (nā ēk’) is a corporal of the native infantry.
22. A subaltern is a junior military officer.
23. Knuckle-bones is a game played by tossing and catching sheep bones.
24. Jhampánies (jām pān’ ēz) are bearers of a jampan, a chair that is designed to hold one person and is carried on poles by men.
25. The Government House is the residence of a governor or the owner or manager of an estate.
26. A Jemadar (je mə dər”) is the head of a group of servants.

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Thus he served faithfully as Jacob served for Rachel;\(^\text{27}\) and his leave was nearly at an end when the explosion came. He had really done his best to keep his temper in the hearing of the flirtations I have mentioned; but he broke down at last. An old and very distinguished General took Miss Youghal for a ride, and began that specially offensive “you’re-only-a-little-girl” sort of flirtation—most difficult for a woman to turn aside deftly, and most maddening to listen to. Miss Youghal was shaking with fear at the things he said in the hearing of her saï. Dulloo—Strickland—stood it as long as he could. Then he caught hold of the General’s bridle, and, in most fluent English, invited him to step off and be flung over the cliff. Next minute Miss Youghal began to cry, and Strickland saw that he had hopelessly given himself away, and everything was over.
The General nearly had a fit, while Miss Youghal was sobbing out the story of the disguise and the engagement that was not recognized by the parents. Strickland was furiously angry with himself, and more angry with the General for forcing his hand; so he said nothing, but held the horse’s head and prepared to thrash the General as some sort of satisfaction. But when the General had thoroughly grasped the story, and knew who Strickland was, he began to puff and blow in the saddle, and nearly rolled off with laughing. He said Strickland deserved a V.C., if it were only for putting on a sais’s blanket. Then he complimented Miss Youghal on her lover. The scandal of the business never struck him; for he was a nice old man, with a weakness for flirtations. Then he laughed again, and said that old Youghal was a fool. Strickland let go of the cob’s head, and suggested that the General had better help them if that was his opinion. Strickland knew Youghal’s weakness for men with titles and letters after their names and high official position. “It’s rather like a forty-minute farce,” said the General, “but, begad, I will help, if it’s only to escape that tremendous thrashing I deserve. Go along to your home, my sais—Policeman, and change into decent kit, and I’ll attack Mr. Youghal. Miss Youghal, may I ask you to canter home and wait?”

* * *

About seven minutes later there was a wild hurroosh at the Club. A sais, with blanket and head-rope, was asking all the men he knew: “For Heaven’s sake lend me decent clothes!” As the men did not recognize him, there were some peculiar scenes before Strickland could get a hot bath, with soda in it, in one room, a shirt here, a collar there, a pair of trousers elsewhere, and so on. He galloped off, with half the Club wardrobe on his back, and an utter stranger’s pony under him, to the house of old Youghal. The General, arrayed in purple and fine linen, was before him. What the General had said Strickland never knew, but Youghal received Strickland with moderate civility; and Mrs. Youghal, touched by the devotion of the transformed Dulloo, was almost kind. The General beamed and chuckled, and Miss Youghal came in, and, almost before old Youghal knew where he was, the parental consent had been wrung out, and Strickland had departed with Miss Youghal to the telegraph office to wire for his European kit. The final embarrassment was when a stranger attacked him on the Mall and asked for the stolen pony.

In the end, Strickland and Miss Youghal were married, on the strict understanding that Strickland should drop his old ways, and stick to Departmental routine, which pays best and leads to Simla. Strickland was far too fond of his wife, just then, to break his word, but it was a sore trial to him; for the streets and the bazaars, and the sounds in them, were full of meaning to Strickland, and these called to him to come back and take up his wanderings and his discoveries. Some day I will tell you how he broke his promise to help a friend. That was long since, and he has, by this time, been nearly spoiled for what he would call shikar. He is forgetting the slang, and the beggar’s cant, and the marks, and the signs, and the drift of the undercurrents, which, if a man would master, he must always continue to learn.

But he fills in his Departmental returns beautifully.

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28. V.C., or the Victoria Cross, is a British military decoration bestowed for conspicuous bravery in battle.
29. A cob is a short-legged stout variety of horse.
30. Here, kit means “outfit or uniform.”
31. Here, a hurroosh is a commotion.
32. Cant means “language, jargon, or manner of speaking.”
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. Do you think this story has a happy ending? Why or why not?

Recall and Interpret

2. (a) Explain how Strickland has put into practice his theory about his job. (b) What do his past adventures reveal about his personality and character?

3. (a) What job does Strickland take on in Simla? Why? (b) What are the challenges and rewards of the job?

4. (a) How does the incident with the general lead to the final outcome of the story? (b) Do you think Strickland expected this outcome? Explain.

5. (a) How is Strickland’s life changed by his marriage? (b) What can you infer about his attitude toward his new life?

Analyze and Evaluate

6. Evaluate the importance of the story’s setting. How does it affect the sequence of events? Explain, using specific examples from the story.

7. (a) Why might Kipling have included the proverb at the beginning of the story? (b) Do you agree with the sentiment expressed in the proverb? Why or why not?

Connect

8. **Big Idea** Class, Colonialism, and the Great War (a) What political issues of the time are reflected in this story? (b) What can you infer about Kipling’s attitude toward these issues? Use evidence from the story to support your opinion.

LITERARY ELEMENT

**Narrator**

The narrator of a story is important for several reasons. The events in a story unfold through his or her eyes and ears. An author’s choice of narrator establishes a particular point of view from which the events are seen. The narrator can also dictate the tone of a story. Finally, a narrator can comment on the characters and events and inform the reader of ideas or themes the author wishes to convey. Review “Miss Youghal’s Sais” and the answers you gave to the Literary Element questions that appear at the bottom of each page of the selection. Then answer these questions:

1. (a) Who is the narrator of this story? How do you know? (b) What seems to be his relationship to Strickland? What evidence in the story leads you to this conclusion?

2. (a) What can you infer about the narrator’s personality and character from his comments and opinions? (b) How do his comments and opinions affect your perception of the other characters and the events that take place?

Review: Conflict

As you learned on page 23, conflict is the struggle between two opposing forces: the protagonist and the antagonist. The protagonist is the central character in a story. An antagonist is a person or force that opposes the protagonist. Generally, the reader is meant to sympathize with the protagonist and to be critical or fearful of the antagonist(s).

**Partner Activity** With a partner, review the events of “Miss Youghal’s Sais.” Then answer these questions:

1. (a) Who is the protagonist of this story? (b) Who are the antagonists?

2. (a) What is the nature of the conflict between these opposing forces? (b) Is the conflict external or internal? Why?

3. (a) Identify the climax. How does it serve as a turning point and lead to the resolution? (b) How is the conflict resolved?
Reading Strategy  Identifying Assumptions
The characters in “Miss Youghal’s Sais” make assumptions about events and other characters that help the reader understand how the characters relate to one another. Use the Reading Strategy notes in your chart on page 1069 and your knowledge of the selection to answer these questions.

1. (a) What assumptions does the narrator make about the methods Strickland employs in his job? (b) How is the narrator both critical and admiring of Strickland’s methods?
2. (a) What do the Youghals assume about Strickland’s character? (b) When and how do their assumptions change?
3. (a) What assumption does Strickland make about the General when he observes him with Miss Youghal? (b) What causes him to change his assumption?
4. At the end of the story, do you think the narrator assumes that Strickland has made the right decision and that his marriage is a happy one? Explain.

Vocabulary  Practice

Practice with Word Parts  Use your knowledge of word parts and a dictionary to help you answer the questions.
1. What is the meaning of the word created by removing the prefix un- from the word unsavory?
   a. caring   b. devoutly   c. appetizing
2. Which word shares the same Latin root as compensation?
   a. dispense   b. peninsula   c. compete
3. Which word shares the same Latin root as suppressing?
   a. prescient   b. supply   c. compression
4. Which suffix can be used to create an adjective from the base word farce?
   a. -tion   b. -ical   c. -ive

Writing About Literature

Analyze Cultural and Historical Context  In a brief essay, discuss how Kipling uses the historical and cultural context of the setting in “Miss Youghal’s Sais” to provide information about India under British rule. You may want to review the biography on page 1068 and Building Background on page 1069 before you begin.

Begin your essay by stating the main point you wish to make about Kipling’s use of setting. In the body of the essay, offer examples of details from the story that describe both Indian and British life. Using evidence from the story, conclude the essay with your own estimation of Kipling’s attitude toward Indian life and the British presence in India. Use a graphic organizer to help you organize your ideas.

After completing your draft, meet with a peer reviewer to evaluate each other’s work and suggest revisions. Then edit and proofread your draft for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Interdisciplinary Activity: History

Kipling wrote from the point of view of an Englishman in colonial India. Research the history of the English presence in India. Why was Britain there? How was the English presence perceived by Indians? What is the state of relations between the two nations today? In a brief essay, summarize your findings.

Web Activities  For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.
Shooting an Elephant

MEET GEORGE ORWELL

Have you ever heard the expression “Big Brother is watching you”? It comes from George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four, a novel in which Big Brother, an all-powerful ruler, watches and controls every aspect of people’s lives. According to Orwell, “The moral to be drawn from this dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: Don’t let it happen. It depends on you.” Orwell took this idea to heart, serving as the “conscience of his generation,” according to critic V. S. Pritchett.

“Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism.”

—George Orwell from “Why I Write”

Developing Social Consciousness Orwell—whose real name was Eric Blair—was born in Motihari, India, where his father worked for the British government. Orwell’s parents were lower-middle-class people who scraped together enough money to send Orwell to English prep schools. When he attended private school in England, he was distinguished from the other boys by both his brilliance and his relative poverty. He found that the boys from wealthy families were treated better than he was. Being a victim of class distinctions during his school days made Orwell sympathetic to the working class and other victims of injustice, a sympathy that influenced his writing.

After graduation, Orwell did not pursue a university education; instead, he applied to become a member of the Indian Imperial Police. At nineteen, he sailed to Burma (now Myanmar), where he spent the next five years working as a police officer. While on leave in England, Orwell decided, at the age of twenty-four, to resign his post in Burma and pursue a writing career. He wrote that his experiences in Burma had left him with “an immense weight of guilt. . . . I wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against their tyrants.” Orwell did this by donning rags and wandering the streets of the impoverished East End of London. He spent the next year in Paris, working as a dishwasher in French hotels and restaurants and writing articles about his experiences in Burma and his views on unemployment and poverty.

Writer and Activist By his late twenties, Orwell had published only a few pieces; his book Down and Out in Paris and London, a fictionalized account of actual incidents in the Paris and London slums, had already been rejected three times by publishers. Disheartened, he decided to take a “regular job” and accepted a teaching position at an English school for boys. But Orwell’s literary fortunes soon changed. His book was published, it sold well, and his writing career was under way.

In 1936 Orwell was dispatched to report on the Spanish civil war, but caught up in the cause, he joined a combat unit to fight fascism. His wartime experiences and later work as a British Broadcasting Corporation radio broadcaster intensified Orwell’s fear of government authority and censorship. He later wrote that a government’s changing of historical fact to suit its needs “frightens me much more than bombs.” His last two novels, Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, express this fear.

George Orwell was born in 1903 and died in 1950.

Author Search For more about George Orwell, go to www.glencoe.com.
Connecting to the Essay

In this essay, Orwell recalls an incident when he felt forced to act against his better judgment. As you read, think about the following questions:

- How does peer pressure affect your behavior?
- How much of human behavior is motivated by the fear of being laughed at?

Building Background

To understand the superior attitude prevalent among the British in Burma at the time Orwell was living there, it is helpful to know that Britain then had colonies and territories in nearly every part of the world. The empire was so vast, in fact, that the British proudly proclaimed, “The sun never sets on the British Empire,” meaning that even as the sun set in one part of the empire, it was sure to be rising or still shining in another.

When Orwell was in Burma, elephants were important draft animals. They were used to move timber and other heavy materials, and Southeast Asian logging operations used them extensively because they could lift felled trees with their trunks. An elephant was trained and handled by one man, called a mahout, who often became the elephant’s inseparable companion.

Setting Purposes for Reading

**Big Idea**  
**Class, Colonialism, and the Great War**

As you read, look for evidence of class conflict and the effects of British colonialism in Burma in the 1920s.

**Literary Element**  
**Symbol**

A symbol is a person, animal, place, object, or event that exists on a literal level within a work but also represents something on a figurative level. As you read the essay, examine how Orwell develops the symbolic meaning of the elephant.


**Reading Strategy**  
**Analyzing Evidence**

When you analyze evidence, you consider the facts, examples, and reasons a writer uses to support his or her opinion. After considering the evidence, you can evaluate the validity of the writer’s opinion.

**Reading Tip: Taking Notes**

Use a chart to keep track of the evidence Orwell presents to support his opinions.

**Vocabulary**

- **supplant** (sə plant′) v. to take the place of, often unfairly; p. 1080 Wishing to supplant the king, the prince plotted against him.
- **despotic** (des pot′ ik) adj. tyrannical; oppressive; p. 1080 The despotic ruler raised taxes for his own personal gain.
- **labyrinth** (lab′ a rinth′) n. a place containing winding, interconnected passages; p. 1080 Jessie quickly became lost in the labyrinth.
- **squalid** (skwol′ id) adj. dirty or broken-down due to poverty or neglect; p. 1080 The family’s squalid living conditions were a direct cause of the infant’s illness.
- **garish** (gär′ ish) adj. excessively bright; flashy; gaudy; p. 1082 The garish party decorations were in poor taste.

**Vocabulary Tip: Analogies**

Analogies are comparisons based on relationships between words.

**Interactive Literary Elements Handbook**

To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to [www.glencoe.com](http://www.glencoe.com).
In Moulmein, in lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people—the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was subdivisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

1. Petty means “trivial” or “insignificant.”
2. Betel juice consists of leaves and nuts of the betel palm mixed with mineral lime.
3. Here, nimble means “agile” or “quick-moving.”
4. Sneering means “scornful.”

What evidence supports Orwell’s statement that “anti-European feeling was very bitter?”
All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically—and secretly, of course—I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lockups, the gray, cowed buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos—all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in saecula saeculorum, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism—the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the subinspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful in terrorem. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone "must." It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of "must" is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow, and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it.

The Burmese subinspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts,
thatched with palm leaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of “Go away, child! Go away this instant!” and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man’s dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast’s foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend’s house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant—I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary—and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metaled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd’s approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to

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12. Here, a switch is a slender, flexible rod, twig, or stick used for whipping.
13. A Dravidian is a person from southern India who speaks the Dravidian language. A coolie is an unskilled laborer.
14. Paddy fields are rice fields.
15. Miry means “swampy.”

GEORGE ORWELL 1081
shoot a working elephant—it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery—and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of “must” was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home. But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes—faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man’s dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd—seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing—no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man’s life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

16. A conjurer is a magician.
17. Futility means “ineffectiveness” or “uselessness.”

Reading Strategy Analyzing Evidence What evidence in this paragraph supports Orwell’s certainty that he “ought not to shoot” the elephant?

Vocabulary garish (gär’ ish) adj. excessively bright; flashy; gaudy

Big Idea Class, Colonialism, and the Great War How does this statement epitomize Orwell’s perception of the absurdity of British colonialism?
But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steamroller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of "natives"; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on, and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do. There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim.

The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theater curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole; actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick—one never does when a shot goes home—but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralyzed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time—it might have been five seconds, I dare say—he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skywards like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open—I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die,
but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dahs and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

19. Dahs are heavy Burmese knives.

20. Coringhee is a port in southeastern India.

Big Idea Class, Colonialism, and the Great War How does this paragraph reflect the distorted values of British colonialism?
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. Which scene in the essay made the strongest impression on you? Explain.

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) According to Orwell, what attitude did the Burmese have toward him and the other Europeans? (b) What do you think accounts for this attitude?
3. (a) Describe how Orwell carried out his plan of action. Why did it take so long? What did he want to avoid at all costs? (b) What role did the crowd play in determining the elephant’s fate?
4. (a) How do the reactions of both older and younger Europeans to the shooting of the elephant compare with Orwell’s realization at the end of the essay? (b) Looking back, what judgments does Orwell seem to be making about himself and about British imperialism?

Analyze and Evaluate
5. (a) Analyze Orwell’s reasons for changing his mind about shooting the elephant. (b) Explain what his change of mind suggests about his character at the time of the incident.
6. What effects are created by Orwell’s lengthy, detailed description of the elephant’s fate?
7. How does Orwell’s perspective on the incident differ from that of the crowd of Burmese natives?

Connect
8. [Big Idea] Class, Colonialism, and the Great War According to Orwell, what is the paradox, or apparent contradiction, at the heart of colonialism? How does the essay illustrate this paradox?

WHO IS THE GREATER VICTIM?

Read the two excerpts of literary criticism below. Notice how each critic emphasizes a different aspect of Orwell’s complexity.

“The key to the moral content of ‘Shooting an Elephant’ lies in a chain of identifications made by the narrator, beginning with his identification of the trampled Dravidian with the victim of the crucifixion. . . . All of these identifications (Dravidian with Jesus, elephant with Dravidian, narrator with elephant) come together with an earlier image, that of the humiliated Burmese in the [i]mperial jail, the ‘prostrate peoples’ victimized by Empire.”

—Thomas Bertonneau

“(The narrator of ‘Shooting an Elephant’) is the target of physical and verbal abuse for the native population. A pivotal opposition, between individual and group, is established immediately, one that will reverberate through the narrative.”

—Peter Marks

1. Both critics agree that the narrator is a victim, but each emphasizes a different aspect of the victimization. What is the difference in emphasis between the two critics?
2. (a) In your opinion, who is more victimized by the British Empire—persons such as the young Orwell, who must enforce the laws, or the native population, who must obey the laws? (b) How does each critic answer this question?

Burmese woman driving, Rangoon, Burma, 1922.
**LITERARY ANALYSIS**

**Literary Element** **Symbol**

Symbols in literature often represent something abstract. For example, in “Shooting an Elephant,” the elephant might symbolize the British Empire. Both are large, powerful, fearsome things that are dying a slow death.

1. If the elephant is a symbol for the British Empire, what might the elephant’s behavior suggest about the way the British rulers have treated the Burmese people?

2. (a) What do you think Orwell himself might symbolize for the people of the town? (b) How does this symbolism help explain the fact that he is “hated by large numbers of people”?

**Review: Thesis**

As you learned on page 726, the **thesis** is the main idea, or statement to be proved, in a work of nonfiction. A thesis may be stated or implied. The author must support the thesis with evidence in the form of reasons and examples.

**Partner Activity** Meet with a classmate and discuss the thesis of Orwell’s essay. Create a web diagram similar to the one below. In the center circle, write the thesis. If the thesis is stated, quote it from the essay; if the thesis is implied, paraphrase it in your own words. Then, in the surrounding circles, write evidence that supports the thesis.

**Reading Strategy** **Analyzing Evidence**

Analyzing evidence is one way to test the validity of an author’s thesis. The facts, examples, and reasons presented by the author determine whether the reader is convinced by the author’s thesis or opinions.

1. (a) Identify an opinion that Orwell expresses. (b) List three pieces of evidence that support that opinion.  
2. Does Orwell convince you of his belief that both the rulers and the ruled are victims of British imperialism? Explain.

**Vocabulary** **Practice**

**Practice with Analogies** Choose the word that best completes each analogy below.

1. lively : somber :: garish :
   a. ugly
   b. bright
   c. luminous
   d. subdued
2. ill : sick :: squalid :
   a. well-maintained
   b. dirty
   c. stormy
   d. peaceful
3. uproot : remove :: supplant :
   a. position
   b. add
   c. beseech
   d. displace
4. cruel : kind :: despotic :
   a. tyrannical
   b. democratic
   c. overbearing
   d. kingly
5. path : lane :: labyrinth :
   a. crooked
   b. winding
   c. maze
   d. puzzle

**Academic Vocabulary**

Here is a word from the vocabulary list on page R82. This word will help you think, write, and talk about the selection.

**administrate** (ad min’ trāt’) v. to manage or supervise

**Practice and Apply**

In what way did the narrator help the British Empire **administrate** the lives of the Burmese people?
Writing About Literature

Explore Author’s Purpose  The author’s purpose is the author’s intent in writing a literary work. Authors usually write for one or more of the following purposes: to persuade, to inform, to explain, to entertain, or to describe. Write a brief essay in which you discuss Orwell’s purpose in writing “Shooting an Elephant.” Consider the following questions as you develop your essay.

- How does Orwell feel about his job?
- What is Orwell’s attitude concerning British imperialism in Burma?
- Does Orwell offer a solution to the problems caused by imperialism? If so, what is it?

Before you begin to write, you might want to organize your ideas in a chart similar to the one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction and Thesis Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body Paragraph(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arrange your supporting reasons and examples in ascending order of importance.

After you complete your draft, meet with a classmate to evaluate each other’s work and to suggest revisions. Then proofread and edit your work for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Listening and Speaking

With a partner, role-play an interview that a reporter might conduct with Orwell after the incident described in “Shooting an Elephant.” Invent appropriate questions the reporter might ask, as well as answers that Orwell would be likely to give.

Orwell’s Language and Style

Using Dashes  In “Shooting an Elephant,” Orwell frequently uses dashes. Authors commonly use dashes to indicate a sudden interruption or a shift in thought, or to set off an appositive or explanatory statement, as in the following sentence.

“I had no intention of shooting the elephant—I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary—and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you.”

Consider the following purposes for which Orwell uses dashes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“In Moulmein, in lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people—the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me.”</td>
<td>explanatory statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Theoretically—and secretly, of course—I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British.”</td>
<td>to introduce words the author wants to emphasize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity  Scan “Shooting an Elephant” for other examples of dashes. Make a list of these examples and indicate the purpose of each usage. Consider whether the dash emphasizes an idea, indicates a break in thought, or sets off an appositive or an appositive phrase—a word or phrase that identifies or gives more detailed information about another word.

Revising Check

Dashes  When revising your own writing, it is important to consider your marks of punctuation. With a partner, review your essay on Orwell’s purpose for writing. Revise your writing by including dashes in places where they would enhance your intended meaning.

Web Activities  For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.
Grammar Workshop

Using Coordinating Conjunctions

“No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress.”

—George Orwell, from “Shooting an Elephant”

**Connecting to Literature**

In the quotation above, George Orwell uses a coordinating conjunction to combine two thoughts and clearly show the connection between them. A conjunction is a word that joins single words or groups of words. A coordinating conjunction joins words or groups of words that have equal importance in a sentence. Use them to link choppy sentences or join the parts of a sentence. Some common coordinating conjunctions are **and, but, or, nor, for, yet,** and **so.**

**Examples**

**Use and or or to connect similar sentence elements:**

Orwell was often taunted and harassed by the Burmese people.

**Use but, yet, or nor to connect contrasting sentence parts:**

Orwell says, “I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to.”

**Use for or so to show cause and effect between ideas:**

He was miserable, for he was caught between two cultures.

**Exercise**

**Inserting Conjunctions** Combine the sentence parts by using one of the coordinating conjunctions in parentheses. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. In his short story, Orwell uses direct language (and, so) appeals to the reader’s emotions.
2. He hated the British raj (so, but) also disliked Burmese nationalism.
3. Burma was once part of the British Empire, (but, for) it gained its independence in 1948.
4. Orwell had to investigate an elephant that had killed a man, (yet, for) that was part of his job.
5. He would have to shoot the elephant, (or, yet) the natives would laugh at him.
Rupert Brooke was handsome, charming, intelligent, privileged, and beloved—a “young Apollo,” as one friend described him. Winston Churchill said of Brooke, “He was all that one would wish England’s noblest sons to be.” Because of his early death in World War I, he has remained that golden young poet forever, and it is partly because of his early death that his reputation as a poet survives.

“The thoughts to which [Brooke] gave expression . . . will be shared by many thousands of young men.”

—Winston Churchill

**A Privileged Youth** Brooke was born in the town of Rugby, and he had all the advantages of a well-to-do upbringing. He went to the prestigious Rugby School, where his father was headmaster. He studied Latin and Greek, and he began to write poetry at the age of nine. Brooke had a childlike sense of wonder. He was full of vitality and energy, and he possessed an air of confidence and unself-conscious ease. Brooke was a gifted student, but he was also skilled at athletics, excelling at soccer, cricket, tennis, and swimming. As expected, he went on to King’s College, Cambridge, in 1906 and soon counted among his friends such notable intellectuals as writer Virginia Woolf (see page 1149), economist John Maynard Keynes, and poet William Butler Yeats (see page 1106).

After graduating from Cambridge in 1909, Brooke spent time traveling and writing. During his late teens and early twenties, he went to Italy, Germany, the United States, and Canada. Then he departed for the South Sea islands of Hawaii, Samoa, Fiji, and Tahiti. His poetry at this time was mostly concerned with the topics of love and nature.

Brooke’s idealistic preoccupation with rural motifs earned him and his friends the moniker “neopagans.” In Tahiti, Brooke appeared to have found a place that was perfectly suited to both his ideals and his artistic sensibility.

**War Breaks Out** Brooke was never happier than while he was in Tahiti, but he decided to return to England during the spring of 1914. A few months later, World War I began, and like many men his age, Brooke immediately volunteered for service. As a member of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, Brooke was dispatched to Antwerp, Belgium; however, he saw no military action because the area surrounding Antwerp was not being contested at the time. During this period, he produced his best-known poetry, the five war sonnets entitled “Nineteen Fourteen,” of which “The Soldier” is perhaps the most famous and openly patriotic. In February 1915 Brooke’s company was ordered to set sail for the Dardanelles for the Gallipoli campaign. In Cairo, however, Brooke suffered through bouts of sunstroke and dysentery. Then he contracted blood poisoning from a small insect bite.

He died on April 23 on a hospital ship in the Aegean Sea and was buried on the Greek island of Skyros. Ironically, his death brought him almost immediate fame as both a poet and a symbol of innocent youth struck down by war.

*Rupert Brooke was born in 1887 and died in 1915.*
Connecting to the Poem
What does a person owe his country? What values are worth fighting for? In Brooke’s poem, the speaker demonstrates his love for his country. As you read the poem, think about the following questions.

- How would you define the word patriot?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of being idealistic about war and death?

Building Background
British soldiers in World War I faced a terrible paradox. Even though they felt a strong urge to fight in order to preserve and defend the world they knew, the horrors of the war increasingly led them to become disillusioned with their cause. At the beginning of the war, most English soldiers believed in the justness of their cause and sought to reassure their families back home to keep up morale. In fact, one soldier, in his haste to assure his wife of the worthiness of the war, complained of depressing letters from the homefront and wrote, “It is just these people who have suffered nothing who make the most fuss.” When the horrors of World War I became widely known, Brooke’s idealistic poetry suffered a loss of popularity. It was not until after World War II that his work rose again in the public’s esteem.

Setting Purposes for Reading

**Big Idea** Class, Colonialism, and the Great War
In the first half of the twentieth century, the power of the British Empire was challenged by colonial unrest and World War I. As you read the poem, consider the poet’s attitude toward war especially in light of what you know today about such catastrophic events.

**Literary Element** Mood
Mood is the emotional quality of a literary work that is conveyed through description and evocative language. Mood differs from atmosphere, which is concerned mainly with the physical qualities that contribute to mood, such as time, place, and weather.


Reading Strategy Applying Background Knowledge

**Background knowledge** refers to what you already know about the historical, social, and cultural forces that help shape a literary work. The ideas expressed in Brooke’s poems were shaped in part by the attitudes and conditions of the world in which he lived. Becoming familiar with those attitudes and conditions and their influence on Brooke can help you gain a better understanding and appreciation of his poetry.

**Reading Tip: Taking Notes** Reread the biography of Brooke on page 1089 and the Building Background feature on this page, noting details that describe attitudes of his time and the war he faced. Use a chart like the one shown here to jot down some of those details. As you read his poem, look for ideas that may have been influenced by the attitudes and conditions you have noted. Add these examples to your chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes and Conditions</th>
<th>Details in Poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. World War I begins.</td>
<td>1. “If I should die,” suggests that the speaker understands that he may die in the war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interactive Literary Elements Handbook To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to www.glencoe.com.

OBJECTIVES
In studying this selection, you will focus on the following:
- analyzing mood
- applying background knowledge
If I should die, think only this of me:
That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. Do you find this poem inspiring or naive? Explain.

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) If the speaker should die, how does he wish to be remembered? (b) What does this reveal about his values and attitudes toward his homeland?
3. (a) According to the speaker, what will happen to his heart? (b) What does the second stanza suggest about the speaker’s attitude toward life and death?

Literary Analysis

Literary Element Mood

Mood is created by a number of elements, including a writer’s choice of language, subject matter, setting, and tone, as well as sound devices such as rhyme and rhythm.

1. Describe the mood of “The Soldier.”
2. What words or phrases help to create the mood?

Writing About Literature

Analyze Genre Elements “The Soldier” is an Italian sonnet, in which the octave presents a situation that the sestet comments upon. In a brief essay, evaluate how the form helps add structure to the poem. What situation does the octave present? What comment does the sestet provide? Do you agree with Brooke’s message? Cite examples to support your opinion.

Reading and Vocabulary

Reading Strategy Applying Background Knowledge

By applying what you know to what you read, you can gain a better understanding of how social conditions and historical forces shape a literary work.

1. (a) According to lines 5–8, what did England do for the speaker? (b) How does this view make sense, given what you know about Brooke’s life?
2. Brooke wrote this poem early in the war and had not seen any real combat. How does knowing this add to your understanding of the poem?

Academic Vocabulary

Here are two words from the vocabulary list on page R82.

draft (draft) n. the process or method of selecting one or more individuals from a group for some, usually compulsory, service.

statistic (stə tisˈ tık) n. one viewed as a nameless item of statistical information

Practice and Apply
1. Do you think Brooke would have supported a military draft? Explain.
2. Do you think Brooke viewed the death of a soldier as a meaningless statistic? Explain.
Dreamers

MEET SIEGFRIED SASSOON

In January 1916, England's First Battalion dug itself into a line of trenches along the river Somme in France and waited to stage the British army's largest offensive of the Great War. Siegfried Sassoon was a transportation officer for the First Battalion, and in April of that year he proved himself a courageous soldier. He successfully rescued a number of wounded comrades while under heavy fire in no man's land and was awarded the Military Cross for valor. This selfless—and extremely dangerous—act of heroism and other forays into enemy territory earned him the nickname Mad Jack.

Early Life  Born to a family of considerable wealth and privilege in 1886, Sassoon grew up on a country estate near Warminster, Kent, and spent his leisure time playing cricket and golf. Sassoon was educated at home by a private tutor until he reached the age of fourteen, and then he attended the New Beacon School. In 1902 he enrolled at Marlborough College, ostensibly to study law, but he became interested in writing poetry. He later went to Clare College, Cambridge, to pursue studies in history, but did not complete a degree. Instead, he wrote poetry and self-published Poems, his first of ten collections to appear in print before he enlisted in the army and was sent to France.

The Making of a Pacifist Poet  The First Battle of the Somme began on July 1 and resulted in over 57,000 British casualties on the first day. It is still considered the bloodiest single day of fighting in British military history. Five days later Sassoon captured a German trench by himself and was recommended for the Victoria Cross. Later that month he became afflicted with acute gastroenteritis and was evacuated to England, an action that saved his life. The Battle of the Somme resulted in over one million casualties, and the horrors of such bloodshed forever changed the way Sassoon viewed war.

While Sassoon was recuperating in a military hospital, his horror and disgust at what he perceived to be the senseless slaughter of the war turned him into a pacifist. However, he felt guilty that his fellow countrymen were still fighting and dying, and he returned to the front only to be shot in the shoulder and hospitalized once again. At the encouragement of another pacifist, the philosopher Bertrand Russell, Sassoon decided to voice his opposition to the war in a letter to newspapers.

Along with other antiwar poets, such as his friend Wilfred Owen, Sassoon was able to poignantly convey the suffering and express the thoughts and feelings of the lost generation of British soldiers who succumbed to the brutal bloodbath of World War I.

“I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.”

—Siegfried Sassoon

Siegfried Sassoon was born in 1886 and died in 1967.

For more about Siegfried Sassoon, go to www.glencoe.com.
Connecting to the Poem

There are probably a number of things you do each day that you might consider commonplace or boring—showering, going to school, waiting in line in the cafeteria. As you read, think about these questions:

- Have you ever been faced with a task so unpleasant that you would gladly welcome a return to your ordinary habits?
- What circumstances might make you appreciate the mundane aspects of your daily life?

Building Background

As World War I dragged on and the casualties mounted, veteran soldiers became weary and disheartened. Many lost their motivation and felt a stark sense of separation from those at home who could not be expected to comprehend the terror of trench warfare. Some soldiers felt so alienated from their families that they passed up opportunities to visit home on leave. Many other soldiers were disgusted by war accounts that glossed over the horrors of battle that they had endured. They felt that the patriotic tributes to heroism portrayed a false picture of the senseless atrocities of war. Much of the war poetry written during this period reflects the soldiers’ feelings of abandonment and disillusionment.

Setting Purposes for Reading

**Big Idea**  
Class, Colonialism, and the Great War

As you read the poem, consider how World War I redefined notions of normalcy for both civilians and soldiers.

**Literary Element**  
Title

The title of a literary work is the first clue about the work’s meaning. The title may help to explain the setting, provide insight into the theme, or describe the action that will take place in the work. Before you read this poem, consider what it might be about based on the title.


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**Reading Strategy**  
Comparing and Contrasting Imagery

To compare two things is to focus on their similarities, while to contrast them is to focus on their differences. Imagery refers to the word pictures that a writer uses to evoke emotions in the reader through the use of vivid sensory details. As you read, look for Sassoon’s use of contrasting image patterns.

**Reading Tip: Taking Notes**  
Use a chart similar to the one below to list contrasting images of war and civilian life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images of War</th>
<th>Images of Civilian Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“foul dugouts, gnawed by rats”</td>
<td>“firelit homes, clean beds, and wives”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vocabulary**

- **destiny** (dës’ tə nē) n. fate; what will necessarily happen; p. 1095  
  Convinced that fame was her destiny, Wilma felt little need to practice her act.

- **feud** (fūd) n. lengthy, bitter conflict or dispute; p. 1095  
  The tribal leaders had engaged in a number of feuds that made a lasting peace nearly impossible.

- **fatal** (fā’ təl) adj. causing death, destruction, or harm; p. 1095  
  After weeks of deliberation, the jury delivered a fatal verdict.

**Vocabulary Tip: Context Clues**  
Sometimes the context, or surrounding words and phrases, of an unfamiliar word can provide clues to the word’s meaning.

**Interactive Literary Elements Handbook**  
To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to [www.glencoe.com](http://www.glencoe.com).
Dreamers
Siegfried Sassoon

Soldiers are citizens of death’s gray land,
Drawing no dividend from time’s tomorrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.

5 Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dugouts, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

Literary Element  Title  How do these two lines explain and expand the title of the poem?

Vocabulary

destiny (des’t a nē) n. fate; what will necessarily happen
feud (fūd) n. lengthy, bitter conflict or dispute
fatal (fā’t al) adj. causing death, destruction, or harm
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. What is your reaction to the things soldiers dream about during war?

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) How does the speaker describe the soldiers in the first stanza? (b) From this description, what can you infer about the speaker’s attitude toward the circumstances of a soldier’s life?
3. (a) According to the speaker, what do soldiers dream about? (b) How do these dreams contrast with the reality of war?

Analyze and Evaluate
4. (a) Why does the speaker include routine tasks, such as “going to the office in the train,” among the civilian comforts that the soldiers long for? (b) What moral, or lesson, might Sassoon be conveying to his readers?
5. (a) How does Sassoon convey his disillusionment with war in the poem? (b) Who or what has determined the soldiers’ “destiny”?
6. The speaker says that soldiers “must win / Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.” In your opinion, are wars ever won? Explain.

Connect
7. Big Idea Class, Colonialism, and the Great War How does “Dreamers” reflect the cultural trauma experienced by the British people during and after the Great War?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element Title
A good title stimulates the reader’s interest and curiosity about a literary work. The title can state or imply the subject or theme of the work, provide a clue to its meaning, or give the reader a sense of the period or setting. A title may be understated, ironic, or paradoxical.

1. What is the typical connotation of the word dreamer?
2. How does the poem contradict the expectations that the reader derives from the title?

Reading Strategy Comparing and Contrasting Imagery
“Dreamers” is composed of two contrasting image patterns—the worlds of military and civilian life.

1. Cite examples of images in the poem that represent the contrasting worlds of war and peace.
2. What generalizations can you make about these contrasting image patterns?

Vocabulary Practice

Practice with Context Clues Identify the context clue that helps reveal the meanings of the boldfaced vocabulary words.

1. The soldier’s destiny was determined by the nature of war.
   a. soldier’s  b. determined
2. The warring factions’ feuds went back for several generations.
   a. warring factions  b. generations
3. The doctor told her patient that his disease was fatal and he only had six months to live.
   a. doctor  b. six months to live

Internet Connection
Conduct Internet and library research to find firsthand accounts of soldiers’ experiences in World War I. How do these accounts compare with the experiences expressed in “Dreamers”? Share your findings and your insights with the class.

Web Activities For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.


**MEET WILFRED OWEN**

One day in January 1917, Lieutenant Wilfred Owen and his men marched six miles over shell-pocked roads and through flooded trenches. The mud was so thick and deep in places that a number of Owen’s men became stuck and had to slip out of their waders to free themselves. They continued their march with freezing and bleeding feet while suffering enemy machine-gun fire and heavy shelling. When it appeared that circumstances couldn’t get worse, German soldiers fired canisters of chlorine gas at them. Through his gas mask, Owen watched one of his men choke to death in a sea-green cloud of poison. This was the incident that inspired Owen’s poem “Dulce et Decorum Est.”

“My subject is War, and the pity of war. I am not concerned with Poetry. The Poetry is in the Pity.”

—Wilfred Owen

**Soldier and Poet** Owen was born to a working-class family in Oswestry, England, in 1893. He attended school at the Birkenhead Institute and graduated from the Shrewsbury Technical School. Owen gained entrance to the University of London, but could not afford the tuition. To help pay for his schooling, he took a job as an assistant to the vicar of Dunsden. However, he soon became disenchanted with his position and went to France to teach English. When Britain entered World War I, Owen enlisted in the British army and left for the front to fight for his country.

One night, after falling into a fifteen-foot shell hole and badly banging his head, Owen experienced unrelenting headaches, which he believed were a result of a concussion. For two months he fought the headaches and the Germans under punishing conditions until doctors diagnosed his illness as “shell shock.” Unable to lead his regiment, Owen was transported to Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh, Scotland, for treatment. When fellow soldier and poet Siegfried Sassoon arrived at the hospital, the two became friends and exchanged poems. Sassoon helped the younger poet by introducing him to Robert Ross, a London editor. Although critics would later point out that Owen’s poems exhibited greater range and technical superiority, Owen was humble about comparing himself to Sassoon. “I am not worthy to light his pipe,” he wrote to his mother.

**A Posthumous Legacy** Owen was more sensitive and compassionate about his subject than many other war poets of the time, and he developed a direct, outspoken style that broke with the conventions of the day. When he was young, he admired the poetry of Keats and Shelley. However, the poet that probably had the greatest impact on his work was Sassoon. Wilfred Owen would go on to become one of England’s most admired war poets, but he would not live long enough to see his poems in print. Tragically, he was killed in battle one week before the end of the war, and the bulk of his poems were posthumously published by Sassoon in the 1920s.

Wilfred Owen was born in 1893 and died in 1918.
Connecting to the Poem

Popular images of war in movies and recruitment ads often depict soldiers in triumph and battle campaigns as glorious adventures. As you read, think about the following questions:

- What do you imagine war is really like?
- Is it always honorable and glorious to die for one's country?

Building Background

During World War I, new technologies brought unprecedented dangers to soldiers and civilians alike. In most previous wars, soldiers had relied on single-shot rifles, hand-to-hand combat, or limited artillery. However, during the Great War, machine guns and tanks killed more efficiently and caused considerably more destruction. Chemicals such as mustard gas, chlorine gas, and phosphorous poisoned and maimed troops. Mortars, which were capable of firing their shells more than a half mile, decimated fighting forces and civilian centers. For the first time in the history of warfare, entire companies of soldiers could be destroyed before they could draw their weapons or catch sight of their enemies.

Setting Purposes for Reading

**Big Idea** Class, Colonialism, and the Great War

The strength and confidence of Britain as a military power came under increasing scrutiny as the war progressed. As you read, consider how the suffering and deaths of large numbers of soldiers might have affected morale in the field and eroded support at home.

**Literary Element** Verse Paragraph

Verse paragraphs and prose paragraphs have a similar function—to convey a main idea that is supported by details. Unlike a stanza, a verse paragraph does not have a fixed number of lines. Verse paragraphs are indicated on the page by a blank space between groups of lines.


**Reading Strategy** Recognizing Author's Purpose

An author's purpose is usually one of the following: to persuade, to inform or explain, to entertain, to describe, or to tell a story. Nonfiction writers often state their purposes explicitly, but novelists and poets tend to imply their purposes. Critically examining the title, tone, theme, and figurative language in “Dulce et Decorum Est” can help you determine Owen's purpose.

**Reading Tip: Asking Questions** As you read, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why does Owen use a Latin quotation from Horace for his title?
- Why does the speaker repeat Horace’s quotation in the final two lines of the poem?
- How does the speaker’s tone help fulfill Owen’s purpose?
- What do the similes and metaphors in the poem tell you about Owen’s attitude toward war?

**Vocabulary**

- **trudge** (truj) v. to walk wearily or laboriously; p. 1099 After the loss, the coach made the entire football team trudge behind the bus for a mile.
- **ecstasy** (ek’ stā se) n. a state beyond reason or self-control; p. 1099 The musicians moved the audience to a state of collective ecstasy.
- **vile** (vil) adj. repulsive or disgusting; p. 1099 When the landlord unlocked the door, he was met by a vile odor that came from the kitchen.

**Vocabulary Tip: Synonyms** Words that have the same or similar meanings are called synonyms. Note that synonyms are always the same part of speech.

**Interactive Literary Elements Handbook** To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to [www.glencoe.com](http://www.glencoe.com).
DULCE ET DECORUM EST
Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines¹ that dropped behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets² just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime . . .
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent³ for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.⁴

Big Idea  Class, Colonialism, and the Great War  How do these similes challenge the notion that war is glorious?

Vocabulary

- trudge  (truj) v. to walk wearily or laboriously
- ecstasy  (ek’s tə sè) n. a state beyond reason or self-control
- vile  (vīl) adj. repulsive or disgusting

1. Five-Nines were artillery shells used during World War I.
2. Clumsy helmets are gas masks.
3. Ardent means eager.
4. Written by Horace, Dulce . . . mori means “It is sweet and honorable to die for one’s country.”
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. How did you feel when the speaker addresses the reader in the final verse paragraph?

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) In the first verse paragraph, how does the speaker describe the soldiers’ retreat? (b) What do you learn about their physical and mental condition?
3. (a) Summarize the speaker’s description of what happens to one of the soldiers. (b) What does the description suggest about the speaker’s attitude toward the war?
4. (a) What theme, or message, do you think the speaker wants to convey in lines 25–28? (b) What evidence has been presented by the speaker earlier in the poem to prove his contention that the Latin quotation is a lie?

Literary Element
Verse Paragraph
While poems written before the twentieth century usually contain stanzas, many contemporary poems are made up of verse paragraphs.
1. What is the function of the first two verse paragraphs of “Dulce et Decorum Est”?
2. How do lines 15–16 function as a transitional verse paragraph?
3. What is the main idea of the final verse paragraph?

Writing About Literature
Respond to Title In his title, Owen quotes the ancient Roman poet Horace. At the end of the poem, the title is repeated. In a one-paragraph response, explain why you think Owen invoked Horace’s words.

Analyse and Evaluate
5. (a) Explain the metaphor in line 6. (b) What sound effects make this metaphor particularly effective?
6. (a) What similes does the speaker use to describe the dying soldier in the final verse paragraph? (b) What is the cumulative effect of these similes?
7. (a) Why are the children in line 26 so eager for “desperate glory”? (b) Why do you think Owen describes the glory as “desperate”?

Connect
8. Big Idea Class, Colonialism, and the Great War Most of Owen’s poems were published after the war. How do you think most people in Britain would have reacted to “Dulce et Decorum Est” when they first read it? Do you think the poem may have affected their opinions about the war effort? Explain.

Reading Strategy
Recognizing Author’s Purpose
Sometimes an author will have more than one purpose for writing. However, authors generally consider one purpose more important than the others.
1. What do you think was Owen’s main purpose in writing “Dulce et Decorum Est”?
2. How do Owen’s tone and figurative language contribute to his purpose?

Vocabulary
Practice
Practice with Synonyms Identify the synonym for each vocabulary word below.
1. trudge a. smell b. plod
2. ecstasy a. rapture b. drain
3. vile a. pathetic b. offensive

Web Activities For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.
Building Background

Paul Fussell was born in California in 1924. His experiences fighting as an infantryman in World War II profoundly influenced his beliefs about the meaning of war, its causes, and its relationship to literature and the arts. In the following excerpt, from his National Book Award–winning *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Fussell describes the trenches that spanned the Western Front during World War I. (See map on page 1033.)

Set a Purpose for Reading

Read to learn about the experiences of soldiers and the trenches in which they lived and fought during World War I.

**Reading Strategy**

**Synthesizing Information**

To *synthesize* means to draw information from multiple sources in order to come to a conclusion. As you read, take notes about the lives of the soldiers in the trenches. Include in your notes information drawn from other sources in this unit, including poetry. Then use this information to come to a conclusion about life in the trenches. Use an evaluation chart like the one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information About Trench Life</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Henri Barbusse estimates that the French front alone contained about 6250 miles of trenches. Since the French occupied a little more than half the line, the total length of the numerous trenches occupied by the British must come to about 6000 miles. We thus find over 12,000 miles of trenches on the Allied side alone. When we add the trenches of the Central Powers, we arrive at a figure of about 25,000 miles, equal to a trench sufficient to circle the earth. Theoretically it would have been possible to walk from Belgium to Switzerland entirely below ground, but although the lines were “continuous,” they were not entirely seamless: occasionally mere shell holes or fortified strong-points would serve as a connecting link. Not a few survivors have performed the heady imaginative exercise of envisioning the whole line at once. Stanley Casson is one who, imagining the whole line from his position on the ground, implicitly submits the whole preposterous conception to the criterion of the “normally” rational and intelligible. As he remembers, looking back from 1935,

1. *Henri Barbusse* (1873–1935) was a French infantryman and novelist.
Our trenches stood on a faint slope, just overlooking German ground, with a vista of vague plainland below. Away to right and left stretched the great lines of defense as far as eye and imagination could stretch them. I used to wonder how long it would take for me to walk from the beaches of the North Sea to that curious end of all fighting against the Swiss boundary; to try to guess what each end looked like; to imagine what would happen if I passed a verbal message, in the manner of the parlor game, along to the next man on my right to be delivered to the end man of all up against the Alps. Would anything intelligible at all emerge?

Another imagination has contemplated a similar absurd transmission of sound all the way from north to south. Alexander Aitken remembers the Germans opposite him celebrating some happy public event in early June, 1916, presumably either the (ambiguous) German success at the naval battle of Jutland (May 31–June 1) or the drowning of Lord Kitchener, lost on June 5 when the cruiser Hampshire struck a mine and sank off the Orkney Islands. Aitken writes, “There had been a morning in early June when a tremendous tin-canning and beating of shell-gongs had begun in the north and run south down their lines to end, without doubt, at Belfort and Mulhausen on the Swiss frontier.” Impossible to believe, really, but in this mad setting, somehow plausible.

“When all is said and done,” Sassoon notes, “the war was mainly a matter of holes and ditches.” And in these holes and ditches extending for ninety miles, continually, even in the quietest times, some 7000 British men and officers were killed and wounded daily, just as a matter of course. “Wastage,” the Staff called it.

There were normally three lines of trenches. The front-line trench was anywhere from fifty yards or so to a mile from its enemy counterpart. Several hundred yards behind it was the support trench line. And several hundred yards behind that was the reserve line. There were three kinds of trenches: firing trenches, like these; communication trenches, running roughly perpendicular to the line and connecting the three lines; and “saps,” shallower ditches thrust out into No Man’s Land, providing access to forward.

2. Alexander Aitken (1895–1967) was a soldier, war memoirist, and famed mathematician.
3. The naval battle of Jutland, which took place off the coast of Denmark, was the only major naval battle of the war. It ended without a decisive victor. Lord Kitchener (1850–1916) was a British field marshal and secretary of state for war. The Orkney Islands sit off the northeast coast of Scotland.
4. Belfort, the capital of the Territoire de Belfort in eastern France, was successfully defended by the allies during World War I. Mulhausen is an industrial town in northeastern France.
5. Siegfried Sassoon was one of the Trench Poets (see page 1093).
observation posts, listening posts, grenade-throwing posts, and machine gun positions. The end of a sap was usually not manned all the time: night was the favorite time for going out. Coming up from the rear, one reached the trenches by following a communication trench sometimes a mile or more long. It often began in a town and gradually deepened. By the time pedestrians reached the reserve line, they were well below ground level.

A firing trench was supposed to be six to eight feet deep and four or five feet wide. On the enemy side a parapet of earth or sandbags rose about two or three feet above the ground. A corresponding "parados" a foot or so high was often found on top of the friendly side. Into the sides of trenches were dug one- or two-man holes ("funk-holes"), and there were deeper dugouts, reached by dirt stairs, for use as command posts and officers' quarters. On the enemy side of a trench was a fire-step two feet high on which the defenders were supposed to stand, firing and throwing grenades, when repelling attack. A well-built trench did not run straight for any distance: that would have been to invite enfilade\(^8\) fire. Every few yards a good trench zig-zagged. It had frequent traverses designed to contain damage within a limited space. Moving along a trench thus involved a great deal of weaving and turning. The floor of a proper trench was covered with wooden duckboards, beneath which were sumps a few feet deep designed to collect water. The walls, perpetually crumbling, were supported by sandbags, corrugated iron, or bundles of sticks or rushes. Except at night and in half-light, there was of course no looking over the top except through periscopes, which could be purchased in the "Trench Requisites" section of the main London department stores. The few snipers on duty during the day observed No Man's Land through loopholes cut in sheets of armor plate.

The entanglements of barbed wire had to be positioned far enough out in front of the trench to keep the enemy from sneaking up to grenade-throwing distance. Interestingly, the two novelties that contributed most to the personal menace of the war could be said to be American inventions. Barbed wire had first appeared on the American frontier in the late nineteenth century for use in restraining animals. And the machine gun was the brainchild of Hiram Stevens Maxim (1840–1916), an American who, disillusioned with native patent law, established his Maxim Gun Company in England and began manufacturing his guns in 1889. He was finally knighted for his efforts. At first the British regard for barbed wire was on a par with Sir Douglas Haig's\(^9\)

6. A parapet is a wall used to protect soldiers.
7. The parados was the side of the trench that faced away from the enemy.
8. Enfilade is gunfire directed at a position from that position's flank.
9. Sir Douglas Haig (1861–1928) was a British field marshal and commander in chief of British forces in France.
A view of the German Trench Avenue on the Western Front, showing the elaborate construction erected by the Germans.

understanding of the machine gun. In the autumn of 1914, the first wire Private Frank Richards saw emplaced before the British positions was a single strand of agricultural wire found in the vicinity. Only later did the manufactured article begin to arrive from England in sufficient quantity to create the thickets of mock-organic rusty brown that helped give a look of eternal autumn to the front.

The whole British line was numbered by sections, neatly, from right to left. A section, normally occupied by a company, was roughly 300 yards wide. One might be occupying front-line trench section 51; or support trench S 51, behind it; or reserve trench SS 51, behind both. But a less formal way of identifying sections of trench was by place or street names with a distinctly London flavor. Piccadilly was a favorite; popular also were Regent Street and Strand; junctions were Hyde Park Corner and Marble Arch. Directional and traffic control signs were everywhere in the trenches, giving the whole system the air of a parody modern city, although one literally “underground.”

**RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY**

**Respond**

1. In what way has this passage changed your understanding of life in the trenches? Explain.

**Recall and Interpret**

2. (a) According to Fussell, what did the British staff refer to as “Wastage”? (b) Why do you think they used this term?

3. (a) How did the British identify sections of the trench when speaking informally? (b) For what reason do you think they did this?

**Analyze and Evaluate**

4. (a) For what reason might Fussell describe the two instances of the “transmission of sound all the way from north to south”? (b) In your opinion, why are these anecdotes effective?

5. (a) How are the trenches like a “modern city”? (b) In your opinion, how successful is Fussell’s description of the trenches? Explain.

**Connect**

6. In what ways does Fussell’s description of trench life resemble the descriptions in the poetry of Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, and Siegfried Sassoon? Based on these similarities and your evaluation chart on page 1101, what conclusions can you draw about life in the trenches?

**OBJECTIVES**

- Read to enhance understanding of history and British culture.
- Evaluate the historical influences that shape elements of a literary work.