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RESOURCES
PACK**

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Teachit English resources for lesser used GCSE texts

A curated sample of our most popular resources:

<p>Anita and Me</p>	<p>Focus on friendship</p> <p>Group activities exploring Meena and Anita’s friendship.</p> <p>Group research tasks</p> <p>A selection of research tasks on the background to the ‘Swinging Sixties’ and aspects of Punjabi culture. Includes a useful table for students to create a Punjabi/English dictionary.</p> <p>Meena - between two worlds</p> <p>A series of short tasks which take students from character to context and encourage them to think about Meena’s different worlds.</p> <p>Problems, problems, problems</p> <p>Students start off by thinking about laws affecting young people, then look at the theft incident in the novel.</p>
<p>AQA Short Story Anthology: Telling Tales</p>	<p>‘Chemistry’ questions and key ideas</p> <p>A useful PowerPoint resource to focus on the key points of this short story by Graham Swift.</p> <p>Post-reading questions on ‘Chemistry’</p> <p>A series of thought-provoking questions on relationships, setting and character.</p> <p>‘Chemistry’ worksheet</p> <p>Plot events in the story on a timeline, answer the questions and explain what happened to Grandfather.</p> <p>Andrew Moore’s study guide for ‘The Darkness Out There’</p> <p>Substantial study pack covering many aspects of the story including themes, characters, writing technique, language, structure and ideas for written and drama work.</p>
<p>Never Let Me Go</p>	<p>Chapter One discussion questions</p> <p>A selection of questions for students to answer or discuss after they have read the opening chapter.</p> <p>Critical essay with prompt teaching ideas</p> <p>A teacher’s critical response to the text, based on the morality of the world of care. Suggested teaching activities are also included.</p>
<p>The History Boys</p>	<p>Four focal themes</p> <p>Quotation grids on key themes, followed by tasks and games.</p> <p>Connecting characters</p> <p>A set of quotation grids along with a series of suggested activities to encourage students to explore character.</p> <p>En français</p> <p>A worksheet of activities and helpful hints to explore the French scene in the play.</p>

Researching references

Prompts and guidelines for exploring the extensive literary and historical references in the play. Teaching suggestions included.

Education: what's it for?

Thoughtful statements about the theme of education for students to diamond-rank and discuss.

The tasks

1. Working in mixed groupings of four to five people spend about five minutes thinking about qualities which make a good friend. Then spend five minutes thinking about qualities which might make an undesirable friend (or at least one your parents wouldn't approve of!). You could list your thoughts in a table like the one below.

Qualities which a good friend should have.	Qualities which would make a friend undesirable!

2. Now spend a few minutes rank ordering the qualities in each column.
3. Pool ideas as a class in order to gain some kind of consensus. This should take no more than ten minutes.
4. Now add any ideas to your group's list that you may not have thought of during initial discussions.
5. Next, your group should select 10-12 important incidents involving Meena and Anita, and make a note of these.
6. Type the following magazine titles into a search engine and find a link that allows you to 'search inside' and browse the magazines.
 - *Jackie: Dear Cathy and Claire: The Best of your Favourite Problem Page*
 - *The Biggest Jackie Annual Ever*
 - *Look-in (The Best of the Seventies)*

Looking at these magazines will give you an idea of the contents/fashion/layout etc. of teenage magazines of the 1960s and 1970s. You should jot down some brief general notes.

Now look carefully at the *Look-in* magazine and focus on any comic strips or photo stories you find. (Bear in mind that you'll be creating your own 'in the style of' comic strip or photo story in a moment.) Make notes on the following aspects:

- titles
- use of speech bubbles
- use of thought bubbles
- ways of registering tone of voice with the use of punctuation marks and spiky speech bubbles
- the plotline ... and where it is placed
- facial expressions
- clothes and setting.

7. Return to your groups and work together on a comic strip or photo story based on the friendship between Meena and Anita, using the list prepared in Activity 5 and the input from Activity 6.
8. The finished work may form a permanent display in the classroom which serves as a reminder of the main points of the friendship and can be a useful revision tool in the run up to the exams.

Extension ideas:

- Work with a partner (but be prepared to do the bulk of the work separately). Together, choose one of the incidents you selected for your comic strip / photo story.
- One of you should narrate the incident from Meena's perspective while the other should narrate it from Anita's perspective.
- Complete a diary entry based on one of the chosen incidents. The quality of your entry will depend on your ability to reveal a character's inner thoughts, as opposed to his/her words or actions.
- Plan and write the essay: 'Analyse the friendship between Meena and Anita, and discuss how realistic you consider it to be.'

Teaching notes

Critical essays can be used in the classroom in a number of ways:

1. Read the critical essay and ask students the question: what new readings of the text has this essay shaped for you? Discuss.
2. Map the idea of **context** with students either on large sheets of paper or on a white board together as a group. Identify and understand what context is and how it is demonstrated in the novel. Share the critical essay with the class and discuss how the writer has embedded context throughout the essay.

Context can include: historical, social, settings within the novel, relationships between characters, gender and age, sequencing of events, incidents that take place, biographical detail of the writer, use of time, power relationships etc.

3. Students read the essay and select **three critical interpretations** demonstrated within it e.g. 'a world which depicts a flinching vision of the world we live in'. In groups, discuss these interpretations with close reference to the text to support your views.

The following is a critical response to the novel *Never Let Me Go*, designed to encourage students' further critical engagement with the text. NB Page numbers relate to the 2005 (Faber and Faber) edition of the text.

Exploring the morality of the world of caring in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

Ishiguro's 2005 dystopian novel *Never Let Me Go* was hailed by the *Scotsman* as 'a *Frankenstein* for our times.' This comparison with Shelley's nineteenth-century gothic tour de force points a finger at its central theme: the problem with caring for those who are orphaned by both 'family' and 'state'.

Hailsham

The world that the young Kathy H, Tommy and Ruth inhabit is one seemingly reminiscent of Enid Blyton's utopian *Malory Towers* or more recently J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. It's a world familiar to children's bedtime stories with replica uniforms, matrons and rolling green fields. However, the 'care' received at Hailsham depicts a flinching vision of the world we live in today where the 'care' industry is one based on mercantile worth, accountability and more frighteningly, passive acceptance of an unearthly outcome. Picking beneath the verdant veneer that Hailsham offers we see care on the cheap. Reminiscent of the polemic Channel 4 series *Benefits Street* this contemporary horror story shows us a world where youngsters are channelled into placing unhealthy value on junk shop possessions: the Judy Bridgewater tape, the pencil case - in an effort to attach themselves to something that matters in place of those that are absent. These clones are orphans; unable to locate their 'possibles' in a world which has allowed them to be 'born' with the sole purpose of 'caring' for the humans who may later require their harvested body parts to enable them to live longer, healthier lives.

Hailsham's version of a 'caring' education is seen through the stunted narrative of the older Kathy H who introduces us to her present role as 'carer' by repeating the word no fewer than nine times in the opening two pages of the novel. The word itself has recently taken on a distinct resonance: defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* as designating a 'family member or paid helper who regularly looks after a child or a sick, elderly, or disabled person.' Kathy's opening remarks locate the word within discourses of professionalism and competency. She recognises that she is good at her job and scornfully disdains those whom she sees as failing. Former Hailsham student Laura is seen in Part Three as '... looking vacantly towards the motorway ... slumped in her car' (p.205). The impact of hours of driving on bleak motorways with little time to spend with each 'donor' before being moved on to the next takes its toll. Ishiguro's depiction of the world of 'care' reflects headline stories today where the 'care' industry faces bed shortages for the elderly, NHS cuts and zero hours contracts.

Hailsham's 'care' centres on secrecy. Kathy H's fragmented narrative becomes in itself a vehicle for concealment. In this world we see a young Tommy who responds to the absence of proper nurturing with 'raving, flinging arms' on the football pitch. His display of human emotion is one that is watched by the other clones with Big-Brother-like omniscience. Hailsham is a world where bullying such as this becomes a source of entertainment, where students receive weekly, intrusive medicals, are lectured against the harmful effects of smoking yet bleakly encouraged to have sex knowing that there will be no danger of subsequent human pregnancies.

The care received at Hailsham sees students leaving doors open at all times, 'it was a sort of rule we couldn't close doors completely except for when we were sleeping,' reflecting the lack of privacy afforded to those held hostage on NHS trolleys in hospital corridors. An especially poignant moment of this subsequent lack of privacy is where we observe Kathy H 'swaying about

slowly in time to the [Judy Bridgewater] song' only to be creepily watched by the human Madame 'out in the corridor ... crying.' The pathos of this scene reminds us of the 'revulsion' the clones instil in the humans. The inability to transgress the boundaries and reach out to these young people is masked by their pretend concern for the Arts which in turn becomes another mask veiling the horrors which later await them in the form of 'donations'.

The Cottages and Beyond

This lack of 'care' becomes clearer as the clones age. At the Cottages their environment is not dissimilar to the settings found in the nineteenth-century novels which absorb their time. Rooms are unheated, placing a metaphorical (and often referred to) 'chill' over events. Sex takes place in 'freezing rooms ... usually under a ton of blankets. And the blankets often weren't even blankets, but a really odd assortment - old curtains, even bits of carpet. Sometimes it got so cold you just had to pile anything you could over you.' Budget pots of stew are cooked in the communal kitchen, porn magazines are shared and windows are 'grimy'. The Goosehouse is unlit and full to the brim with 'broken tables, old fridges ... and a two-seater sofa with the stuffing poking out of its black plastic.' Once again the familiar *Benefits Street* world emerges. Highly prized for the worth their harvested organs will eventually reap, we see the clones living in abject squalor, isolated from the real world where humans function in shiny open plan offices and visit art galleries in their leisure time. Ishiguro's clones exist in a twilight world dependent upon the state for their food and shelter. In this case the 'state' seemingly fails in its duty of care placing capitalist gain beyond any consideration for the clones' mental welfare.

At the ironically named Kingsfield recovery centre where Tommy later lives, donors huddle together in the concrete square of this former holiday camp. Rooms are 'stuffy or too draughty ... you can't get into [them] with a wheelchair.' The prize for Tommy after successfully completing three organ donations is that he is moved into his own room, yet this is hardly the en-suite luxury one might expect with having survived three major operations. Instead he is placed in a hideous upgrade 'I think it had been a bathroom back in the holiday camp days.' This image of 'care' is consistently synonymous with debris, rubbish and the throwaway consumerism that in fact reflects the clones' limited lives. It's no surprise that Kathy H's final words reflect a scene so bleak that it can only reflect the clones' destinies. She stares out into a barren, ploughed field watching 'all sorts of rubbish [that] had caught and tangled ... torn plastic sheeting and bits of old carrier bags.' Here the assumption is that through Kathy's confessional narrative we understand that the world of 'care' is precisely the opposite; rather it is a world that disconcertingly legitimises the 'donation' system, rendering those caught up in it as nothing more than the floating debris who will ultimately be 'let go'.

Teacher's notes

In the first grid are some of the literary and cultural references within the play. Cut these out and distribute for your students to research. There are enough for a class of 32, though if the class is smaller, you might like to ignore the last two rows.

It is not intended that this research be exhaustive. Students should write their notes after careful selection and synthesis of material. This is an important higher order research skill. To this end, the research sheets supplied have a limited place for notes.

The following prompts should be shared with students to transfer to their record sheets under 'Topic areas to find'. These should encourage careful selection of material.

There are teacher notes on the references at the end of the resource.

NB Page references relate to the Faber and Faber (2004) edition of the text.

Writers, singers, philosophers, pop groups

- Type of art/work produced
- Lifestyle: attitudes to others/living/literature
- Most famous for what type of art/attitude or achievement?
- Reputation/cultural impact

Film

- Genre
- Main events and theme(s)
- Why popular/famous
- Other

Historical events or periods

- Main events
- Why famous/well-known
- Contemporary and/or historical significance

<p>W.H. Auden (1907-1973) p.23, p.36, p.37, p.38</p>	<p>Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) p.54</p>	<p>Samuel Taylor Coleridge Who is the 'person from Porlock'? p.30</p>	<p>Frances Cornford (1886-1960) p.92</p>
<p>T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) p.45</p>	<p>Robert Graves (1895-1985) p.25</p>	<p>Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) p.54</p>	<p>A.E. Housman (1859-1936) p.5, p.44</p>
<p>Franz Kafka (1883-1924) p.30 (<i>The Trial</i>), p.87.</p>	<p>John Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) p.26</p>	<p>Philip Larkin (1922-1985) p.27, p.51</p>	<p>Haig - Passchendaele (WW1 1917) p.25</p>
<p>George Orwell (1903-1950) p.34, p.73</p>	<p>Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) p.24, p.26</p>	<p>Plato (429-347 BC) p.53</p>	<p>John Milton (1608-1674) 'Nothing is here for tears ...' p.66</p>
<p>Michelangelo (1475-1564) p.53</p>	<p>John Paul Sartre (1905-1980) p.86</p>	<p>Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) p.26</p>	<p>Gracie Fields (1898-1979) p.79, p.104</p>
<p>Stevie Smith (1902-1971) p.39 'Not Waving But Drowning'</p>	<p>Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) p.53</p>	<p>The Renaissance p.53</p>	<p>Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) p.71-72, p.84</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) p.96</p>	<p>Pet Shop Boys (pop group) p.104</p>	<p>Edith Piaf (1915-1963) p12</p>	<p>William Shakespeare (1564-1616) p.6, p.7, p.30</p>

Teacher's notes on references

Page	By whom	Quotation	Reference	Comment
5, 44	Hector	'All knowledge is precious ...'	A.E. Housman: <i>Poem XXXI</i>	A quotation to support his reasons for teaching as he does. His philosophy of teaching.
6	Hector	'Bread eaten in secret ...'	Bible: <i>Proverbs 9:17</i>	Hector's way of explaining the 'pact' he has made with his students. He romanticises his behaviour by religious references elsewhere (p95) and Mrs Lintott dismisses this.
6	Hector	'This day I call Heaven ... seed (children) may live ...'	Bible: <i>Deuteronomy 30:19</i>	His reaction to the boys saying they are aiming for Oxbridge. Hector refuses to acknowledge exams.
6	Hector	'Wash me in steep-down gulfs of ...'	Shakespeare: <i>Othello</i>	Expressing his disapproval of the boys trying for Oxbridge
6-7	Hector and boys	'He faints' to 'usurp's his life'	Shakespeare: <i>King Lear</i>	When Hector expresses his disapproval of the boys trying for Oxbridge, the boys take up the lines and enact them.
7	Scripps		Hymns Ancient and Modern: The Church of England prayer book	These hymns are particularly rich and Hector, whilst ignoring Scripps religious convictions, appreciates his access to art.
23	Lintott		J.D. Salinger: <i>Catcher in the Rye</i>	A 1960s novel that many teachers chose to put on the syllabus in spite of being dated because they liked it when at school. Lintott suggests that teaching their own culture is often the real motive for teachers.
23	Hector	'I hate the ... child can bear'	Auden: <i>Letter to Lord Byron</i>	Hector suggests children should be neurotic, Mrs Lintott dismisses this by reminding him Auden didn't have children.
24, 26	Dakin, Irwin		Wilfred Owen: 'Dulce Et Decorum Est ...'	Another example of the morally bankrupt nature of 'spin' when Irwin suggests Owen enjoyed the war (WW1).

Page	By whom	Quotation	Reference	Comment
25	Irwin		<i>The Last Post</i> : The bugle tune played at a soldier's funeral. Also a Robert Graves poem.	Irwin mentions several memorials to fallen soldiers in his discussion with the boys on how to present history to the examiners at Oxbridge. His view reduces the suffering to 'spin', or an 'angle'.
25	Dakin		Douglas Haig / Passchendaele	History is still discussing his place in it. Won a victory at Passchendaele, but loss of life means questioned as a 'victory'.
26	Irwin	'If any question we die ...'	Kipling: 'My Boy Jack'	Following the death of his son in WW1, Kipling wrote this. Irwin quotes it as part of his 'spin' students could take on WW1.
26	Irwin		Siegfried Sassoon	Like Owen, Irwin implies that this anti-war WW1 poet actually enjoyed war, in spite of his nervous breakdown during it.
30	Scripps	'Behold, I stand at the door and knock ...'	Bible: <i>Revelations 30:20</i>	There is a knock at Hector's locked door and he asks the boys for quotes from literature about knocking at doors.
30	Akthar	'... the person from Porlock ...'	Coleridge : 'Kubla Khan'	Coleridge was said not to have finished the poem 'Kubla Khan' because a person from Porlock knocked at the door.
27	The boys	'Those long uneven lines ...'	Larkin: 'MCMXIV'	The boys recite this poem between them to Irwin, asking him whether, as art, it isn't the truth of history. He is just baffled.
30	Hector		Kafka: <i>The Trial</i>	A reference regarding knocking at doors.
30	Hector	'O villainy! Let the door ...'	Shakespeare: <i>Hamlet</i>	A literary quotation about locked doors. Hamlet says this after his mother has been poisoned.
32	Hector	'The untold want by life ...'	Whitman: <i>Leaves of Grass</i>	Quoted because the boys have just enacted a scene from the film: <i>Now Voyager</i> .

Page	By whom	Quotation	Reference	Comment
34	Irwin		George Orwell	Irwin suggests Orwell could have written <i>Carry On</i> film scripts or been a fascist - thus showing up the sham of his 'angle' on history.
36	Akthar	'We are ... nation shoplifters'	Napoleon Bonaparte	Deliberate misquote of Bonaparte's comment that 'England is a nation of shopkeepers' for humour.
37	Lockwood	'The heart has its reasons ...'	Blaise Pascal: 'Pensées'	Said when the boys were challenging Irwin's methods and view of WW1.
37	Akthar	'[Art is] Breaking bread with the dead.'	Auden: The New York Times 1971	Explaining to Irwin what they do in Hector's room (i.e. read poetry).
38	Dakin	'Lay your sleeping head my love ...'	Auden: 'Lullaby'	Dakin is trying to make Irwin uncomfortable as Auden wrote this to a student of his.
39	Lockwood	'England you have been ...'	Stevie Smith: 'Not Waving But Drowning'	Irwin suggests that a quotation from this poet would end a history essay well, but the boys are unconvinced art should be 'spin'.
45	Scripps	'A painter of the Umbrian School ...'	T.S. Eliot: 'Mr Eliot's Sunday Morning Service'	A poem about a painting, which Scripps asks Dakin to test him on. Cynical Dakin suggest using it as an 'angle' for the Oxbridge interview.
47	Dakin		Nietzsche	Dakin has been discussing Nietzsche's ideas on art with Irwin, hoping to impress him. He is mortified to find he has mispronounced the name.
51	Hector	'After such knowledge ...'	Larkin: 'Gerontion'	Said when summoned to the Headmaster's office; presumably guessing what it might be about.
53	Head		Plato	Typical of the Headmaster to dismiss him as a homosexual when he is criticising Hector's teaching. Mrs Lintott: '... in this benighted profession ... the chief enemy of culture in this benighted profession is always the Headmaster,' (p.50) presumably because of league tables (p.55).
53	Head		Oscar Wilde	See the comment to Plato (above).

Page	By whom	Quotation	Reference	Comment
54	Posner	'There is some corner in a foreign ...'	Rupert Brooke: 'The Soldier'	A quote that is a comparison Posner makes to Hector between a Hardy poem from an earlier war and this WW1 patriotic poem.
54	Posner		Thomas Hardy: 'Drummer Hodge'	Posner recites this to Hector. Hector and Posner are approximately the same ages as Hardy and Drummer Hodge.
57	Hector	'The words of ... we this way.'	Shakespeare: <i>Love's Labour Lost</i>	Hector says this as his only explanation as to why he is refusing to give Dakin a lift. Mercury's words refer to the Headmasters' to him.
63	Timms	'About suffering ... opening a window ...'	Auden: 'Musée des Beaux Arts'	Refers to Breugel painting about Icarus where Icarus is tiny compared to the crowd watching. Comment on nature of suffering.
64	Dakin		Shakespeare: <i>King Lear</i>	When King Lear challenges his daughter to prove her love, she stays silent. This silence drives him to foolish action which brings about his own fall. Dakin is suggesting Hector need not question their loyalty.
66	Hector	'Here I am an old man in a ...'	T.S. Eliot: 'Gerontion'	Hector weeps in front of the boys and touchingly explains himself with this quotation.
66	Hector	'Nothing is here for tears ...'	Milton: 'Samson Agonistes'	Quoted after he cried in front of the boys.
71	Dakin	'Whereof one cannot speak ...'	Wittgenstein: <i>Tractatus</i>	Dakin quotes it as a response to Hector saying silence is better than analysing war's horror. He is accused of being glib, but explains he no longer believes it - he is moving to Irwin's utilitarian way of seeing things.
74	Rudge	'Tout comprendre est ...'	Anne-Louise Germaine Necker, aka Madame de Staël (1766-1817) - French author and political philosopher	To understand all is to forgive all. It sums up what Rudge and Irwin believe Posner means about contextualising war's horror - but Posner means that the quotation's meaning is not true.

Page	By whom	Quotation	Reference	Comment
77	Scripps		Proust	Scripps jokes that he hopes any emotional scarring from Hector will turn him into Proust (i.e. a great writer: Proust happened also to be homosexual).
86	Rudge		Sartre	Rudge creatively lied in his interview practice about Sartre - a serious philosopher - playing golf; misunderstanding 'spin, but showing it up for the hollow lies it is'.
87	Crowther		Kafka: <i>The Trial</i>	After Rudge's claim Sartre played golf: Crowther ridiculed it by joking the depressive writer Kafka played tennis.
84	Lockwood	'The world is everything ...'	Wittgenstein: <i>Tractatus</i>	Quotes at Mrs Lintott during practice Oxbridge interviews. She pops his pomposity with a question about the writer's sexuality.
92	Hector	'A young Apollo, golden-haired ...'	Frances Cornford: <i>On Rupert Brooke</i>	It is an apt description of the boys during the school photograph. It is also rather cynical - a comment upon potential future lives.
94	Hector	'The open road, the dusty highway ...'	Kenneth Grahame: <i>Wind in the Willows</i>	A children's book in which an erratic and rash Mr Toad, follows the open road for excitement. Hector's use of the quotation is rather sad under the circumstances.
96	Dakin		Virginia Woolf	Ironic. She wrote 'A Room of One's Own' for women and now juxtaposes it with a popular novel in room for male students.
108	Hector	'Finish good lady ...'	Shakespeare: <i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>	He is encouraging Mrs Lintott to finish what she is saying.

'The Darkness Out There'

What happens in 'The Darkness Out There'?

'The Darkness Out There' is a short story from Penelope Lively's collection *Pack of Cards*, published in 1984. If you have not yet read the story, then do so before you read this summary! It is the sort of story to which you can return several times. On a first reading the power of the story may make you miss some details.

The plot can be reduced to a few sentences:

- Two young people go to help an old lady with her housework.
- She tells them a story about something she did in the war.
- The young people are shocked by her story and leave.

This is a slightly more detailed account:

Sandra and Kerry (a boy) are in a club, at school, run by Miss Hammond. The club members help people in the community. One Saturday, Sandra and Kerry go to the house of an old lady, Mrs Rutter. When they have done the errands, they ask her about a local wood, which is meant to be haunted. Mrs Rutter knows the true story behind the popular version.

During the Second World War a German aeroplane was shot down and crashed in the wood. Mrs Rutter and her sister were the first people on the scene. They saw that one of the crew was still alive, but trapped in the aircraft. They left him and returned the next night, knowing that he was dying in agony. Mrs Rutter is not ashamed of what she did, and explains it in terms of strict revenge, for the death of her husband, who was killed in Belgium at the start of the war.

Sandra is shocked but it is Kerry who takes the initiative. As directly as he can he insists that he must leave. As soon as he is out of the house, he speaks of his horror at Mrs Rutter and his sympathy for the German.

The themes of this story

This is a story in which ideas are very important, probably more so than characters. The most obvious theme is the contrast between appearance and reality, how things seem and how things are. This general contrast is found in many more specific contrasts.

Darkness and light

This is important enough to the author for her to refer to it in the title of the story. And it is both literal darkness and light (the sunshine in which Sandra walks, the darkness of the wood) and a metaphorical contrast between evil and good.

First impressions

Sandra does not think well of Kerry at first, but she comes to see that he is a strong character. Mrs Rutter appears at first as a stereotype of a sweet little old lady, but is revealed as a cold-blooded, selfish and vengeful woman.

Good neighbours

Sandra and Kerry (and Miss Hammond) try to be good neighbours. They contrast clearly with Mrs Rutter who sees the world as divided into friend and foe. This can be amplified into a contrast of values; Kerry sees at once what Mrs Rutter should have done. She does not even understand his moral sense. She thinks more about the inconvenience of the rain, than a dying man's mortal agony.

Past, present and future

The story contrasts time, but in two directions - from the starting point of the present day, Sandra imagines the future, in idealised terms, while Mrs Rutter recalls the past in its horrific reality.

Youth and age

You might think that the story suggests that young people are better than the old. This is a possible reading. An alternative view would be that it challenges the popular ideas of the young as selfish and irresponsible. It shows that morality depends not on your age, but the sort of person you are. Remember that Mrs Rutter was not an old woman when she left the German to die in pain.

The characters in the story

Sandra

Sandra is the first character we meet. Although this is a short story, we see how Sandra changes in the course of an afternoon. Outwardly she is unremarkable - she expects to be a secretary - but we note little details in the course of the story: Mrs Rutter says that she is pretty, while someone else once remarked on her attractive feet; she makes her own clothes and dreams of having her own sewing machine; she judges Kerry at first by his appearance; she is superstitious about the wood.

When Kerry asks Mrs Rutter about the war, Sandra does not want to listen - she tells him to 'Shut up'. Why is this? Is she frightened? Is she superstitious? Is there some other reason?

Perhaps Sandra is more important as someone who observes and learns from things. She moves from a childish fear of rumours and tall stories to a realistic horror at the real darkness or evil in the world. 'You could get people all wrong ...' Does this refer to Mrs Rutter, to Kerry, to both of them, or to all sorts of people, including these two? And is it right?

Kerry

Sandra does not really know Kerry, but she shares her friends' opinion of him - 'Kerry Stevens that none of her lot reckoned much on'. But at the end of the story she changes her mind. Why is this? Kerry seems a bit of a stereotype - he works part-time in a garage, and will have a full-time job there when he leaves school. He identifies Sandra's dad by the make and colour of his car.

But there are clues that suggest Kerry is not as Sandra sees him - for example, he is ready to spend his free time helping old people, and he asks Mrs Rutter what she wants them to do, then gets on with it steadily.

At the end of the story it is Kerry who takes the initiative, and passes judgement on Mrs Rutter. 'In Sandra's eyes he had grown; he had got older and larger ...'

Mrs Rutter

Mrs Rutter is the opposite of Kerry in a way. Pat calls her a 'dear old thing'. She looks like the stereotype of a sweet old lady, calling Sandra 'dear' and asking her if she is 'courting'. She seems very interested in marriage and people having children. It may be that her own childlessness is something for which she blames the Germans, but she says she was a widow at thirty-nine, so it seems likely that she would not have had children anyway. She claims, 'I've got a sympathy with young people'. Perhaps she quite likes young people but she does not really have sympathy with them, as she is bitter and vengeful. Gradually her real character is revealed.

Pat (Miss Hammond)

Pat does not appear directly in the story, but we learn some things about her. She is unmarried and not very attractive in appearance. She is evidently a very thoughtful woman, who takes trouble for others and encourages young people to do the same. Sandra calls her Pat, which seems friendly but perhaps rather informal. Mrs Rutter calls her 'Miss Hammond' - is this out of politeness, or to emphasise Pat's unmarried status?

The setting - time and place

In this story, both time and place are very important. The location is presented in ambiguous terms (we are not sure how to see it). In some ways it is a picture postcard view of the country - we first see Sandra walking through flowers. There are lists of plants and birds. But in the middle of the scene is the dark wood, with its rumours of ghostly voices and sexual assaults. At the end of the story, the place has not changed, but now Sandra sees it as it really is. She has learned the true nature of evil, instead of the myths.

The story is set in the present day more or less (it was published in 1984 in a collection called *Pack of Cards*). A few details make it seem a little dated but the present is a point from which people look forwards or backwards. Sandra looks forward in a vague fantasy ('One day, this year, next year, sometime ...') but she lacks a vivid imagination. The dream has one precise detail - a Singer (sewing machine) which 'does zig-zag stitch'. Kerry looks forward practically to when he leaves school and works at the garage. But Mrs Rutter looks back. She recalls her husband as 'a lovely man', but his death seems to have brought her own life to an end. She has not remarried, and has no children. It is as if the only thing she lives for are memories - of her brief marriage, and long widowhood. She relishes the recollection of leaving the airman to suffer.



Penelope Lively's technique

Viewpoint

The story is told from Sandra's viewpoint but it is written in the third person. This means the narrative uses personal pronouns and possessive forms like 'he, she, him, her, his, her' (In case you are puzzled by these numbers, the first person is 'I' and the second person 'you'.)

We do, however, see other viewpoints as people speak, notably those of Mrs Rutter and of Kerry so it is possible for the reader to compare them.

As you read the story do you see things from one viewpoint or does your viewpoint change?

Does the author manage to show convincingly the viewpoint of characters younger than her?

Dialogue

The story relies a lot on dialogue. In places it is almost like a play, in fact the story would be easy to dramatise for TV or radio. At first the dialogue comes in short passages surrounded by narrative. But as Mrs Rutter tells her story, then the conversation dominates.

Notice how Kerry is interested in the type of aeroplane, asking if was a Messerschmitt (it could be a Messerschmitt Me 110, two-seater fighter-bomber, but equally could be any one of many other twin seat aeroplane types). Mrs Rutter does not know this, but she does know the human story, from experience.

Sometimes, a little detail in conversation tells you a lot. What is the effect of the extract below?

'There weren't any flames; it was just stuck there in the ground, end up, with mess everywhere. Drop more milk, dear, if you don't mind.'

Mrs Rutter mentions the rain 'bucketing down' and her bike's puncture, to explain her reluctance to let the authorities know about the German plane. What is the effect of this on the reader?

At the start of the story Kerry controls his language - Sandra shouts 'Christ!' when he jumps out at her. But after he leaves Nether Cottage, he swears freely: 'old bitch ... poor sod ... two bloody nights ... Christ!' Why does he do this?

Language

Pronouns and names

Sandra is the central character in the story. The reader learns her name from Pat's speech about Mrs Rutter in the opening paragraph. How many more times does it appear in the text? Check: are you surprised by what you find? Sandra is identified mostly by the pronouns 'she' and 'her', or by the noun-phrase 'the girl'. Mrs Rutter is sometimes named and sometimes 'the woman'. Kerry is occasionally 'the boy', but he seems to keep his name more than the other two. Can you think of why Penelope Lively has done this? Is it deliberate or accidental? Did you notice it before you checked? What is its effect on you?

Standard and non-standard forms

Sometimes English teachers insist on ‘proper’ or standard forms in students’ writing. Does Penelope Lively use standard forms throughout this story, or can you find things of which some readers might disapprove?

What is the effect of words or phrases like these: ‘polleny summer grass’, ‘watching telly’, ‘it’s if you’re nervy you get bothered’?

The author suggests that there are different varieties of spoken English, as Sandra thinks of how Pat describes old people:

‘Ever so grateful the old poppets was what Pat said, not that you’d put it quite like that yourself.’

Penelope Lively also uses non-standard grammar, writing single words or phrases, without a verb as sentences (what are sometimes called minor sentences):

- ‘Packer’s End.’
- ‘Two enormous blokes, sort of gypsy types.’
- ‘One day.’
- ‘Not Susie. Not Liz either.’

In other places, by contrast, the author uses a very formal and controlled literary style:

‘When she returned, the old woman was back in the armchair, a composite chintzy mass from which cushions oozed and her voice flowed softly on.’

The effect is to suggest that some parts of the narrative are in Sandra’s own voice - as if the non-standard phrases are her thoughts. The more formal and controlled prose gives a more detached viewpoint.

Simile and metaphor

The story is full of word pictures. Some of these are similes (which make a direct or explicit comparison):

- ‘a speck like a pin-head’
- ‘her eyes investigated, quick as mice’
- ‘like lines from a song.’

Explain the effect of these similes, and any others you can find.

More often, though, Lively uses metaphors (where the comparison is indirect or implied):

- ‘a creamy smiling pool of a face’
- ‘a no-man’s-land of willow herb’
- ‘his chin was explosive with acne’
- ‘a man with a tooth-brush moustache, his army cap slicing his forehead.’

Repetition

In your own writing you are often told to avoid repetition. Does Penelope Lively do this? Among repeated words are ‘spinney’, ‘sun’ and ‘nervy’. Sometimes there are similar but not identical forms like ‘sun’, ‘sunshine’, and ‘Most important of all is’. By repeating these key words, the author perhaps makes them more powerful and complex, in readiness for the final paragraphs.

Symbolism

The title of the story is obviously symbolic, but of what? At first the darkness seems a simple metaphor for the unknown evil in Packer's End but at the end of the story, the evil is now known. The darkness is not evil outside in the wood. It is 'out there' in the world of human experience, 'in your head for ever like lines from a song ... it was a part of you and you would never be without it, ever'.

Structure

A good story has a beginning, middle and an end, supposedly. Does this story follow the classic pattern? Look at this plan:

- Beginning: we find out why Sandra and Kerry are visiting Nether Cottage
- Middle 1: Sandra talks to Mrs Rutter while Kerry works outside
- Middle 2: Mrs Rutter tells her story
- Middle 3: Kerry passes judgement on Mrs Rutter
- End: Sandra sees the truth about darkness or evil in the world.

Is this a good model of the structure of the story, or would you show it in some other way? Make your own diagram to show the structure of the story.

Stereotyping

This story appears on the surface to be full of stereotypes. Here are some possible examples:

- Mrs Carpenter lacks a social conscience has platinum highlights and suede boots.
- Kerry knows about aeroplane makes and likes working with cars.
- Sandra dreams of a future where she falls in love, goes to places (she doesn't know the names) from travel brochures, gets a new sewing machine and works as a secretary.
- Some of the old people 'were really nice'.
- Pat talks about 'old folks'. She says, 'Adopt a granny' and draws an old woman with 'specs on the end of her nose and a shawl'.
- A girl is assaulted by 'two enormous blokes, sort of gypsy types'.

How far does the story challenge or undermine these stereotypes, in your view? How many of these views are directly contradicted (shown to be false) by the end of the story?

