

H.O. Sheldagayeva (Petrenko)

**A Booklet of Tests
in English and American
Literature**

*To everyone who taught me English -
with a deep reverence
I dedicate...*

**Kherson
2014**

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англійської та американської літератури для 10 та 11 класів шкіл з
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Рецензенти:

Ткаченко Л.Л., завідувач кафедри романо-германських мов ХДУ,
кандидат філологічних наук, доцент.

Турбова Л.М., старший викладач, учитель-методист вищої
категорії, завідувач кафедри англійської та німецької філології
АЛХДУ.

Радецька І.В., заступник директора з навчально-виховної роботи
Херсонської гімназії № 6 Херсонської міської ради, учитель-
методист.

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Preface

It is evident that factual knowledge assessment is vital in terms of making information structured, otherwise the facts are soon forgotten. This Booklet of Tests in English and American Literature is aimed at senior pupils' knowledge evaluation within the frame of English and American literature studies. We believe, it can also be used as a guide to self-assessment, our another purpose being in highlighting the most important information given in the articles of the traditionally used text-books on English and American literature by T.D.Volosova, M.J.Hecker and others (*Волосова Т.Д., Геккер М.Ю.и др. Английская литература, часть I и II. – М.: Просвещение,1974; Геккер М.Ю. и др. Американская литература. - М.: Просвещение, 1978*). However, the tests could help those learners who use other text-books as well, our reference points being not the text-book articles proper, but the authors' biographies and their heritage.

To make teachers' judgement convenient every test is divided into four levels, the fourth (the highest) being aimed at stimulating creativity. Every test (except the revision tests) is given in two equivalent variants; one of the tests is recommended in a boys' and a girls' variants for explainable reasons. To encourage creativeness we suggest that sometimes pupils should start with the fourth task to spend more time doing it during the test lesson.

The tasks collected in this Booklet met the requirements of teaching practice more than once during almost a decade being subjected to corrections and additions which, we believe, made them more helpful. However, we do not offer tests here to check knowledge on those curriculum materials where factual information is less important than understanding a literary creation. Experience prompts that a composition would be a more appropriate form to obtain feedback in such a case. A *Literature Spot* lesson plan (*Longman Literature Spot Competition prize-winner 2003*) illustrating how pupils should be prepared for writing such compositions is given in the Bonus Materials of this Booklet. The Bonus Materials added here also include the notion of annotation and suggest the way it should be explained to senior pupils.

To meet the requirements of the *communicative approach* we tried to make the tasks feasible and creative, stimulating logical thinking and developing writing skills. The author of this booklet is thankful to I.M.Turovets who kindly contributed Test №2 and Test №3 in English Literature, and to O.S.Synychkina who worked out Test №2 in American Literature, grateful acknowledgements expressed here to everyone who helped publish this brochure.

Sincerely,
H.O. Sheldagayeva (Petrenko)

Tests in English Literature

Test № 1

The Middle Ages in English Literature

Variant 1

I. Agree or disagree:

1. The Celts were governed by a class of peasants called the Druids.
2. Some curious customs of the Druids are still kept in the Britain of today.
3. The Romans came to Britain in the search of valuable metals.
4. The Celts were more advanced than the Romans.
5. The names of the cities like Manchester, Worcester have a Celtic ending.
6. The Romans and the Britons became one nation.

II. Finish the sentences (try to be brief and precise):

1. Runes were...
2. A liegeland was...
3. Liegemen served...
4. Earls were given...
5. The word "Catholic" means...
6. Caedmon and Cynewulf were...

III. Put the events from the story about Beowulf in the right order:

- a) Grendel rushed in, seized thirty men and devoured them.
- b) There lived Hrothgar who gained great wealth.
- c) The news of the disaster reached Beowulf.
- d) Beowulf managed to tear off Grendel's arm.
- e) People could not tear their eyes off Hrothgar's palace.
- f) Beowulf was badly wounded by the dragon.
- g) Beowulf overcame Grendel's mother with the help of the magic sword.
- h) The water-witch came to avenge her son's death.
- i) Beowulf became king of the Jutes.

IV. Tell about the language of the poem about Beowulf. Put down a few lines from the poem, analyze the lines in terms of alliteration. Give the definitions of *metaphor and alliteration*.

Test № 1

The Middle Ages in English Literature

Variant 2

I. Agree or disagree:

1. The Romans left Britain because they were needed in their own country.
2. Tu, Woden, Thor and Freia were Anglo-Saxon gods.
3. Freia was the goddess of war.
4. Angles, Saxons and Jutes fought with one another for supreme power.
5. The first king to rule over all Angles, Saxons and Jutes was Alfred.
6. Christianity first penetrated into the British Isles from Rome.

II. Finish the sentences (try to be brief and precise):

1. Venerable Bede wrote about...
2. "Death of Arthur" symbolizes...
3. The fabliaux tell...
4. The "romances" show...
5. Minstrelsy is the art of...
6. The worship of fair ladies motivated the plots of...

III. Put the events from the story about Beowulf in the right order:

- a) For twelve years Hrothgar's palace stood deserted.
- b) Hrothgar decided to build a palace for feasts.
- c) Beowulf set sail for the country of the Danes.
- d) The Queen honoured Beowulf with a necklace for overcoming Grendel.
- e) The "grim and greedy" Grendel wanted to destroy Heorot.
- f) Beowulf ordered Wiglaf to take the treasure and give it to the Jutes.
- g) Heorot was freed forever.
- h) Beowulf plunged into the waters full of hissing serpents in search of Grendel's mother.
- i) A fire-breathing dragon started to destroy villages.

IV. Tell about Geoffrey Chaucer's contribution to literature. Give the definitions of *the fable* and *the fabliau*.

Test № 2

The Renaissance in England

Variant 1

I. Make the sentences complete:

1. The new outlook was called...
2. Instead of the blind faith ordered by the Catholic religion, great importance was assigned to....., to....., to.....
3. After the crowning of Henry VIII Sir Thomas More came into great favour and made a rapid career as a...
4. The word "Utopia" is formed of Greek words meaning...
5. The main characters of the Morality were...
6. "University Wits" was the group of...

II. Write down the notions:

1. Drama is....
2. The Pageants are....

III. Answer the questions (4-5 sentences):

Who was Earl of Surrey? What was his literary work? What were his innovations in literature?

IV. Answer the question in detail:

How many periods is Shakespeare's creative work divided into? Characterize each of them and name the chief plays written during each period (Shakespeare's gradual move from the optimistic tragedy to the pessimistic mystery).

Test № 2

The Renaissance in England

Variant 2

I. Make the sentences complete:

1. Sr. Thomas More wrote works of a, and character.
2. Thomas More was the first writer in Europe to formulateprinciples as a basis for society.
3. In 14th-15th century became the main class.
4. This period of time was called “the Revival of Learning” or
5. The Mystery plays dramatized episodes from.....
6. Comic scenes which were usually acted between the episodes of the main plays were called.....

II. Write down the notions:

1. The sonnet is....
2. The Miracle is....

III. Answer the question (4-5 sentences):

Who was Ben Jonson and what was his influence on the development of English literature?

IV. Answer the question in detail:

What was Shakespeare’s contribution to the genre of tragedy? During what period did Shakespeare write his tragedies? What his tragedies do you know? (You may also choose to speak about Shakespeare’s comedies or histories).

Test № 3

The Enlightenment in England

Variant 1

I. Agree or disagree:

1. King Charles I was supported by the old nobility and by the church.
2. During the Revolution prose became very popular.
3. The French Bourgeois Revolution was over long before the Enlightenment spread in France.
4. Alexander Selkirk (a Scottish sailor) lived alone for six years on a desert island.
5. In 1713 J.Swift was made a vicar at a little parish church.

II. Finish the sentences:

1. The coffee-houses were...
2. "Tories" was...

III. Answer the question:

What are the features of English literature of the Enlightenment?

IV. Touch upon the points:

What do you know about Daniel Defoe's life and creative work?

What is the message of his novel "Robinson Crusoe"?

Test № 3

The Enlightenment in England

Variant 2

I. Agree or disagree:

1. Charles II ascended the throne in 1666.
2. During the Revolution the writers wrote on social and political problems in poetry.
3. The French Enlightenment was more progressive than the English.
4. Robinson Crusoe lived twenty-four years on the desert island.
5. The novel "Gulliver's Travels" is divided into 4 parts, four voyages.

II. Finish the sentences:

1. "Whigs" was...
2. The Houyhnhnms are...

III. Answer the question:

What are the features of John Milton's creative work?

IV. Touch upon the points:

*What do you know about Jonathan Swift's life and creative work?
What's the message of his novel "Gulliver's Travels"?*

Test № 4

Romanticism in English Literature

Variant 1

- I.** 1. Why did the philosophy of Romanticism appear?
2. What do the Romanticists speak about? (Their themes)
- II.** 3. Why was poetry the leading genre of Romanticism? What part does nature play in Romantic poetry?
4. What is “Byronism”?
- III.** 5. Why was P.-B. Shelley ostracized?
6. What is the message of “The Cenci” by P.-B. Shelley? Was there any other way out for the victims of the tyrant?
- IV.** The Russian acmeist of XX century A. Akhmatova once confessed:

“Writing poetry is a catastrophe, and it is the only way poems are written.”

Do you think it is true about G.G. Byron’s and P.-B. Shelley’s poems you have learnt?

What might happen in a man’s soul to make him write the lines of “Mutability” or “My Soul is Dark”?

Who is more pessimistic: Byron or Shelley?

What way out of the difficult situation does Byron see in his poem?

Test № 4

Romanticism in English Literature

Variant 2

- I.** 1. What was the main conflict of Romanticism and how did the writers solve it?
2. What is the central problem of Romanticism and where might it lead?
- II.** 3. What are the three main schools of Romanticism?
4. What hero type is called “byronic”?
- III.** 5. How did Byron’s relationship with his mother influence his character?
6. According to W. Scott, what is the essential characteristic of a historical novel? Do you think his model was original?
- IV.** The Russian acmeist of XX century A. Akhmatova once confessed:

“Writing poetry is a catastrophe, and it is the only way poems are written.”

Do you think it is true about G.G. Byron’s and P.-B. Shelley’s poems you have learnt?

What might happen in a man’s soul to make him write the lines of “Mutability” or “My Soul is Dark”?

Who is more pessimistic: Byron or Shelley?

What way out of the difficult situation does Byron see in his poem?

Test № 5

English Literature From its Dawn till the Beginning of the XIX Century

(Revision Test)

I. Match the stage of literary development with its main idea. Put the literary periods in the right order:

- A. The Enlightenment,
The Renaissance,
English Literature during the Bourgeois Revolution
Romanticism,
The Middle Ages.
- B. 1. Man is an ambivalent being, everything is in disharmony, the good and the evil are inseparable.
2. Hate of prejudice and life by common sense, a sound-thinking and rational age.
3. Man is an evil being and his life on earth is sinful.
4. Great importance assigned to intellect, the new outlook being called Humanism.
5. An irresistible desire to escape from reality, to get away from the present.

II. Match the author's names with the literary period (see task I):

Anglo-Saxon folks,	Sir Thomas More,	Geoffrey Chaucer,
John Milton,	Sir Thomas Malory,	Caedmon,
George Gordon Byron,	William Langland,	The Venerable
Daniel Defoe,	Cynewulf,	Bede
William Shakespeare,	Jonathan Swift,	
Christopher Marlowe,	Ben Jonson,	
Philip Sidney,	Edmund Spenser,	

III. Match the literary creations with the author's names (see task II):

"Paraphrase",	"Paradise Lost",	"Elene" and
"The History of the English Church",	"Childe-Harold's Pilgrimage",	"Juliana",
"Beowulf",	"Gulliver's Travels",	"Henry V",
"Utopia",	"As You Like It",	"Robinson Crusoe",
"The Canterbury Tales",	"King Lear",	"The Battle of the Books".
"The Visions of William Concerning Piers the Ploughman",	"Don Juan",	
"Tamburlaine the Great",	"The Tempest",	
	"Twelfth Night",	
	"Death of Arthur",	

IV. Prove that the motifs depicted in Jonathan Swift's work are typical of the Enlightenment; start your answer with the aim of the Enlightenment.

Test № 6

The Chartist Literature

The Girls' Variant

III-IV. Write a mini-composition considering the following:

a) Not a single person can live his/her life without being cheated at least once. In his pessimistic youth Thackeray divided society into “rogues” and “dupes”. Do you agree with Thackeray? Why? Give your reasons.

b) There exist two basic types of men: those like George Osborn and William Dobbin. If you had a choice of two people like these two to be your boy-friend or husband, who would you choose and why?

II. Match the characters from “A Christmas Carol” by Dickens with their actions, then order the actions:

1) Scrooge; 2) Scrooge's nephew; 3) Jacob Marley.

- a) invited Scrooge for Christmas dinner;
- b) enjoyed Christmas Day and became generous;
- c) told Scrooge about the three Ghosts.

I. Choose the correct answer:

1. The idea of limiting birth rate to reduce poverty belongs to:
a) Jeremy Bentham; b) Robert Malthus.
2. The workers' political demands were expressed in:
a) the People's Charter; b) “Capital”.
3. Thackeray's married life was:
a) happy; b) unhappy. Answer: why?
4. The title of Thackeray's “Vanity Fair”:
a) was invented by Thackeray; b) was taken from an earlier book.

Test № 6

The Chartist Literature

The Boys' Variant

III-IV. Write a mini-composition considering the following:

a) Not a single person can live his or her life without being cheated at least once. In his pessimistic youth Thackeray divided society into “rogues” and “dupes”. Do you agree with Thackeray? Why? Give your reasons.

b) There exist two types of women: those like Amelia Sedley and Rebecca Sharp. If you had a choice of two people like these two to be your girl-friend or wife, who would you choose and why?

II. Match the characters from “A Christmas Carol” by Dickens with their actions, then order the actions:

1) Bob Cratchit; 2) The Ghost of Christmas Future; 3) The Ghost of Christmas Present.

- a) arrives late on the Day after Christmas;
- b) showed Scrooge the Cratchit family Christmas;
- c) showed Scrooge what was going to happen to him.

I. Choose the correct answer:

- 1) The leading genre of the Chartist Literature was:
 - a) poetry; b) prose.
- 2) Dickens let his children heroes remain unspotted because:
 - a) he believed it was possible; b) he tried to defend children's innocence.
- 3) Thackeray's “snobs” could be found:
 - a) only among the rich; b) among the poor; c) everywhere in society.
- 4) As a writer he started with biting satire and became more tolerant towards the end of his life:
 - a) Dickens; b) Thackeray.

Final Revision Test № 7

The Stages of English Literature Development English Literature of the XIX and XX Centuries

I. A. Put the literary periods in the right order:

Victorian Literature,
The Enlightenment,
Decadence,
The Renaissance,
Modernism,

Romanticism,
The Middle Ages,
English Literature during the
Bourgeois Revolution.

B. Match the following ideas with the three latest stages of literary development from "A":

- literature is the supreme knowledge of man determined to solve man's social problems through investigating his inner world;
- escape into the world of art from the ugly reality; "art for art's sake";
- realistic and objective depiction of typical characters under typical circumstances.

II. Match the authors' names from list "A" with their creations from list "B":

A.

- Charles Dickens;
- William Makepeace Thackeray;
- Oscar Wilde;
- Rudyard Kipling;
- George Bernard Shaw;

- Herbert George Wells;
- John Galsworthy;
- James Joyce;
- William Somerset Maugham.

B.

- "A Friend in Need";
- "The Forsyte Saga";
- "Vanity Fair";
- "David Copperfield";
- "The House of Pomegranates";
- "If";
- "Heartbreak House";
- "The Time Machine";
- "The Book of Snobs";
- "Ulysses";
- "The War of the Worlds";
- "The Picture of Dorian Gray";
- "Oliver Twist";
- "The Nightingale and the Rose";
- The Dubliners";
- "The Moon and Sixpence";
- "A Christmas Carol";
- "The Jungle Book";
- "The First Men on the Moon";
- "The Lotus Eater";
- "Dombey and Son";
- "Pygmalion";
- "The War That Will End War".

III. Describe the literary technique of "the stream of consciousness":

- What psychological theory is it based on?
- How is it distinguished in prose?

IV. Analyze any short story by W. Somerset Maugham.

Point to the features of Modernism present in the story. Formulate the message of the story.

Tests in American Literature

Test № 1

The Beginning of National Literature and the Age of Reason in America

Variant I

I. Agree or disagree:

- 1) Scandinavian seafarers made the actual discovery of America;
- 2) Amerigo Vespucci is the undoubted discoverer of America;
- 3) The governors of the English colonies were appointed by the King of England;
- 4) The North was characterized by a feudal system of government;
- 5) The “Mayflower” arrived at Cape Cod Bay;
- 6) The Pilgrim Fathers agreed to build a society where everyone would be rich.

II. Finish the sentences (try to be brief but precise):

- 1) The city we know as New York was first called...
- 2) Theocracy is ...
- 3) A frontiersman was...
- 4) Witch-hunting meant that ...
- 5) Theocracy crumbled because...
- 6) “The History of the Plymouth Plantation” was written by ...
- 6a) The British didn't want their colonies to have the economy of their own because...

III. Answer the question:

Why do we study American Literature as Independent of English Literature?

IV. Choose one of the writers (Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Philip Freneau) and write about him considering the following points:

- the principal points of his life experience;
- his principal works;
- the ideas he proclaimed and promoted, the main areas of concern in his works.

Test № 1

The Beginning of National Literature and the Age of Reason in America

Variant II

I. Agree or disagree:

- 1) The Pilgrim Fathers agreed to build a society where everyone would be equal;
- 2) All the generations of Puritans followed the laws of the Mayflower Compact;
- 3) The question of the origin of Indians has not yet been settled;
- 4) The American Indians made good slaves;
- 5) It was the desire of Pilgrim Fathers to start the literature of the new American nation;
- 6) Clergy ruled the Puritan Colony.

II. Finish the sentences (try to be brief but precise):

- 1) "Private Journal of a Journey from Boston to New York" was written by...
- 2) The British didn't want their colonies to develop in their own way because...
- 3) "Committees of correspondence and Safety" during the War of Independence were made in order to ...
- 4) Not all Americans supported the armed struggle against the British because...
- 5) The Age of Reason was called so because...
- 6) Deism is...
- 6a) The distrust of the mystical during the Age of Reason resulted from...

III. Answer the question:

What are the three types of Americanisms ? (Name them)

IV. Choose one of the writers (Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Philip Freneau) and write about him considering the following points:

- the principal points of his life experience;
- his principal works;
- the ideas he proclaimed and promoted, the main areas of concern in his works.

Test № 2

Romanticism in American Literature

Variant I

I. Make the sentences complete:

- 1) ... is not much a definite system as a particular attitude towards the reality of man, nature and society.
- 2) The writers of Romanticism depicted life as a ..., between vice and virtue and insisted that virtue should defeat...
- 3) Nathaniel Hawthorne ... greatly to the development of... in American Romanticism.
- 4) ... became Washington Irving's hobby.
- 5) The conflict between nature and civilization, and the immense social changes resulting from it are the main concern in ...'s novels.
- 6) Edgar Allan Poe is remembered as the poet who established a new ... poetry and the new... based on... analysis.

II. Continue the sentences:

- 1) Longfellow continued the fine tradition of ... began by W. Irving and F. Cooper.
- 2) E. Poe took an interest in the scientific discoveries of his time, and this is evident in his ...
- 3) The principal personage in "The Raven" is ...
- 4) Poets and writers repulsed by the dishonest practice of businessmen romanticized the ...
- 5) The author of "The Scarlet Letter" was...
- 6) ... was the master of scenery.

III. Dwell on the point:

Characterize the principal features of Romanticism.

IV. Comment on E. Poe's poem you choose considering the following points:

- 1) The main character of the poem.
- 2) The message of the poem.
- 3) Your own attitude.

Test № 2

Romanticism in American Literature

Variant II

I. Make the sentences complete:

- 1) The most characteristic feature of ... is the great gap between...and the ... - the dream of a poet, artist or writer.
- 2) The early period began with the ... and ... of....
- 3) Melville was deeply interested in social problems, he hated the ... and despotic power of...
- 4) ... and ... are hidden behind the serious Irving's tone.
- 5) ... was the creator of the historical novel.
- 6) In his best poem "...." Poe tried to follow the ancient tradition of using...

II. Continue the sentences:

- 1) Longfellow continued to spread ...
- 2) The psychological study of anxiety and terror, of passion, anger and other emotions suffered by lonely men can be found in the...
- 3) E. Poe made it a rule never to write...
- 4) The author of "The Spy" was...
- 5) The paper "Salmagundi" was started by...
- 6) ... was the author of "The Bells" and "Annabel Lee"

III. Answer the question:

What was the creative method of the writers of Romanticism?

IV. Comment on E. Poe's poem you choose considering the following points:

- 4) The main character of the poem.
- 5) The message of the poem.
- 6) Your own attitude.

Test № 3

American Literature in the Second Half of the 19th century

Variant I

I. Complete the sentences describing the political background of the Civil War in America:

- 1) Towards the middle of the 19th century the romantic trend gave way to new...
- 2) The most dramatic event preceding the Civil War was...
- 3) It was not easy to free the slaves because their very minds were...

II. Name the four main themes of W. Whitman, explain why they were vital during the period and have remained so till nowadays.

III. Put down the message of “Wan Lee, the Pagan” by Bret Harte.

IV. Speak about M. Twain’s social views in detail. Enumerate the motifs and the works in which he depicted his social views (4 main works).

Test № 3

American Literature in the Second Half of the 19th century

Variant II

I. Complete the sentences describing the political background of the Civil War in America:

- 1) A clash between the two economic systems, ... and ... became inevitable.
- 2) ...-...movements had been spreading in the North for many years.
- 3) John Brown’s plans were to ...

II. What image is brought about by “the leaves of grass” in the “Song of Myself” by W. Whitman? What is the difference between the romantic and the realistic symbol?

III. Write down the message of “Wan Lee, the Pagan” by Bret Harte.

IV. What part did humour play in Mark Twain’s works according to M. Twain himself? Where did his humour come from?

Test № 4

American Literature at the Turn of the Centuries

Variant I

- I. Write down the characteristic features of Naturalism.
- II. Complete the sentences:
 - 1) O'Henry's credo was...
 - 2) In 1919 the New York society of Arts and Sciences founded ...
 - 3) Stephen Crane's masterpiece "The Red Badge of Courage" was inspired by...
- III. Write down the messages of "The Service of Love" and "The Last Leaf" by O'Henry.
- IV. Formulate the message of any story by O'Henry you have read (except those mentioned in the text-book).

Test №4

American Literature at the Turn of the Centuries

Variant II

- I. Write down the characteristic features of Realism.
- II. Complete the sentences:
 - 1) Stephen Crane's mood of works protested ...
 - 2) Crane's work "Maggie, a Girl of the Streets" gives ...
 - 3) O'Henry's works reflect...
- III. Write down the messages of "The Gift of the Magi" and "Make the Whole World Kin" by O'Henry.
- IV. Formulate the message of any story by O'Henry you have read (except those mentioned in the text-book).

Test № 5

The First Half of the 20th Century in American Literature

Variant I

I. Agree or disagree, correct the false statements:

- 1) W.C. Faulkner's 'Yoknapatawpha Cycle' is about the North of the USA;
- 2) W.C. Faulkner's family were proud of their Southern heritage;
- 3) "The White Rose of Memphis" by W.C. Faulkner's great-grandfather was a romantic poem;
- 4) W.C. Faulkner sometimes changed his judgement of a character from novel to novel.

II. Give one main reason for:

- Jack London's going to Klondike;
- Growing recognition of Jack London as a writer.

III. Explain a critic's phrase about Th. Dreiser and characterize the writer according to the questions:

"American writing, before and after his time, differed almost as much as biology before and after Darwin".

- 1) Name Th. Dreiser's motifs and his best novels;
- 2) Comment on the message of any novel by Th. Dreiser;
- 3) Why did he choose ordinary people to be his characters?

IV. Give brief but precise and creative answers to the questions about "Martin Eden" by Jack London:

- Why couldn't Ruth appreciate Martin Eden as a writer?
- What was Martin Eden's tragedy?

Test № 5

The First Half of the 20th Century in American Literature

Variant II

I. Agree or disagree, correct the false statements:

- 1) Faulkner was deeply interested in formal studies throughout his life;
- 2) W.C. Faulkner took part in World War I;
- 3) After his second novel “Mosquitoes” (1927) Faulkner had to continue his life in something close to isolation;
- 4) Faulkner’s mature attitudes irritated both blacks and whites.

II. Give one main reason for:

- “Sister Carrie ” by Th. Dreiser being considered “vulgar”;
- Bourgeois literature of the time being separated from life;

III. Explain Jack London’s phrase and characterize the writer according to the questions:

‘My first memories of life were pinched by poverty’ (Jack London)

- 1) Name Jack London’s motifs and his best works;
- 2) Comment on the message of any story or novel you have read;
- 3) Why do critics call him “a poet of the North”?

VI. Give brief but precise and creative answers to the following questions about “An American Tragedy” by Th. Dreiser:

- What is similar in the ambitions of Clyde and Roberta?
- What makes the tragedy typical of the America of the time?

Bonus Materials

1. A *Literature Spot* lesson.
2. Teaching pupils how to write an annotation.

A Literature Spot Lesson

THEME: **Beauty of Sacrifice in Oscar Wilde's Tale
"The Nightingale and the Rose"**

LEVEL: 10th form (upper-intermediate)

OBJECTIVES: to analyse the surface and the underlying thought contents of the tale against the background of Oscar Wilde's epoch and in terms of eternal moral values; to teach pupils to see the beauty of the author's language; to develop memory and logical thinking.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction: At the beginning of the lesson the teacher of the course in English literature reminds the pupils about the previous epoch in the development of English literature, announces the theme and prepares the pupils for reading the background article.

1. Read the background article and answer the questions:

- 1) Have you ever read fairy-tales by Oscar Wilde? Was there anything unusual or difficult to understand?
- 2) What is characteristic of Decadent literature? Why did the movement appear?
- 3) Do you believe art can be independent of life?

Note: the pupils' answers may be different before and after the lesson.

Background



Great disillusionment struck European civilization in the last decades of the 19th century. The hopes that scientific progress would guarantee happiness and well-being for human society vanished. Science was already more advanced than the cultural level of the people and their moral understanding how to make use of it. Besides too few got their dividends from the industrial development. The belief in the power of human mind collapsed.

This new mode of thinking was immediately reflected in the literature of the period, the so-called Decadence (from "decay", the process of something rotting). Decadents escaped from the ugly reality into the world of art which most of them considered independent of life and completely useless in terms of materialism. Oscar Wilde was one of them.

Born in Dublin on October 16th, 1854, at school and later at Oxford Wilde displayed a considerable gift for art and the humanities. After graduation he turned his

attention to writing, travelling and lecturing. The writer earned the reputation of being the leader of the then popular Aesthetic Movement. The supporters of the trend worshipped beauty and criticized society for lack of spiritual culture. The theory of “pure art” was proclaimed and the motto was “art for art’s sake”. Oscar Wilde was called “an apostle of beauty”. His main works are “The Happy Prince and Other Tales” (1888), “A House of Pomegranates” (1891), “The Picture of Dorian Gray” (1891), “A Woman of No Importance”(1894), “The Ballad of Reading Gaol”(1898) and others.

Oscar Wilde’s tales have deep philosophical meaning and the characters are allegorical, i.e. are symbols of something else.

Reading

2. *Read the tale. Try to complete the following sentences from memory:*

- 1) Surely love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than
- 2) In the centre of the grass-plot was standing a beautiful rose-tree and when she [the Nightingale] saw it she
- 3) But the Tree shook its head. ”My roses are white,” it answered; “as white as.....”
- 4) “My roses are red,” it [the Rose-tree growing beneath the Student’s window] answered, “as red as..... But the winter has chilled.....”
- 5) “If you want a red rose,” said the tree, “you must.....”
- 6) The Student could not understand what the Nightingale was saying to him, for he knew only.....”
- 7) But the Oak-tree understood, and felt sad, for he.....”
- 8) “Press closer, little Nightingale,” cried the Tree, “or.....”
- 9) “Look! Look!” cried the Tree,” the Rose is Finished now;” but the Nightingale.....”
- 10) But the girl frowned. “I am afraid.....”
- 11) “What a silly thing love is!” said the Student as he walked away. “ It is not half as useful as.....”

3. *Read the tale again. Check exercise 2. Then answer the following questions:*

(Note: After the pupils have checked ex. 2 the teacher points to the beauty of the author’s language, which is difficult to reproduce while retelling.)

- 1) Why did the Student attract the Nightingale’s attention?
- 2) How did she decide to help him?
- 3) What happened to the Nightingale?
- 4) Why did the girl frown?
- 5) What conclusion did the Student arrive at?

Speaking

4. *Analyse the tale in groups of four according to the following plan and then the speaker of your group will present your analysis to the class:*

Note: The pupils should be encouraged to be very critical of every consideration

suggested, sure to express their own points of view and use quotations to support their visions of the questions.

- 1) Name all the characters of the tale. What types of people in society do the allegorical characters (the Nightingale, the Oak-tree, the Daisy, the Butterfly, the little Lizard) symbolize?
- 2) Find the paragraphs in which the Student's and the Nightingale's views on love are expressed and study them. Does the author's language differ in the two extracts? Do those who are able and unable to love really speak different languages?
- 3) The Nightingale is a feminine character. Do you think this is accidental? Did she see "what she sang of" and "what was joy for her" rather than the real state of things?
- 4) The Rose-tree with red roses was just beneath the Student's window and it didn't blossom. Is this detail suggestive? Why didn't the Nightingale take the hint? Is she naive? Wise? Do you think love can be wise?
- 5) What did the Nightingale say about her sacrifice? How does this characterize her? Did anyone feel for her?
- 6) The Student said the girl was ungrateful. Who was even more ungrateful? Was the Student a real lover? Is the girl's image independent in the tale or is it just the Student's reflection (e.g. he looked for a girl like himself)?
- 7) Oscar Wilde worshipped beauty. In this tale beauty lies in the ability at sacrifice. Is there less beauty in sacrifice after it is rejected?
- 8) Oscar Wilde proclaimed art "completely useless". In the tale the Nightingale's sacrifice is evidently useless. Can we suggest that it is also the symbol of the artist's sacrifice for art's sake? Draw parallels with the aestheticism of Decadent art.
- 9) O. Wilde denied the fact that literature can teach people anything. At the same time a tale is always a lesson (e.g. folk tales for children). Is there a contradiction? Do you think art is instructive?

Note: While the speakers of the groups are presenting the analyses the members of other groups ask questions. The other three members of the speaker's group should participate in answering these questions.

Writing

(Summing up the lesson and announcing home assignment)

5. You have listened to different points of view as regards what the author wanted to tell "between the lines" of the tale. Do you think the tale is worth reading? *Your home task is to write a composition "Beauty of Sacrifice and Sacrifice of Beauty in O. Wilde's tale "The Nightingale and the Rose". Express your own visions.*

Annotation

An annotation is a brief characterization of a book, an article, a manuscript touching upon the ideas revealed, as well as the problems and the contents taken in. The application and the value of a composition are also concisely dwelt upon. An annotation can serve as a description or a reference, either general or special.

An annotation usually answers the following questions:

1. What is the title (if any)?
2. Who is the author (mentioned only if indicated and important)?
3. What was the article/story/novel etc. written for?*
4. What are the contents?
5. Who may be interested in reading it (i.e. its application and value)?

One should remember that annotating is slightly related to advertising. It should be brief but essential. To be precise with its contents one should make a plan first. Do not forget that an annotation **is about a book, not retelling its contents, but giving the overall idea and pointing to its MOST significant characteristics.** In authentic annotations they avoid using “I think” to make the opinion expressed *impersonal*, or as if shared by many. Expressions like “I suppose”, “I consider” etc. may be found only in various quotations supporting a critic’s idea. However, quoting is of a limited use (only the brightest and the most competent utterances are considered) as it may make an annotation cumbersome.

* In case of fiction they seldom speak of the instructive value of a composition, it is mostly accepted to mention the problems raised by the author and the message that may or may not be derived from it by the reader. A good critic’s credo is being **polite** both *to the author* so as not to spoil the potential reader’s impression with any kind of a limited understanding, and *to the reader* so as to give him as much freedom as possible to derive his own conclusions and instruction if any. A masterpiece annotation excites and intrigues, slightly hints at the possible ways of (but never imposes any specific method of) understanding.

An example annotation on a dictionary

Now fully revised for its fourth edition, THE OXFORD GUIDE TO ENGLISH USAGE is the most up-to-date and easy-to-use dictionary available in paperback. As well as clear definitions of everyday vocabulary, with helpful examples, there are encyclopedic entries for famous people, places and institutions.

For those seeking advice on spelling, punctuation, grammar, pronunciation, or difficult and misused words – help is at hand! This fully revised and updated edition is a complete guide to good English, pointing out pitfalls and how to avoid them.

‘Every home, office, secretary, and boss should have one.’ (Good Book Guide)

Consider the points:

Does the annotation answer all the questions mentioned above? Why? Which usual characteristics does it correspond to? Can you point to its advertising elements? Is the quotation appropriate? Can you trace the plan according to which the annotation was written?

An example annotation on a piece of fiction (for a student to work out)

Навчально-методичне видання

ШЕЛДАГАЄВА (Петренко) Ганна Олександрівна
(за участю Ірини Михайлівни Туровець
та Оксани Сергіївни Синичкіної)

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О.А.Ісаєнко

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73033, м. Херсон, а/с-15

e-mail: dimg@meta.ua

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