***The Open Window*, by Saki (H. H. Munro)**

The first three activities are used to encourage the students to let free their imagination, to practise their speaking skills and above all to build their desire to read literature.

**TASK 1** Warm-up

The students have to work during this activity individually. If they want they can write some things on their notebooks. They have to present their own answer. The best ideas can be awarded ‘a prize’.

What would you do if you wanted to get rid of an unwelcome visitor? List ways of dealing with people that you:

1. Know well.
2. Do not know well.

**TASK 2** Warm-up – Writing and Speaking

During this activity the students have to work in pairs. They will receive a list of questions. The answers to their questions will be found in their stories. They also receive a list with some elements that should be included in their stories – characters and some sentences extracted from the original short story, just for guidance. So they have two worksheets to use during the activity. They have the possibility to write their story on a sheet of paper; they can even draw the characters or some scenes from their stories – if they are good at drawing.

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| 1. Main characters of the story:
* Vera, aged 15
* Mrs Sappleton, Vera’s aunt
* Framton Nuttel, a visitor to Mrs Sappleton’s house
1. Some sentences for guidance:

-‘My aunt will be down presently, MrNuttel,’ said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; ‘in the meantime you must try to put up with me.’ - ‘Her (Mrs Sappleton) great tragedy happened just three years ago,’ said the child (Vera). - ‘Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will walk in through that window...’ - In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms. Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat.* ‘A most extraordinary man, MrNuttel,’ said Mrs Sappleton.
* ‘I expect it was the spaniel,’ said the niece calmly; ‘he told me he had a horror of dogs.’
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| The questions that the story should answer to, are:1. Who is Mr Nuttel and why is he visiting Mrs Sappleton?
2. What was Mrs Sappleton’s tragedy?
3. Who are the figures? Where have they come from and what do they want?
4. Where has the spaniel come from? Whose is it?
5. Why does Mr Nuttel run away in fear?
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The stories can be read in front of the others. There can be organised a competition for the most inspiring story, the funniest, the strangest, the most original one or the closest to theme of the original short story, and the pupils can get awards. After this activity the pupils can read the original short story and in this way they can see which of their stories was the closest to the original.

**TASK 3** Understanding vocabulary:

*Match the words highlighted in the text with their definition:*

1. Snipe
2. Pariah
3. Rectory
4. Moor
5. Bog
6. Falter
7. Infirmities
8. Imminent
9. About to occur, impending
10. To be unsteady in purpose or action, as from loss of courage or confidence; waver
11. A broad area of open land, often high but poorly drained with patches of heath and peat bogs
12. Member of lowest class in India; a social outcast
13. A type of wading bird
14. A home occupied by a minister or a clergy
15. Soft, waterlogged ground; a marsh
16. Frailties; disabilities

Key of the exercise: 1.e; 2.d; 3.f; 4.c; 5.g; 6.b; 7.h; 8.a;

**TASK 4**5 W’s and an H – Method – Reading comprehension

For a better understanding of the text, *The Open Window’, by Saki*, the students can be asked to form six groups. Each group will receive a few questions they have to answer*.* Each set of questions start with one of this question words: *what, where, when, why, who and how.* The students have to find the answers in the text. The answers will be written on a flipchart, each answer under the question word the question starts with. The students can use different colours for their answers. Using the answers the whole class will be able to get the main ideas of the text, which will be written in the middle.

 

WHO

* Who are the protagonist and the antagonist?
* Who greets Mr Nuttel upon his arrival?
* Who is Vera?

WHAT

* What does Framton Nuttel suffer from?
* What does Framton’s sister give to take with him?
* What does Framton know of Vera’s aunt?

WHY

* Why does Framton’s sister give him letters of introduction?
* Why is the window left open according to Vera?
* Why does Framton run out of the house?

WHERE

* Where does the action take place?
* Where does the open window look to?
* Where have the men gone?

WHEN

* When does Vera’s aunt enter the room?
* When does Framton leave the house?
* When is the *climax* of the short story?

HOW

* How might the story be different if Framton were the narrator?

**TASK *5*** The characters - Speaking

Tick the sentences that best describes each character. During this activity each student works by himself/ herself. The goal of the activity is to get the pupils speak, bring arguments for their choices and even contradict the other students’ choices. Then the class is divided into 3 groups and each team has to write on a sheet of paper the characteristics of one character: Vera, Mrs Sappleton and Mr Nuttel. One member of each group comes in front of the class, sticks the paper on the blackboard or wall and presents the final ideas of the topic.

1. Framton Nuttel:
2. He is not sure this visit is a good idea.
3. He is concerned with doing the proper thing.
4. He suffers from a nervous and anxious condition.
5. He prefers to keep to himself.
6. He is horrified by Mrs Sappleton’s talk.
7. He likes to talk about his illness.
8. He is terrified of what he sees out the window.
9. Vera:
10. She is self-possessed.
11. She knows proper etiquette.
12. She is a good actress.
13. She tells tales.
14. Mrs Sappleton:
15. She is cheerful.
16. She is chatty.
17. She is distracted while talking to Mr Nuttel.
18. She is bored with Mr Nuttel’s conversation.

**TASK 6** Grammar practice – Past Simple vs. Past Continuous

The students have to fill in with the correct form of the verbs in brackets, either in Past Simple or past Continuous:

‘*She………….. (talk) on cheerfully about the shooting and the lack of birds, and the hope of shooting duck in the winter. To Framton it……. (be) all quite terrible. He……….. (make) a great effort, which was only partly successful, to turn the talk to a more pleasant subject. He was conscious that his hostess…………………. (give) him only a part of her attention, and her eyes…………………… (look) frequently past him to the open window and the grass beyond.’*

*‘Framton………………… (tremble) slightly and turned towards the girl with a look intended to show sympathetic understanding. The child……………… (look) out through the open window with fear in her eyes. With a shock Framton………………….. (turn) round in his seat and ………….(look) in the same direction.’*

 *(The Open Window, by Saki)*

Key to the exercise: talked; was; made; was giving; was looking; trembled; was looking; turned; looked.

**TASK 7** Informal letter

The students have to imagine they are a fly in Mrs Sappleton’s house. They have to write a letter to a friend in which to tell him/ her about what he/she sees and hears during that day. (100-120 words)

**TASK 8** Informal letter

The students have to imagine that Framton Nuttel learned the truth about the Sappleton’s ‘tragedy’. How might he respond to the news? The students have to write a letter to his sister in which to describe how he might feel and act upon learning that he had been tricked.

 The students can choose between these two tasks. The best pieces of writing will be awarded.