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МЕТОДИЧЕСКИЕ РЕКОМЕНДАЦИИ ПО ОБУЧЕНИЮ УЧАЩИХСЯ ПЕРЕСКАЗУ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫХ ТЕКСТОВ РАЗЛИЧНЫХ ЖАНРОВ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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ПОЯСНИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЗАПИСКА

Представленные «Методические рекомендации по обучению учащихся пересказу художественных текстов различных жанров на английском языке» (структурный элемент учебно-методического комплекса по учебному предмету «Практика устной и письменной речи») предлагают ряд рекомендаций (план анализа, ключевые вопросы, фразы для выражения собственного мнения и т.д.), необходимых для пересказа с элементами анализа текста произведений художественной литературы.

Использование данных методических рекомендаций в образовательном процессе будет способствовать развитию у учащихся речевых умений в процессе обучения иностранному языку.

Логика структурной организации методической разработки обуславливает доступность усвоения предлагаемой информации: теоретическую часть работы существенно дополняет практический материал (примеры средств художественной выразительности, образцы художественных текстов), на основе которого проиллюстрированы ведущие литературоведческие положения. Теоретический и практический материал предназначен для использования преподавателями по учебному предмету «Практика устной и письменной речи».

Преимуществом разработки является то, что учебный материал представляет собой полноценное средство обучения пересказу текста с элементами анализа как части промежуточной аттестации по учебному предмету, является существенным дополнением к самостоятельному усвоению программного учебного материала.

I. TALKING ABOUT STORIES. THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

When discussing stories or extracts there are certain aspects which you are supposed to regard. It is useful to know and to be able to use them. They will make it easier for you to talk about stories.

1. If you deal with an extract begin your discussion with saying a few words about its **origin,** naming the writer and the title of the story or the novel it is taken from.

2. The impact of a literary work depends on all its elements. Among them **plot** plays an important role. Plot refers to the sequence of events or actions in a story. Most stories and novels have plots. But there are some which have no plots (e.g. stories and poems describing nature, the so-called "novels of ideas" and stories presenting the stream of consciousness).

The components of the plot structure are

- the exposition (where the author introduces the theme, the characters and establishes the setting)
- complications (actions, thoughts, feelings)
- the climax (the key event, the crucial moment of the story)
- the denoement or resolution (where the fate of the main characters is clarified and some conclusions are suggested)

It should also be noted that the intensity of the impression depends on the order in which the writer presents the information included into the story (the so called "presentational sequencing"). There are several devices of presentational sequencing

- retardation (the withholding of information until the appropriate time, it heightens suspense)
- flashbacks (scenes of the past inserted into the narrative)
- foreshadowing (a look towards the future, a remark or hint that prepares the reader for what is to follow)

3. At the heart of the plot is **conflict** – the opposition of the characters or groups of characters to each other or to something. The story may be based on several conflicts:

external –

a) man against man
b) man against nature
c) man against society, social order!
d) conflict with poverty inequality

internal – "man against himself"

4. The plot with its characters, actions and settings forms the so-called 'surface content' of a literary work, which is represented in concrete individuals, situations and actions. It may entertain and keep the reader curious. Some read only to learn what happens next. But a skilled reader discovers what lies beyond the surface content, he looks for the **theme**.

The theme of the story is the main area of interest treated in the story. There are stories on the theme of love, or love for one's Motherland, family relations, anti-war theme, human relations in society, the power of beauty and art to stir emotions, etc.

5. The theme of the story implies the problem which the writer raises. His view and attitude to the problem is revealed in the way he develops the theme of the story.

The most important idea that the author expresses in the process of developing the theme is the **message** of the story. The theme is therefore organically connected with the author's message. The message can be expressed indirectly. We way reveal the message of a literary work through the analysis of the implications. Implication may be conveyed by contrast, parallelism, repetition, symbols, arrangements of plot structure.

6. In fiction the representation of the reality is always a subjective reflection, which is affected by the author's view of the world, his outlook, his personal attitude to it. That is why in fiction the representation of reality can never be entirely neutral. In every literary work the writer's feelings and emotions are reflected in the **tone, attitude and atmosphere (mood).**

Atmosphere is a general mood of a literary work. **Mood** is the dominant impression the story makes on you. It can be gloomy, sad, optimistic, pathetic, melancholy, lively, cheerful and so on. Mood may be revealed through the choice of words, figures of speech, dialogues, monologues, short or long sentences and even phonetic devices, such as alliteration or others.

The author's **attitude** is his view of the characters and actions. It reflects his judgement of them. The reader is expected to share the author's attitude.

The attitude of a writer to his subject matter determines the **tone** of the story. The tone is the light in which the characters and events are depicted. **Tone** helps us to understand if the writer takes the subject matter seriously, comically, bitterly, humorously, ironically, etc. Tone also expresses the relationship between the author (the narrator) and the reader. Thus, the tone may be casual, familiar, impolite, defiant, offensive, sarcastic, ironical, sneering or bitter.

Tone in oral speech is primarily conveyed by modulations of the voice pitch, whereas in written speech the tone is mainly conveyed by **emotionally coloured words.** The English language has its own system of expressive means – words and phrases which help to add vividness to the description and with the help of it to touch the reader's imagination. These words and phrases are used figuratively (metaphorically).

7. **Style** of language

a) When a writer resorts to the language of everyday life, neither rich nor refined, and which is especially typical of dialogues, we call this style <u>colloquial (informal)</u>.

b) When a writer resorts to the language which is not widely used in everyday life and is not typical of spoken English because it is "too correct" we call this style <u>bookish (or formal, official).</u>

c) When there are many scientific words terms in a story we speak about <u>scientific</u> style.

d) When there are words typical of this or that profession we speak about <u>professional words</u> in a story.

We can also name newspaper, publicistic and religious styles. Though there are quite often no strict borders between styles. (e.g. science-fiction style).

II. THE PLAN FOR RENDERING THE STORY/ARTICLE

I. INTRODUCE THE ARTICLE

1. Name the *title* of the article.
2. If there is a *byline*, say who the *author* of the article is, what his/her qualifications are, *where* and *when* the article was published.
3. Name the *topic* of the article.
4. Name the *message* of the article, if there is one.

II. SUMMARIZE THE ARTICLE

III. ANALYZE AND INTERPRET THE ARTICLE

1. Article genre

- *Is the article under analysis a (straight) news story, a (straight) feature story or a featurized news story? Why?*

2. Article structure and unity:

1) Headline:

- *What is the purpose of the headline?*
- *Is the headline straightforward or teasing? Why?*
- *Are there any grammatical/lexical/graphic peculiarities in the headline? If yes, how can you account for them?*

2) Lead:

- *Is it a direct lead summarizing the story's essential facts (who, what, when, where, why and how)?*
- *Or is it a delayed lead (an anecdote, a shocking or startling statement, a generalization, description, a quote, a question, a comparison, etc.) enticing the reader into the story by hinting at its contents?*

3) Body of the article:

- *Does the body of the article mainly contain details on the information given in the lead? Is it written in the "inverted pyramid" form?*
- *Or is it a sequence of plot events united by the main theme and the message/ a first-person narration about the author's own experience?*
- *Is it written in the quote/transitional way?*
- *Does the story have a thread?*

4) End:

- *Does the story end with less important information (in comparison with the lead)?*
- *Or does it end with a conclusion wrapping up the story/ a strong quotation/ a surprising climax?*

3. Comment on **graphology and punctuation** of the article. Are there any peculiarities? If yes, what is the purpose of their use?

4. Comment on the **language, vocabulary and style** of the article. Are there any peculiarities? If yes, what is the purpose of their use?

5. Illustrations and captions and their function(s).

IV. CONCLUSION

1. The author's attitude and purpose in writing the article.

• *Can you 'hear the voice of the author? What is it used for?*

2. Your ideas and attitudes.

Helpful Language Reference

To make you talk on stories more colourful you may benefit from the following words and phrases:

1. The story under discussion deals with …
2. The setting of the story dates back to (the time) …
3. The events described in the story throw light upon …
4. The author resorts to ...
5. The author attaches special significance to detai1s (epithets, monologue, description and so on)
6. The author has a sharp eye for detai1s.
7. The choice of words is very elaborate.
8. It helps us to get a vivid notion of....
9. The author makes ample use of the dialogue....
10. to depict, to portray.
11. to reveal, to display through....
12. surprise ending
13. happy end

III. SOME HELPFUL QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER TEXT ANALYSIS

a. BACKGROUND

Where and when does most of the action take place?

To what extent are the buildings, dress, habits, and language markedly different from what you are familiar with?

How much does the background influence the actions or personality of any of the main characters?

Does the author seem to be thoroughly familiar with his setting? If it required research, do you think he did enough?

Do the scenes ring true?

How well does the background create moods?

b. PLOT

If both are present, how well are the main story line and the subplots interwoven?

Is it possible that the events could take place in real life?

What is the turning point of the action?

Do the incidents follow one another naturally, or do they seem to have been mechanically inserted by the author?

How well does the author create suspense, if any?

How many loose ends are left at the end of the story?

How logical or reasonable or probable or unusual is the ending?

What devices used by the author seem to indicate that he depended too much on chance to carry his story forward?

c. CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters? Are they like real people? Of whom do they remind you? Friends? Family? Prominent people? Movie or television stars?

Which are the most interesting? Why? Which remind you of yourself? How?

Do some of the characters seem to develop and change as the story progresses, or do they all remain about the same from beginning to end?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the central characters? What incidents can you cite to support your conclusions?

To what extent does the personality of any character determine his or her success or failure?

What character did you like most and which did you dislike? With which ones did it make a difference to you whether they were happy or sad? Why?

Which ones helped you to understand people you know a little better, than before?

What minor characters are interesting? How would you describe one or two in a single sentence?

If you were the author, would you develop one or more of the characters differently? How?

How well does the author seem to know people and what “makes them tick”?

d. THEME

What do you suppose was the main reason for the author's telling this story? To amuse? Entertain? Preach? Convert? Criticize? Present a social problem?

What is he trying to prove, or what life experience is he trying to explain?

What is the main point of the story expressed in a single sentence?

Is there a problem in the story, how well does the author solve it? Does he suggest a solution?

How has the book influenced your own thinking? What new ideas have you come across?

To what extent has this story stimulated you to read others on the same theme?

If you were designing a book jacket, what illustration or symbol would you draw to point to the main idea?

e. STYLE

How well does the author present his scenes? Does he make you feel as if you were an eyewitness?

How do the sentences run — long, involved, sharp, varied?

What difficulties did you have with the vocabulary?

How well are the emotions portrayed? What devices are used to do this? Were you moved to tears or laughter anywhere? Why?

Did you get angry with any of the characters? When?

How do the characters talk — the same as people like them would in real life, or do they seem to be talking out of the mouth of the author?

Does the author seem to invent phrases or have you heard many before? Give examples.

What is the tone of the language? Warm and friendly? Wise and fatherly? Cold and formal? Dry as dust? Rough and tough? Genteel?

If some of the language is strong, is it offensive or necessary to maintain the atmosphere and the nature of the characters? Give proof. Do you suspect that some bits were put in by the author mainly to be sensational and help the book to sell? Cite examples that are really unnecessary.

Would you want to read more by this author because of the way he writes? Why?

What do you think of the choice of title? How does it suit the story?

f. GENERAL

In what way have you changed your mind about certain beliefs you had before?

How different do you now feel about a type or group of people? How significant is the theme in relation to world or life problems? What is there interesting about the author's life that is reflected perhaps in the story?

How would you compare this story to another somewhat like it that you read previously?

What do you think the central characters would be like twenty or so years after the end of the story?

What chance does this story have of becoming a classic, if it hasn't already become one? Why?

IV. USEFUL VOCABULARY FOR DETAILED TEXT ANALYSIS

1. TITLE

the title accentuates/ emphasizes/ strengthens/ reinforces the author's idea that

the title allows of different interpretations/ can be interpreted in different ways

the title can be interpreted as an (in)direct expression of the author's idea/ message

the title can be linked to the story's message in the following way ...

the title captures the essence of the story which is ...

the title contributes to the overall effect of the story

the title creates a sense of anticipation/curiosity about what will happen in the story

the title echoes certain events in the story

the title evokes immediate response from the reader

the title has several meanings/ layers of meaning

the title immediately arouses interest in the reader

the title implies that/ hints at/ indirectly expresses/ is suggestive of ...

the title is a means of creating suspense

the title is indispensable/ crucial/ essential for understanding the meaning of the story

the title of the story is eye-catching/ thought-provoking/ challenging

the title orientates the reader toward the story in that it helps to disclose the hero's personality/ to concentrate on the most relevant detail of the setting/ turn of the events, etc.

the title points out/ reveals the underlying meaning of the events

the title serves/ functions as a foreshadowing

the title stimulates/ encourages/ urges the reader to think about...

the title the author chose is appropriate/ imaginative/ apt/ original/ intriguing/ foreshadowing/ symbolic/ ironic, etc.

the title unites all the aspects/ elements of the story together

2. ALLUSION

a hint/ a clue

a parody

a reference to something

a symbolic interpretation

full of historical/ musical etc., allusions

the author alludes/ makes allusion/ refers indirectly/ makes reference to...

the author draws inspiration from a folk tale/ a traditional fairy tale/ a different writer, etc.

the author gives new meaning and depth to a well-known story/ tale, etc.

the author interprets somebody's ideas in a new and unique way

the author mocks/ sneers/ jeers at...

the author uses somebody's work as the basis for his own plot, bringing new meanings and angles to the surface

the story/ text/ character echoes something
to be inspired by
to borrow from somebody
to cite/ to quote
to draw parallels between
to recognize/ recognizable
to satirize

3. CHARACTERIZATION

a trait/ aspect/ facet of character
analysing the character's speech characteristics, we come across...
another powerful means of characterization is...
dialogue serves as the main means of characterization
his/ her character is revealed through/ rendered by...
his/ her inner world/ state of mind/ emotional state is seen in...
penetration into the protagonist's thoughts/ psychology
the author depicts/ portrays/ describes/ discloses a character through...
the author describes the protagonist directly as...
the author directly states/ points out...
the author gives insights into the character's system of values...
the author presents the character through action
the author provides the evidence of...
the author puts emphasis on/ emphasises the idea that/ stresses that/ underlines that
the author uses/ resorts to/ makes ample use of various means of characterization
the author's mouthpiece
the author's portrayal is convincing/ picturesque/ true-to-life/ powerful, etc.
the character is described/ portrayed/ depicted throughout the story as...
the character is structured round one major quality
the character seems self-confident/ ridiculous/ inventive/ naive/ imaginative/ caring/ thoughtful/ indecisive/ romantic/ cruel, etc.
the characters are presented as caricatures/ character-types
the character's motto/ world-outlook/ life-philosophy
the description of the character's environment/ belongings/ domestic interior/ mental process adds to the portrait/ is another indirect means of characterization
the descriptions of ... are colourful/ impressive/ vivid
the emotional state is implicitly rendered through...
the feature can be also traced in...
the moral/ mental/ physical/ spiritual characteristics of the hero/ heroine
the narrator pronounces characterizing/ evaluating judgements
the only/ main/ basic means of characterization is ...
the personages' speech is differentiated/ is in keeping with their station in life/ is literary/ colloquial/ low colloquial/ abounds in stock-phrases from a doctor's/ teacher's/ pilot's vocabulary, etc.

the protagonist/ the antagonist/ the villain of the story is...

the protagonist has distinct characteristic features

the protagonist is implicitly characterized by the clothing/ physical appearance/ environment

the quality suggested/ indicated by the author is revealed in the episode...

the reader evaluates/ rates/ judges/ assesses a character's actions, words, appearance, etc.

the reader's attitude to the character undergoes a change as the story progresses

the repetition of ... implies that .../ these constantly repeated words signify ...

the speech of the character enables the reader .../ reflects his ...

the speech of the character is full of/ can be described as/ shows that ...

the use of foil as a means of characterization emphasizes ...

the verbal behaviour is indicative of ...

this detail/ this feature is suggestive of the character's nature/ contributes to the character creation

this detail is implicative of/ implies that ...

this feature is made absolutely clear with the help of ...

this feature of the protagonist's personality is made explicit with the help of

this is illustrated by/ another illustration of this is ...

this scene/ episode brings out the following qualities ...

to arouse affection/ delight/ admiration/ resentment/ warmth/ affection/ compassion/ dislike/ disgust, etc.

to categorize the characters as ...

to contribute to characterization/ individualization with ...

to create/ produce an impression of ...

to depict/ portray/ describe/ picture a character

to evoke antipathy/ disgust/ dislike/ aversion/ animosity

to excite hate/ fascination/ sympathy/ compassion

to infer ... from the description of the protagonist's behaviour/ manner of speaking/ outward appearance

to infer the character's social status/ background/ educational level/ emotional state through ...

to portray an attractive/ charming/ appealing/ likeable/ fascinating character

to reinforce characterization by ...

to reveal/ expose/ lay bare somebody's personality traits through ...

to serve/ act as a foil to somebody

to share a character's emotions

4. MISCELLANEOUS

going back to the text, the evidence of what I was saying is...

in my/ his/ her/ their view

the leading characteristics of the author's style are simplicity/ great precision/ elaborate vocabulary/ dynamic dialogues, etc.

the author comes up with/ creates/ builds up a realistic/ unrealistic portrayal of

the author conveys/ communicates/ gets across the idea ...

the author draws our attention to ...

the author handles the relationship/ the problem/ addresses topical and relevant issues

the author has a keen eye for exact and concrete detail, etc.

the author is concerned with country life, etc.

the author plausibly/ skilfully creates the picture of ...

the author puts ... in the focus of the reader's attention

the author reinforces the idea ...

the events described in the story have a truthful ring

the following evidence from the text can support this assertion …

the impact of the outside world

the indications/ clues in the text are ...

the overall idea is ...

the problems/ issues the author discusses are burning/ crucial/ urgent because

the story is about the power of love/ friendship/ the future/ parent's love for their children/ the father and son relationship/ people's foibles and faults/ people's ideas of happiness/ income-prehension of adults/ the institution of marriage/ a mysterious murder case/ the problem of choice in people's life, etc.

the story made a favourable/ unfavourable impression on me because ...

the story's major/ minor themes are ...

this can be exemplified by/ this idea may be supported by the following ...

to bear on/ to relate to ...

to disclose the main idea of the story completely

to draw inferences from something

to manifest itself

to understand the undercurrent of thought

5. PLOT

the absence of exposition stimulates the reader to...

the author confines himself to obligatory plot components only

the author deliberately deviates from the traditional model of plot structure...

the author depicts this type of conflict by focusing on .../ the conflict is rendered through/ by means of...

the author gains by leaving out the denouement

the author gives a hint as to the further development of the action through ...

the author keeps the reader guessing/ exploits the reader's expectations

the author leaves out the denouement/ exposition ... to achieve

the author makes skilful use of retardation as an effective sequencing technique to ...

the author makes the plot more complex by ...

the author resorts to foreshadowing with a view to/ with the intention of/ to achieve ... effect ...

the author uses ... sequencing techniques to ...

the character seeks a solution/ resolves a problem

the character struggles internally

the climax is the resolution of the conflict/ the conflict is resolved in the climax

the complications/ events are arranged in a (non)chronological order

the complications are exhilarating/ stirring/ electrifying/ moving/ breathtaking/ exciting

the complications consist of/ are formed by feelings/ thoughts/ actions

the conflict at the core of the story is ...

the conflict in the story may be interpreted as the opposition of ...

the conflict is localized in the inner world of the character/ occurs within the character's own mind

the conflict is physical/ ethical/ emotional/ internal/ external/ social

the crucial events in the story

the ending comes out as a complete surprise

the ending is predictable/ troubling/ thought-provoking/ optimistic/ pessimistic, etc.

the ending takes the form of ...

the events are logically related to the theme of the story

the events of the complications contribute thematically/ artistically ...

the exposition contains/ gives/ offers a detailed description of ...

the main function of the exposition is to .../ the exposition introduces ...

the moment of "no return" is when ...

the narrative is interrupted by digressions/ with numerous flashbacks to the past

the "open ending" allows of a variety of explanations

the opening/ closing sentence (paragraph) of the story ...

the peak of intensity/ the culmination point is when ...

the plot/ story is based on ... conflict

the plot comprises a variety of events

the plot moves toward the moment of decision

the plot of the story is complex/ complicated/ simple/ intricate/ intriguing/ credible/ impressive/ stimulating/ rousing, etc.

the plot unfolds as the characters deal with conflict/ the conflict develops from episode to episode

the reader is made/ stimulated/ prompted/ encouraged/ inspired/ invited to ...

the rearrangement of the plot structure influences the total response of the reader

the scenes of ... are inserted as flashbacks/ the flashbacks are scattered throughout the narrative

the sequencing of events in the narrative is chronological

the ... starts the events of the story moving

the story (plot) is mainly focused on physical events/ psychological movement/ development of ...

the story contains all the components of plot structure/ the plot is structured conventionally

the story describes a conflict between an individual and society

the story is characterised by very artful plotting

the story may be called a revelation/ solution/ decision/ explanation story according to/ judging from the climax, etc.

the story opens with a dialogue/ description/ scene...

the structure of the story is simple and clear

the turning point is ...

the use of ... contributes to ...

this event at the point of highest tension and drama/ the climactic event is...

this event serves as the climax of the story/ the climax comes at the end of the story when ...

this makes the climax of the story a surprise ending

this serves the purpose of .../ makes the narrative/ has the effect of/ results in/ is the cause of ...

to arouse the reader's excitement/ curiosity/ concern/ emotions, etc.

to excite one's mind/ to touch one's heart/ to stir one's imagination

to interest/ captivate/ charm/ attract/ enthral/ mesmerize/ absorb/ intrigue/ move/ fascinate/ involve/ affect, etc, the reader

6. POINT OF VIEW

one of the advantages of this kind of narration/ point of view is...

the 1st person narration increases the immediacy and freshness of impression

the author deviates from the subject of the narrative

the author gives a detailed analysis of the character's actions/ motives

the author gives us different versions of the events changing the point of view/ the narrator

the author lets the character speak for himself/ demonstrate his features

the author uses a/ an ... narrator/ point of view/ narrative method to tell the story

the author uses this figure of speech to emphasise ...

the author's standpoint is ...

the characters are described from the outside only

the dialogues/ descriptions play an important role in the story

the dominant point of view is ...

the events are narrated in the 1st person

the events are shown/ related/ filtered through somebody's perception

the information is presented through the eyes of a minor/ the main character

the inner world of the character is in the focus of interest

the main form of presentation is narration with some elements of dialogue/ description

the narrator addresses the reader directly/ confides his personal thoughts to the reader

the narrator enters the mind of/ shares the viewpoint of ...

the narrator has a distinct identity of his own

the narrator is nonparticipant/ in the thick of the action

the narrator misinterprets the events in the story

the narrator provides the reader with direct assessment of the events

the narrator reveals the characters' thoughts/ the personality of ...

the "point of view" character is ...

the reader adopts the author's point of view

the reader is made to pronounce his own judgements

the reader is stimulated to reflect about the events of the story

the story is a deep psychological analysis/ a study of actions and events/ an outside observation of the events, etc.

the story is narrated/ told by a character who ...

the story is presented in the form of a dialogue/ of narration/ description

the story is told from the 3rd person point of view/ the story is 3rd person narration

the story is told from the point of view of an omniscient narrator/ objective narrator (onlooker/ observer)

the story is told in the first person, which creates a sense of intimacy because ...

the story is told in the third person, which allows the reader to ...

the story told from this point of view is more confiding/ more objective/ extremely convincing, etc.

this point of view brings a personal touch to the story

this point of view exposes the reader to the thoughts of ...

this type of narration allows the reader access to the inner world of ...

this type of narration creates the effect of verisimilitude

to create a strong sense of the character's inner reality

to deepen the reader's understanding of the story

to enter a character's mind, train/ course of thought

to feel an emotional connection with a character

to give an insight into the inner world of the character

to give the reader a sense of identification with the character

to make objective observations

to make the story sound true to life/ to increase the credibility of the story

we get a deep understanding of how an individual experiences the world

we perceive the world of the story/ receive the story through the eyes of the main character

7. SETTING

a character's background becomes central to the story a realistic/ historical/ fantastic/ exotic/ rural setting

the atmosphere/ the character's background becomes central to the story because...

the author establishes the time and the place of the action as ...

the author is more concerned with social/ cultural environment of the characters than specific physical objects

the domestic interior is the main element of setting/ serves as a means of characterization

the idea is inconceivable without the specific setting ... the scene is laid ...

the setting acquires a symbolic meaning the setting contributes to the single effect of the story the setting functions/ serves as a contrasting background to ... the setting has a symbolic meaning which can be interpreted as ... the setting helps to determine the characters' hopes/ aspirations/ habits/ desires/ conflicts/ fate, etc.

the setting helps to identify the genre of the story as ... the setting is crucial to the creation of a complete work

the setting is established in the exposition/ scattered throughout the whole story

the setting is vital for understanding the message of the story the setting plays a great role in the operation of the story/ in conveying the message because ...

the social background/ cultural environment/ landscape/ historical period/ geographical location, etc. is the most important element of the setting in the story/ is as important as the characters themselves

the span of time the story covers

the story is set in ...

to construct the world of the story

to create a tragic/ dramatic/ peaceful/ serene/ still/ undisturbed/ tranquil/ gloomy/ weary/ grim/ depressing/ cheerful/ lively/ blissful/ idyllic, etc. atmosphere

to encourage the reader to ...

to enhance characterization by ...

to express/ frame/ reflect/ parallel the emotional state of the character

to increase the credibility of the characters and events in the story

to individualize a character

to reveal certain features of a character's personality

8. SUSPENSE/ SURPRISE

skilful sustention of suspense

the action in the story is highly suspenseful

the author gives a hint / hints at some future events

the author plays with the reader's expectations

the author raises certain expectations in the reader

the author relies heavily on suspense

the author shows his ability to keep the reader in suspense

the author skilfully uses the techniques of suspense and surprise in the story

the climax comes as a complete surprise/ as a revelation/ as a relief, etc.

the complications are arranged along an ascending scale

the plot thickens

the reader is really taken aback/ startled/ confused/ puzzled/ bemused/ bewildered, etc. by the unexpected turn of events

the suspense in the following lines is created with the help of/ by means of ...

the suspense is intensified by ...

the tension builds toward the main conflict

the tension increases/ rises as the plot moves on

to anticipate significant events

to awaken/ arouse/ hold the reader's interest

to create/ build up/ heighten/ increase suspense in the story

to create a sense of anticipation/ a feeling of tense excitement

to maintain suspense by withholding information/ using coincidence/ providing the reader with information that the characters do not have, etc.

to retain/ withhold/ hold back information from the reader

to retain interest

9. SYMBOLS

a symbol allowing of a variety of interpretations/ defying single interpretation a symbol conveys/ represents/ indicates the idea/ concept/ notion of ... a symbolic/ suggestive character/ action/ object/ detail, etc. an allegory

an effective/ striking/ unexpected/ powerful/ significant/ easily conceivable/ universal/ traditional symbol

the author relies on symbols to intensify the idea

the author uses symbols in unexpected ways

the author's use of symbols requires (no) elaborate interpretation

the images/ objects represent abstract ideas/ feelings

the meaning of the symbol changes at this/ that point

the story/ novel, etc., is heavily marked with symbols

the story has two layers of meaning

the story uses symbols extensively

the symbol has a straightforward meaning

the symbol has different meanings/ levels of meaning

to acquire a symbolic meaning in the context of a story/ novel, etc.

to be an image of something

to be related to/ based on/ associated with something

to be rich in implications

to carry positive/ negative connotation

to discover/ perceive/ examine symbols

to provide analogy for something to serve as a sign/ reflection of ...

to symbolize/ to signify/ to suggest/ to denote/ to embody/ to represent/ to stand for something

10. TONE

ironic/ bitter/ mild humour

the actions/ words/ descriptions of the characters are intended to provoke/ cause laughter

the author creates/ assumes/ establishes/ maintains a sympathetic/ mocking/ romantic/ lyrical/ dramatic/ sentimental tone

the author criticizes/ laughs at/ attacks/ makes fun of/ exposes ruthlessly/ portrays satirically ...

the author displays ornate/ somewhat florid/ highly figured/ flamboyant/ exuberant style

the author makes ample use of/ relies heavily on epithets/ similes/ metaphors, etc., to achieve a ... effect

the author ridicules/ satirizes different moral and social types/ social conventions, etc.

the author uses irony to expose human wickedness, etc. - the description is vigorous/ dynamic/ subdued/ vivid, etc.

the device permits an unprecedented revelation of feelings and motives

the expressive vocabulary contributes to the creation of this mood/ is rich in connotations/ suggests connotations of ...

the general/ predominant/ prevailing mood of the text is highly emotional/ bitter/ sad/ gloomy/ good-humoured/ lyrical, etc.

the language of the story abounds in emotively charged words, such as ...

the language of the story is vivid/ precise/ metaphorical/ elaborate/ ornate/ imaginative/ simple/ colloquial/ bookish/ pompous/ high-flown/ picturesque, etc.

the narrative bursts with emotion when ...

the narrative is permeated with mock seriousness/ rationalistic scepticism/ deep feeling/ drama/ conflicting emotions/ sentimentality/ distrust of ...

the satire is aimed/ directed at ...

the shift in tone/ change in mood occurs when ...

the story is carefully worded to reveal the depth the characters' feelings/ the author's sympathy and delight with..., etc.

the story is full of humour/ irony/ satire

the tone alters as the story unfolds

the tone is sarcastic/ light-hearted/ cheerful/ melancholy/ personal/ impassive/ earnest/ matter-of-fact/ casual/ unemotional/ detached/ excited/ agitated/ moralizing, etc.

the writer uses lyrical passages/ imagery/ unexpected comparisons/ certain figures of speech/ symbolism/ deliberate exaggeration/ a round-about way of referring to things to create the desired mood of joy/ sadness/ confusion, etc., in the reader

with inimitable verve/ sparkling humour/ extraordinary vitality/ remarkable imagination/ exceptional lucidity/ cool indifference/ unrivalled wit/ bleak pessimism/ melancholy sensibility/ assertive optimism/ striking cynicism

V. CONNECTORS AND MODIFIERS FOR EXPRESSING THE OPINION

The expression of opinion in modern English depends to a considerable extent on the correct use of connecting words or phrases that help the reader or listener to understand what is being said. Such words or phrases may be used to show how an argument is organized, to prepare the reader for what is coming next or to convey the tone of what is being said.

A. Developing an Argument

1. Sequence

Most people develop an argument by making a series of points. This can be done numerically – **first, second, third** – but the following phrases are more commonly used:

Point 1: **In the first place, To begin with, To start with, First of all**.

For one thing is more conversational, and usually suggests that the speaker has not yet thought of all his reasons and listed them in his mind, so it is best to avoid it in writing.

Point 2: **Secondly, In the second place.**

These lead the reader or listener to expect further reasons, and should not be used unless more than two points are being made.

In addition to that tends to be used for the second and final reason.

Apart from that, Moreover (formal) and **What is more** (conversational) indicate second reasons of a rather different kind, but tending towards the same conclusion:

e.g. Fewer people are going on holiday in the Mediterranean this year. **In the first place**, *the economic situation is serious, and many are staying at home*. **Apart from that**, *an increasing number of people are being attracted to more distant places*.

Besides is used for a second and normally conclusive, reason that is so strong that it almost makes the first reason irrelevant:

e.g. I don't really think we can afford to go there again for our holiday this year. **Besides**, *I am tired of the place – I don't want to go there*.

Final Point: **Finally, Lastly**.

Above all indicates that the last point is the most important. Conclusion (not necessarily the last point in a list, but as the beginning of the last paragraph, to show that the argument is coming to an end, or you are summarizing it).

In conclusion, To sum up

These are markers indicating that you have reached this stage of the argument.

Taking everything into account, All things considered, All in all.

These indicate that you are summarizing all the points made and reaching a conclusion, whether or not the points listed agree.

In brief, In short, In a word (the last two more conversational).

These indicate that you are going to summarise the points made briefly, and should only be used if you are brief.

2. Examples

When you wish to give an example of what you mean in making a point, use:
For example, For instance.

3. Contrast

In some cases, you may want to conduct your argument not by making a list of points that all point in the same direction but by contrasting the opinions of one group with another. This can be done very simply by writing **but** instead of **and** or by using concession clauses with **although, in spite of** etc.

In written argument, the most common connecters to indicate a point that to some extent contradicts or limits a previous statement are:

However, Nevertheless, All the same, At the same time

After all is used to indicate a strong argument against the previous point that appears not to have been considered:

e.g. I am surprised you haven't invited Joan to go on holiday with you. **After all,** *she is your sister.*

On the other hand is used in balanced arguments (see below) but often appears alone simply to indicate an alternative point of view:

e.g. Most people seem to think that the spread of tourism in the area has done a lot of harm. **On the other hand,** *it has cured the unemployment problem here.*

In contrast is used to indicate that the alternative point of view that follows is in direct contrast to what has gone before:

e.g. Ecologists are very critical of the spread of tourism in the area. **In contrast,** *hotel managers are all in favour of it.*

4. Balance

The connecters used for contrast tend to favour the second point raised at the expense of the first. When presenting both sides of an argument as equal, it is best to use **On the one hand,** … and **On the other hand.**

5. Cause and effect

Because of … and **Owing to** … indicate why something has taken place or is being proposed **Due to** … is also used in this context, but, strictly speaking, should only be used as a compliment to the verb **be**. Compare:

e.g. The flight was cancelled **because of** *the fog.*

The cancellation of the flight **was due to** *the fog.*

When a reason or reasons have been given, the argument can continue with **For this reason, For these reasons, As a result, In consequence, Consequently.**

That is why is more conversational, **Therefore** and **Thus** are more formal.

For one reason or another is used when the speaker does not know the reason.

B. Establishing Facts

This usually appears in contrast to appearance, what seems to be true or is believed to be true. Here are two ways of contrasting appearance and fact:

e.g. **At first sight (on the face of it)**, *the village seems unspoiled, but* **in fact** *it has been completely altered. The village is* **apparently** *unspoiled, but* **actually** *it has been completely altered.*

More emphatic forms of **In fact** are **The fact is that** … and **The fact of the mater is that** …

As a matter of fact means 'In fact, although it may surprise you …'.

e.g. It's not the first time I've visited this island. **As a matter of fact**, *I was born here*.

In practice is used in contrast to **In theory** or **In principle** to show the reality compared to the idea or the original intention. **In effect** is close to **In fact** in meaning and usage. It suggests 'for practical purposes'. An alternative is **To all intents and purposes.**

C. Expressing a Personal Opinion

When you want to make it clear that what you are saying is a personal, as distinct from a general opinion, use one of the following:

In my opinion, In my view, To my mind, As I see it (more conversational).

Personally and **For my part** tend to contrast the individual opinion with that of the majority.

As far as I am concerned means 'in so far as the matter affects me'. It is less likely to appear in written argument than in speech:

e.g. I don't care whether we go to one seaside resort or another.

As far as I'm concerned, *it won't make any difference.*

D. Modifying what is said

There are many ways in which we modify statements by limiting their meaning or pointing to specific circumstances where what is said is correct.

1. General statements

These express what is true in general terms, though not in all circumstances:

In general, As a rule, As a general rule, On the whole, In the main, For the most part.

2. Partly correct

These limit the truth of the statement in general terms:

To some extent, To a certain extent, Up to a point.

In a way and **In a sense** limit the truth in terms of interpretation:

e.g. **In a sense** *one could say that the local people are responsible for what has happened because they welcomed the tourists, but* **on the whole** *they are not really to blame.*

3. Limit of knowledge

The fact that the speaker's knowledge is limited can be expressed by:

As far as I know, To the best of my knowledge.

For all I know suggests ignorance of the topic.

4. Assigning responsibility

According to … By all accounts indicate that responsibility for a statement lies with someone else.

At least is used to avoid personal responsibility:

e.g. I know he intended to come on holiday with us. **At least**, *that is what he told me.*

5. Limited validity

Under the circumstances, As it is, Things being as they are suggest that what is suggested is only valid in the present situation but not in ideal circumstances.

E. Intensifying what is said

1. Obviously

One way of intensifying what is said is to suggest that it is obvious to everyone by using of these:

Clearly, obviously, of course, Needless to say, As everyone knows.

2. Especially

Another way is to draw attention to a particular aspect:

In particular, especially.

Note that **especially** will appear within the sentence as an adverb and not as a connector at the beginning.

e.g. They had very bad weather on holiday, **especially** *during the first week.*

3. More noticeably

Let alone and **Not to mention** are used to indicate a more noticeable example of the same thing:

e.g. The taxi fare to the airport was very expensive, **let alone** *the cost of the flight itself.*

F. Rephrasing what is said

The most common phrases indication that the speaker is going to rephrase what has been said are:

In other words, That is to say.

VI. ELEMENTS OF STYLE

When assessing written work we usually consider two aspects of it: what is said, and how is said. It often happens that the content is interesting enough, but the mode of expressing it is poor, and not because there are mistakes in spelling or grammar. The form may be poor even if grammar is correct – in this case we say that the style is bad. The style is bad when the sentences are monotonous, the vocabulary is poor, and the writing is unimaginative. The style is bad, too, when the form does not suit the subject of the composition. The same basic content can be expressed in different ways or styles. Just as a builder can use bricks and mortar to construct almost anything from a shack to a palace, we use the same raw material – English words and grammar – to describe different subjects and to express a wide variety of ideas in appropriate style.

Expressive Means of the English Language.

The English language has its own system of expressive means – words and phrases which help to add vividness to the description and with the help of it to touch the reader's imagination. These words and phrases are used figuratively (metaphorically) and the basis of such uses is certain relations between things or notions, very frequently on the similarity or resemblance of objects.

Metaphor. A metaphor is a way of speaking or writing in which a word or phrase is used to mean or describe something quite different from what it usually expresses. Such transference of meaning is based on similarity of objects or notions. ***Personification*** is a special kind of metaphor in which abstract ideas or inanimated objects are identified with persons, that is, are ascribed human characteristics or actions.

In the sentence *'The news you've brought is dagger to my heart',* the word dagger is used metaphorically, it denotes the striking, painful effect produced by the news, comparable to the cruel pain produced by dagger.

Here are some more examples:

Though he was in the sunset of his days, he was yet strong and coarsely made, with harsh and severe features, indicative of much natural sagacity and depth of thought.

In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and one there with icy fingers. (O. Henry)

Metonymy. Metonymy is a case of one word used for another on account of some actual logical relations between things denoted or notions expressed by the two words. Here are some characteristic examples:

I was ready for my knife and fork. (Ch. Dickens) (dinner is meant here)

She liked to read Dreiser and other American authors. (The writer is named instead of his works.)

His mind was alert and people asked him to dinner not for old times' sake but because he was worth his salt. (S. Maugham)

Simile. Simile is an imaginative comparison of objects belcoing to different classes. It differs from a metaphor in having two elements and thus no transference of meaning. A simile can easily be recognized by the conjunctions *as, like, as it, just as* joining its two elements.

The old-fashioned brass knocker on the low arched door ... twinkled like a sta. (Ch. Dickens)

Quaint little windows, though as old as the hills, were as pure as any snow that ever fell upon the hills. (Ch. Dickens)

A simile should not be confused with a comparison which is a grammatical phenomenon, whereas a simile is a stylistic device.

He is as tall as his brother. (comparison)

He is as tall as a lamp-post (a simile)

Epithets are words or phrases used attributively, which reveal the author's attitude to a thing or notion; they are usually emotionally coloured, while many attributes are not.

Compare: grey hair (attribute) and golden hair (epithet)

She was a faded white rabbit of a woman. (A. Cronin)

During the past few weeks she had become most sharply conscious of the smiling interest of Hauptwanger. His straight lithe body – his quick, aggressive manner – his assertive, seeking eyes. (Th. Dreiser)

Hyperbole is a stylistic device in which emphasis is achieved through deliberate exaggeration. It is one of the most common expressive means used by all writers. They resort to it when they want to intensify the quantitative aspect of the described objects. Hyperbole can be expressed by all notional parts of speech.

I was scared to death when he entered the room. (J.D. Salinger)

Her family is one aunt about a thousand years old. (F.S. Fitzgerald)

Four loudspeakers attached to the flagpole emitted a shattering roar of what Benjamin could hardly call music, as if it were played by a collection of brass bands, a few hundred fire engines, a thousand blacksmiths' hammers and the amplified reproduction of a force-twelve wind. (A. Saxton)

But when the size, shape, dimensions, characteristic features of the object are not overrated, but intentionally underrated, we deal with ***understatement.***

She wore a pink hat, the size of a button. (J. Reed)

The little woman, for she was of pocket size, crossed her hands solemnly on her middle. (J. Galsworthy)

She was a sparrow of a woman. (Ph. Larkin)

Oxymoron is a phrase that combines 2 words that seem to be the opposite of each other.

A neon sign reads "Welcome to Reno – the biggest little town in the world." (A. Miller)

Their bitter-sweet union did not last long. (A. Cronin)

She was a damned nice woman, too. (E. Hemingway)

He behaved pretty lousily to Jan. (D. Cusack)

Irony is a stylistic device by which the words and phrases are used to express a meaning opposite to their direct meaning. The context is arranged so that the qualifying word or phrase reverses the direction of evaluation, and the word positively charged is understood by the reader as a negative qualification.

She turned with the sweet smite of an alligator. (J. Steinbeck)

"I have nothing to add except my thanks for your politeness," said Miss Murdstone. "Bah! Stuff and nonsense!" said my aunt. "Don't talk to me!"

"How exquisitely polite," exclaimed Miss Nurdstone. "Overpowering, really!" (Ch. Dickens)

Several months ago a magazine named 'Playboy' which concentrates editorially on girls, books, girls, art, girls, music, fashion, girls and girls, published an article about old-time science-fiction. ("Morning Star")

Pun is based on the interaction of 2 well-known meanings of a words or phrase.

– Did you hit a woman with a child?

– No, Sir, I hit her with a brick.

Zeugma is the use of a word in the same grammatical but different semantic relations to 2 adjacent words in one context, the semantic relations being on the one hand literal, on the other, transferred.

She let him carry umbrella and her impossible character.

Examples

Metaphor

1. The clock had struck, time was bleeding away.
2. There had been rain in the night and now all the trees were curtseying to a fresh wind.
3. Another night, the heat of my room sent me out into the streets.
4. The laugh in her eyes died out and was replaced by something else.
5. The slash of sun on the wall above him slowly knifes down, cuts across his chest, becomes a coin on the floor and vanishes.
6. The music came to him across the now bright, now dull, slowly burning cigarette of each man's life, telling him its ancient secret of all men intangible, unfathomable defying long-winded description.

Personification

1. All the time the big Pacific Ocean suffered sharp pains down below and tossed about to prove it.
2. The moon held a finger to her lips.

Metonymy

1. It was a representative gathering – science, politics, business
2. He drank one more glass (of whisky)
3. She bought some china.
4. We have two Renoirs.
5. He is the sharpest pen in our redaction.
6. They hate skinheads.

Irony

1. It is delightful to find oneself in a foreign country without a penny in one's pocket!

2. Stoney smiled the sweet smile of an alligator.

Zeugma

1. There comes a period in every man's life, but she's just a semicolon in his.
2. "Have you been seeing any spirits?" inquired the old gentleman. "Or taking any?" added Bob Allen.

Pun

1. – What is the difference between a schoolmaster and an engine – driver? – One trains the mind and the other minds the train.

Epithet

1. The room was old and tired.
2. I-am-not-that-kind-of-girl look.
3. The giant of a man.
4. He gave us a marvelously radiant smile.

Oxymoron

1. He was certain the whites could easily detect his adoring hatred of them
2. Welcome to Reno, the biggest little town
3. Parting is a sweet sorrow (Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet)

5

VII. PATTERNS FOR PRACTICE

Text № 1.

Aim: present a short summary of the story

Most important hour in a family's day.

By Harriet Webster (from reader's Digest. June. 1995)

1. Reading Exercise.

Read the article carefully making use of the vocabulary which is intended to aid your comprehension of the text.

Consult a dictionary for some other unfamiliar words.

(paragraph 1) to have hectic schedules – быть в цейтноте (о времени)
(prgh. 1) to abandon – отказываться
(prgh. 2) to erode – постепенно разрушаться
(prgh. 3) demise – зд.: исчезновение, отказ от
(prgh. 4) pandemonium of sibling skirmishes – шум сражений между братьями
(prgh. 4) touchstone – критерий, подлинная ценность
(prgh. 4) rehashing today – подведение итогов дня
(prgh. 5) to recapture – вернуть
(prgh. 5) to revitalize – вдохнуть новую жизнь
(prgh. 8) to dominate – доминировать, преобладать
(prgh. 8) interrogation – допрос, опрос
(prgh. 11) to ignore – игнорировать
(prgh. 11) crucial – решающий
(prgh. 13) ritual – ритуальный
(prgh. 13) to imbue – вселять, вдохновлять
(prgh. 13) to say grace – читать молитву
(prgh. 13) blessing – молитва
(prgh. 14) exodus – массовый уход, бегство
(prgh. 14) contemplative – созерцательный, умозрительный
(prgh. 15) to stimulate – побуждать, поощрять
(prgh. 16) to encourage – воодушевлять, вселять надежду
(prgh. 16) to guard against – защищать, оберегать
(prgh. 17) to wrestle – бороться, противостоять
(prgh. 18) to bully – задираться
(prgh. 20) to steer (the talk) – направить (беседу)
(prgh. 21) frustrating – разочаровывающий
(prgh. 22) to clam up – прекращать разговор, замолкать
(prgh. 25) to sulk – дуться, быть сердитым

Recapture that special time when you and your children gather to share today's news and plan for tomorrow

1. Waiting on the sidelines for my son's football practice to finish, I was getting anxious "I wish they'd hurry," I mumbled to a neighbour standing near by. "We have to get home for dinner."

"Dinner?" she asked. "You mean a family dinner? You must be joking. We save that for holidays and special occasions."

2. Unfortunately, this attitude is becoming increasingly common. Like many other families, my neighbour, her husband and children have hectic schedules and rarely find themselves together at dinner time. Yet, by abandoning this daily routine, they're ignoring its importance.

3. If the traditional family is eroding – and many people think it is - one key reason is the demise of family dinner time. "In the past", says columnist Ann Landers, "that's where family members always connected. That's where children learned most of their values. Sad to say, too many kids now come home to an empty house and find a note saying, "I won't be home till later. There's stuff in the fridge for supper".

4. When my three sons where growing up, dinner separated the late-afternoon pandemonium of sibling skirmishes and after-school activities from homework and bedtime routines. Our dinner served as a touchstone, symbolizing our importance to one another in good times and bad. Dinner was a time for slowing down, telling news, airing problems, rehashing today and planning for tomorrow.

5. I'm not arguing for a return to the 1950s, when mum stayed at home and took care of the house. But families need to continue sharing dinner, in whatever way works best for them.

Here are some tips to help you recapture or revitalize this endangered tradition:

- **Make the family dinner everyone's responsibility.**

6. A survey of working mothers in the US found that 77 per cent of them make dinner alone. Meanwhile, many dual-career parents complain that they can't find time to spend with their children. Both problems can be solved by getting children to work in the kitchen before and after dinner.

7. Decide who's going to do what during the meal's preparation and clearing up, depending upon the ages of your children. What's important is that you all do it together. Working alongside one another encourages heart-to-heart talk.

- **Create a friendly atmosphere.**

8. Writer Janice Rosenberg remembers the discomfort she felt as a child when dinner conversation was dominated by criticism and interrogation. This ranged from "Sit up straight" to "Have you learnt your spelling?"

9. Determined never to treat her own children that way, Janice sticks with the old but wonderful rule: treat guests like family and family like guests. "A guest who spills her milk isn't called an idiot," she says. Above all, avoid using dinner time as lecture time.

- **Avoid interruptions.**

10. “We had two rules at our house,” comments American humorist Erma Bombeck, mother of free. “The first was: ‘Either show up for dinner or bring a note from God excusing you. ‘The second: Absolutely no one uses the phone while we’re eating’.”

11. If you can’t ignore the phone, consider the solution of Daine Dittermore. “We have a designated answerer who says, ‘We have a designated answerer who says, ‘We’re having dinner at the moment. I’ll ask him or her to call you back as soon as we’ve finished.’

She says it’s crucial that the rule applies to parents as well as children.

- **Turn off the TV.**

12. Television is the primary dinner distraction. A poll showed that among families in the US with children under the age of 18 living at home, 42 per cent spend dinner time watching TV. Even worse, children who microwave their own dinners and eat in front of the television lose the sense that family time is more important than TV time.

- **Build family rituals.**

13. David Kertez, author of Ritual, Politics, and Power (Yale University Press, £ 10-50), stresses that tradition imbues certain times and places with special significance. Jim and Emily Angelini always say grace before starting dinner with their two daughters, Stephanie, 12, and Maria, nine. The blessing reminds the family to be thankful and sets a tone of relaxed togetherness.

14. Just as important, closing rituals prevent children from making a gradual exodus from the table. Lawyer David Babson sometimes asks one of his three children to read a poem at the end of dinner. It’s a gentle way of leaving everyone with a peaceful, contemplative moment. Psychologist Douglas Abbott and his wife Marry often finish Sunday dinner by reading a Bible story to their children. “It’s our family spiritual time,” he says.

- **Become a story-teller.**

15. Instead of risking the classic stalemate – Dad: “What did you do today?” Son: “Nothing” – try stimulating a child with a story of your own. Children who hear their parents talk over problems are more likely to describe their disappointments and successes at the dinner table too.

16. Elinor Ochs, an applied-linguistics lecturer at the University of California, who has studied dinner customs and conversations, says the most successful dinner times involve story-telling. Too often, however, parents get the children to tell stories but contribute few of their own. “Typically,” she says, “the mother encourages the child to tell a story, and then the father acts as the critic, judging the child’s actions. Parents need to guard against this.”

17. Perhaps the biggest value of story-telling is that it provides an easy path into any complex issue. “Everyone enjoys a good story,” Elinor Ochs says, “especially the younger members of the family who might otherwise have trouble wrestling with complex ideas.”

18. Story-telling is also valuable for problem-solving. Five years ago, my son Ben mentioned a child at day camp who kept bullying him. Sitting round the dinner table, Ben's two older brothers and I started wondering why. It turned out that it was the boy's first time there he didn't know anybody. Someone recommended Ben use reverse psychology and ask the boy to join in some activity with him and his friends.

19. The next night, Ben told us the new boy wasn't so bad. In fact, Ben had invited him over to play the following Saturday.

- **Broaden the discussion to include everyone.**

20. After one child's report of the day's events, steer the talk towards broader issues. John Ronan lives with his wife and two stepsons near the coast. One evening at dinner, 17-year-old Ben was complaining about his summer job on a fishing boat. Each day they pulled up lots of worthless fish instead of the cod they sought. Detaching the unwanted ones, throwing them back and resetting the lines was time-consuming work that cut into Ben's pay-packet.

21. "It must be frustrating to work hard and not get much for it," John commented. Then he steered the conversation towards a wider topic, and soon the family was discussing everything from the work ethic to regulations governing commercial fishing. Ben began to see the relationship between his own situation and problems that beset the industry as a whole.

- **Play games**

22. Paul Iaffaldano, an advertising salesman, recalls how his daughters Paige, eight, and Blair, six, used to clam up at dinner when asked about school. That changed when they invented a game called Truth or Lie. Now everyone takes turns relating what happened that day. Once in a while, someone throws in a tall tale to see if the others can detect it.

23. "When we were growing up," reminisces American broadcaster Katie Couric, "my dad asked each of us four kids to bring a new word to the dinner table every night. The other kids would have to guess the meaning. My favorites were 'incongruous' and 'perspicacity."

- **Invite a guest to dinner.**

24. New faces at the table mean new ideas and a fresh point of view. Playwright Israel Horovitz remembers his parents always had lively Sunday dinners with family and friends. "My mother's side of the family told jokes, and we all doubled up laughing," says Horovitz. "My father's side sat quietly and told impressive success stories." Now, with wife Gillian and their nine-year-old twins, Horovitz keeps up the tradition of inviting friends or colleagues to dinner. Their dinner hour, he says, is filled with both "lots of jokes and lots of success stories."

25. Times change and families change. But one of the constants in life is the importance of the family dinner. As Erma Bombeck notes of her own childhood dinner times: "We argued. We sulked. We laughed. We asked for favours. We shouted. We listened. It is still our family's finest hour. "

2. Text Features.

Before you fulfill the tasks that follow, study the explanations in the box and do the sample exercises.

The article consists of several **paragraphs.**

A paragraph is a group of sentences all of which help develop a central point or idea.

There is usually one sentence in the paragraph which tells about all of the other sentences. It is called **a topic sentence**.

The other sentences in the paragraph are details which support the topic sentence.

Sample exercise 1. Find the topic sentence in paragraphs 1and 2.

Paragraph 1

The topic sentence: "we have to get home for dinner."

Paragraph 2

The topic sentence: "Like many other families, my neighbour, her husband and children have hectic schedules and rarely find themselves at dinner time."

The **topic** tells what the author is writing about. We also need to find out what the author thinks about the topic. Then we shall have the main idea. **The main idea** is the idea which the author wishes to express about the topics.

Sample exercise 2. State the topic and the main ideas in paragraphs 3 and 4.

Paragraph 3

The topic : family dinner time.

The main idea: The traditional family is eroding… and one key reason is the demise of family dinner time.

Paragraph 4

The topic: family dinner time.

The main idea: Dinner in the author's family served as a touchstone, symbolizing their importance to one another in good times and bad.

A. Read each paragraph and decide on its topic. Then think about the idea that the author wishes to express about the topic.

Write out the main idea sentence of each paragraph. You will get about 20 sentences.

B. Get ready to present a short summary of the whole article basing on the main idea sentences.

Text № 2.

Aim: retell the story with the elements of text analysis

A japanese legend

There is a strange belief among the Japanese people that mirrors have souls. The reason for this belief is that they say that the mirror takes to itself, something of the owner's spirit, by constantly reflecting the person's image. They, therefore, treat mirrors with care and **reverence**, believing that from being used by so many generations, the mirror will reflect the various qualities of character of people who used it. Mirrors have an honourable place in Japanese household, and are never thrown away, but passed down from one generation to another. Here is a short story which illustrates the high **esteem** in which some Japanese families held their fashionable articles of toilet.

There was a certain house in the town of Kyoto, which people avoided. The reason for their fear was that two of the former owners of the house had drowned themselves in the well that stood in the **courtyard**. Both of these tenants had apparently been very happy and there seemed no cause for them to **commit suicide**, yet both had become **victims** of some wicked spell.

The house had been lying empty for some time, as no one was willing to occupy a place with such a bad reputation, and so it was let very cheaply to Matsumura, a poor priest. He had come to the city to try to get a grant from the Regent for the restoration of the temple in his own country village.

Shortly after Marsumura **took over the tenancy** of the house, a great **drought** occurred in that area. Water became very scarce and many wells and reservoirs dried up. Matsumura's well was one of the few that did not go dry and it allowed many people to come and draw water from it.

One day there was an outcry in the courtyard. A young man had been found drowned in the well. Only then did Matsumura recall all the queer stories about this strange house. Once more, the people of the neighbourhood shunned the house and went to draw their water elsewhere, leaving Matsumura alone.

As he sat on the brink of the well, Matsumura kept turning these strange happenings over and over in his mind and there seemed to be no solution for their tragic **occurrences.** All at once, he started, for something white appeared in the dark water below. It was a very beautiful woman. She smiled sadly at the priest. Matsumura felt his knees melt with fright. He had hardly strength to run from the well. When he had sufficiently **recovered from the spell** which she seemed to have cast over to him, he called some men to help him to cover the well. They weighed the lid down with great stones and logs, so that no one else might **fall a victim** to the **enchantress** beneath.

That night, there came a knock at Matsumura's door. He opened it and saw the maid of the well standing in the moonlight. In spite of his terror, the priest cried, **"Witch,** what do you want? Why have you drawn people to their death? I shall call on the good spirit to drive you away".

The maiden stopped him and, holding up her hands, said, "Kind sir, I am no witch. I desired not the death of those good men. I only wanted their help. The water is low. Search for my body and then at last I shall be at rest".

So saying, she walked across the courtyard and despite the heavy cover, she melted into the well like a **wisp** of smoke. Matsumura spent a troubled night thinking on the **plight** of the phantom maid and wondering what the **outcome** of it all would be. Early next morning he told his story to the neighbours, who, though they remained

doubtful, were willing to help him explore the mysteries of the well. Then they had searched the well thoroughly, all that they found was a mirror covered with **mud** and **slime**.

Matsumura did not scoff at the discovery like the others. He carefully cleaned it and found it was made of silver. On the back, beneath an **engraving** of the sacred mountain, there were inscriptions which he could not read **save** for a few scattered dates and names. He wrapped the mirror in a cloth and put it away, waiting for the maiden, who, he felt sure, would return.

Sure enough, one evening he raised his eyes from his holy book to see her standing before him again. "Kind priest", she said, "I thank you for your **rescue** and your care of me. I am the soul of the mirror. I belonged in ancient times to Lady Kamo of the Court and had been an **heirloom** in her family for many years. One day however, a jealous lady, **in a fit of spite**, threw me into that well. After reflecting so much beauty and gladness, sunshine and colour, I lay in the darkness far from human touch. I **longed** to escape. Oh priest, give me to Lord Yoshimasa, the **descendant** of my first mistress and I shall be happy again." With these words, she **vanished**.

Lord Yoshimasa was the **Regent** of the province and he was the one with whom Matsumura had long **sought an audience**. The priest set out with the mirror next day and went up to the Regent's palace, saying that he wished to restore an heirloom that belonged to the Regent. He was brought into his presence and Lord Yoshimasa was so pleased with the story that he accepted the mirror and readily agreed to the money to grant restore the temple.

Matsumura, his mission completed, returned to his village with the joyful news. The mirror spent the rest of its days happily, for it remained in the possession of Yoshimasa's little daughter, who treated it with the loving care it deserved.

How well did you read?

1. What strange belief do Japanese have about mirrors?
2. Why do they hold this belief?
3. What happens to mirrors in Japan?
4. Why was the house in Kyoto avoided?
5. Why was Matsumura able to rent the house so cheaply?
6. What was Matsumura's purpose in coming to Kyoto?
7. What occurrence brought the people back to Matsumura's house?
8. What happened after they came back?
9. What appeared to Matsumura at the well?
10. Why did he cover up the well?
11. What happened that night?
12. What did the phantom maid ask Matsumura to do?
13. What did they find in the well?
14. What was inscribed on the back of the mirror?

15. What was Matsumura doing when the maiden appeared again?

16. Tell the maid's story as to how she came to be in the well.

17. Who was the descendant of her first mistress and what connection had he with Matsumura?

18. What happened when Matsumura went to the Regent's palace?

19. Why would the villagers be pleased to see Matsumura on his return?

20. What happened to the mirror?

Text. **Most important hour in a family's day**.
By Harriet Webster (from reader's Digest. June. 1995)

Recapture that special time when you and your children gather to share today's news and for tomorrow

The author points out that many families in modern society rarely find themselves together at dinner time. He believes that if the traditional family is eroding , one key reason is the demise of family dinner time. *To a certain extend* that's where children used to learn most of their values.

On the one hand dinner served as a touchstone, symbolizing our importance to one another in good times and bad. *On the other hand* dinner was a time for slowing down, telling news, airing problems, rehashing today and planning for tomorrow.

Consequently the author insists that families need to continue sharing dinner, in whatever way works best for them.

In this connection the author suggests some tips to help recapture or revitalize this endangered tradition:

- *In the first place,* ***make*** **the family dinner everyone's responsibility.**

Moreover get children to work with you in the kitchen before and after dinner *because* working alongside one another encourages heart-to-heart talk.

- *Secondly*, **create a friendly atmosphere –** no criticism and interrogation. *Besides,* treat guests like family and family like guests.

Above all both parents and children follow the rule -

- **Avoid phone while eating.** He ironically suggests – "Either show up for dinner or bring a note from God excusing you".
- *In addition to that* **turn off the TV** *for* television is the primary dinner distraction.

Apart from that **build family rituals.** They prevent children from making a gradual exodus from the table.

- *What is more* **become a story-teller as** children who hear their parents talk over problems are more likely to describe their disappointments and successes at the dinner table too. Consequently, perhaps the biggest value of story-telling is that it provides an easy path into any complex issue and problem-solving.
- *Above all* **broaden the discussion to include everyone** as after one child's report of the day's events, you may steer the talk towards broader issues.
- *At least* **play games** or **invite a guest to dinner** – new faces at the table mean new ideas and a fresh point of view.

In fact times change and families change. But Harriet Webster sticks to the point that one of the constants in life is the importance of the family dinner.

VIII. LIST OF WORKS USED

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