



# **Literature in the online EFL classroom: Promoting extensive reading.**

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## Introduction

### Objectives

Literature played a central role in some of the earliest incarnations of modern foreign/second language studies. It was integral to Grammar Translation, which was the dominant methodology between the 1840s and the 1940s (Richards and Rodgers, 2001), and took the notion that “Literary language is superior to spoken language” as writ (Mambrol, 2020, “Principles” subsection, Bullet-point 3). However, literature began to fall out of favour with the onset of globalisation, as the demands on language learners became increasingly focused on actual, real world communication, as opposed to simply being an intellectual pursuit of the wealthy, educated elite. The Communicative method that was born from this shift, became the pre-eminent methodology of the following period, meaning that literature was side-lined, not in part due to its association with the now antiquated Grammar Translation (GT) method. As Mambrol (2020) points out, GT did literature a double disservice, not only turning a generation of language practitioners and students against it, but also, throughout the time it was the cornerstone of GT, its contents were not examined or discussed by students. It was only used as it was considered to possess *high level* language that was worthy of translation, its abundant value as a window into another time, place and culture, or as a catalyst for lively, meaningful debate of a myriad of often difficult or taboo issues, was entirely overlooked (Collie and Slater, 1987).

It is only in the relatively recent past that literature has seen somewhat of a resurgence in popularity, with many educators realising its potential due to the attributes outlined above and more. An additional asset of using literature in the language classroom, and one that is

a key element of this study, is its inherent value in promoting Extensive Reading outside of the classroom, the benefits of which are many and varied. By holding up the use of authentic literary texts against reading exercises specifically designed or adapted for language learners, this paper hopes to examine the ways in which literature can be utilised, inspiring students to incorporate regular Extensive Reading (ER) into their self-study routines.

Another factor that will be investigated throughout this research, is the way in which modern technology can be used in the administration of these literature-based classes. We will look at ways to augment and support the use of literature, with the ultimate goal of promoting extensive reading in mind. The classes took place via the online meeting application, Zoom, and this presented certain advantages and disadvantages to a traditional face-to-face class. These will be discussed, and suggestions made for alternative approaches which could be carried out during similar research in the future.

On a more personal note, whilst I have limited experience in using literature with my students, I have long suspected that it would be a powerful tool, both for inspiring debate within the classroom, and inspiring ER outside of it. Recently, I have been working within the Online EFL Sector, and though a project of this kind would have been impossible to carry out with my current employer, I was extremely interested in the way that the medium could connect learners from many different backgrounds, and the way that this mirrored the often unifying, universal nature of literature itself. Some aspects of the digital realm are extremely egalitarian, and knowing that with a laptop, a WIFI connection and a group of

volunteers, I would be able to test these notions, I proceeded with the intention of meeting the following objectives:

- To collect qualitative data on student's attitudes and current habits with regards to the use of literature in the language classroom and extensive reading in English.
- To promote extensive reading through the use of literature in the classroom.
- To use literary texts as a catalyst for discussion, thus developing students speaking skills.
- To use the online setting to promote elements of Connectivism (Siemens, 2004).

## **Literature Review**

After its central role in the GT method, and its subsequent shunning by the majority of the language teaching community, it is true that, recently, literature has experienced increased interest from academics and in-service teachers alike. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when this resurgence began, but Carter (2007) claims, in terms of research at least, literature was absent from the second language acquisition landscape up until 1986. Paran (2008) cites two "state-of-the-art" papers as being crucial to this sea change, Lott (1988) and, a little under a decade later, Gilroy and Parkinson (1996). It seems strange, however, that there would be such a lull in activity over this period, and Paran himself admits that the primary concern of Lott's study was the way in which linguistics were influencing the world of literary criticism, with only a small section devoted to L1 teaching materials, and only a subsection of that, to materials for L2 learners. Gilroy and Parkinson's study was more clearly focused on literature's use in the language learning classroom. It examined elements of literary theory and took into account the reactions of students to the materials that were used, all within the framework of the L2 Communicative method. However, two books, both

of which were meant as resources for language teachers, were published in the intervening years, and these cannot be underestimated in terms of their importance in bringing literature back to the fore.

“Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities” (Collie and Slater, 1987) makes its intentions abundantly clear in its title. It is meant as a tool for use by teachers in the classroom, giving guidance on a number of key issues that many educators may have pondered, yet had no reference for, due to the lack of corresponding texts on the subject. The book itself is divided up into three parts. Part 1 makes the argument for using literature to teach L2, something which would have been necessary at the time, given the prevailing resistance towards the idea. This is also sub-divided into three sections, each attempting to answer the questions: Why teach literature? What should we teach? How should we teach it? Part 2 lists and details a number of varied and engaging literature-based activities, that have been tried and tested in real classroom situations, providing teachers with ideas and inspiration concerning the kinds of tasks they themselves could use with their students. Part 3 looks in-depth at the teaching methodology and techniques that can be applied when working with complete works of literature, and gives some examples of how the activities in Part 2 could be applied to specific novels, short stories and other literary forms. This book in particular, has informed this study, not only in terms of the motivation to use literature, but also in the criteria the texts were selected for, and the way in which the activities were designed and administered.

Collie and Slater’s (1987) breakdown of the benefits of using literary texts was particularly informative, reinforcing beliefs that were previously held, but were rarely afforded

opportunity to be exercised (largely due to the constraints of syllabi, and lack of freedom offered to teachers within the commercial language learning sector). These benefits are listed as being cultural enrichment, language enrichment, the use of authentic texts and literature's ability to engage people on an intimate, personal level. The final element mentioned here is emphasised once more when discussing the type of literature that is suitable for the L2 classroom, stating that if "it is meaningful and enjoyable, reading is more likely to have a lasting and beneficial effect upon the learner's linguistic and cultural knowledge" (p.6). Pellicer-Ortín and Romo-Mayor (2020) were also referenced when considering the selection of texts for this project, as their work features a concise and easy-to-follow "Ten Tips for Using Literature in the Communicative EFL Classroom" (p.23). Points such as "Integrate Different Skills and Critical Thinking" (p.23), "Combine Written Texts with Audio Visual Materials" (p.25) and "Derive Both Accuracy-Orientated and Fluency-Orientated Activities" (p.26) all became essential building blocks when selecting the texts and creating the tasks around them. These sentiments, laid out by Pellicer-Ortín and Romo-Mayor, are echoed by Collie and Slater in the "How" (p.7) section of their book, with similar sub-sections discussing the need to use a variety of activities that activate a variety of skills, supplementing the texts with additional materials to promote the use of different competences, and having students use the target language in varied ways, again, to promote both fluency and accuracy. Similar notions were also espoused by Lazar (1993), further reinforcing these ideas as central when considering the use of literature.

The second book that is a seminal work for the use of literature in the EFL/ESL classroom, and one that became something of a touchstone throughout this project, was "Literature with a Small l" (McRae, 1991). Again, it extolls the virtues of, and elaborates upon, the ideas

mentioned by the texts above, also making a distinction between literature being “representational”, where students imaginations and emotions are being engaged, and non-literary texts being “referential”, where the language largely functional. The book also has significant relevance for its insights into how students read the texts specifically. An entire chapter is devoted to this, “Students and Reading” (p.17), and later we can find two sub-sections in the “Materials” (p.30) chapter which discuss “Readers” (p.43) (meaning graded readers) and “Extensive Reading” (p.44). Both of these are of particular interest, the former, for how its views on graded readers support the argument for using authentic, literary materials, as they expose the reader to a greater range of linguistic features, and not just the sanitised and obvious examples that are deemed acceptable for students of this level or that, and the latter, for its promotion of ER as a way to create enthusiasm for the act of reading among students, increasing the time spent being exposed to the language and, because the texts are literary, increasing their exposure to more diverse syntax and lexis.

There is also a wealth of research with ER as its primary concern. Day and Bamford (1998) were early to champion its worth, summarising twelve separate studies and citing definite improvements in linguistic competence and in writing skills, with possible progress made in vocabulary and spelling when active and consistent ER is carried out. In these early stages of its development, ER was inexorably linked to graded readers, and to this day, this is the understanding of the concept that many hold on to. However, Brown (2009) has pushed for ER to be included in textbook design, incorporating it into interactive, communicative classroom activities. With the rise of Task-Based Learning (TBL) as an increasingly popular methodology in recent years, to many, an attractive alternative to the Communicative method for its holistic approach to the introduction of the target language, and its



compatibility with CLIL curriculums, it is perhaps unsurprising that some have sought ways to marry TBL and ER. Green (2005) makes some valid points about this, stating that for it to be truly effective, ER should be woven into the very fabric of the curriculum. More recently Chen (2018) conducted research that found integrating ER and TBL yielded fantastic results with regards to student motivation and confidence. This type of integration, however, is not entirely relevant for the purposes of this project, as TBL does not lend itself effectively to the timeframe, needs nor setting chosen. For this reason, here, ER is combined with the more traditional Communicative method. Similarly, Macalister (2007) has seen ER's potential in other avenues of language learning, namely, English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This is of interest, as the volunteers for this project were of B2/C1 level in the CEFR, a level that translates to a score of 6.5/7 in IELTS, the minimum requirement for international students to enter many Universities in English speaking countries. This supports the idea that ER can be utilised effectively, and further promoted at this level.

Another interesting development, is the move away from adapted texts towards authentic ones, something previously alluded to in McRae (1991). Wu (2009) makes the case for the use of Young Adult Literature, as opposed to graded readers, as it is not specifically aimed at L2 students, yet is designed to appeal to, and be easily comprehended by, younger L1 readers, perhaps with less developed vocabularies. Despite this, it still offers valuable examples of current, everyday functional language, in addition to idiomatic language and slang. Takase (2009) proposes a compromise of sorts, suggesting that graded readers have their place, to be used as stepping-stones, allowing students to gain confidence in the self-study realm of ER, before moving on to the greater challenges, but ultimately greater rewards, that are common place with authentic literary texts.

Whilst the vast majority of research into ER is positive, it has been noted that ER programs are expensive and often difficult to implement (Davis, 1995). Another interesting criticism has been made by Stephens (2010), suggesting that we may take for granted students ability to *hear* the language internally as native speakers do, particularly those students whose L1 bears few similarities to English. To combat this, she proposes the pre-emptive or simultaneous use of “extensive listening”, allowing students to focus on intonation and pronunciation, as well as the lexical and syntactical content of a text. This is of particular interest, when we consider the use of literature, as intonation is what creates rhythm, a key element in prose and poetry alike. However, we can assume that higher level students, such as the volunteers in this study, have had more exposure to the language, and thus to the natural stress and intonation that forms this rhythm. Also, as Stephens herself admits, , students now have far greater access to examples of spoken English than ever before via the internet, making this less of a concern.

Increased student exposure to spoken English is just one way the internet exerts its influence over this project. The online setting was somewhat dictated by the current pandemic, yet it also provided an opportunity to investigate how this type of class can be carried out using free meeting applications such as Skype or Zoom, something that is valuable when we consider the ever increasing presence of digital learning, and what seems like its inevitable omnipresence in the future. The eight tenets of the Connectivist theory (Siemens, 2004), were referred to frequently when planning and implementing the lessons, with some of them becoming guiding principles, most notably, “Learning and knowledge rests in a diversity of opinions” and “Ability to see connections between fields, ideas and

concepts is a core skill". This was also supported by Carvalho and Goodyear's (2014) notion of "networked learning", where not only connections between ideas are promoted, but connections between students and the teacher, students and their classmates and students and the learning resources. These connections are made infinitely easier in a digital setting, and with the teacher acting as a "curator" (Siemens and Tittenburger, 2009), guiding, but ultimately only facilitating each individual's learning experience, the onus being on them to extend the topics introduced in class, by using the abundance of resources they now have available to them online.

It is evident, from the texts examined here that there are three key areas of research that play large roles in this particular project, namely, the use of literature in the language classroom, the promotion of ER and the use of the internet to create a connected and networked learning experience. Through the combination of these, arguably quite diverse areas of study, the objectives previously outlined were investigated with a view to achieving them, or at the least, gaining further insight into how they could be better achieved in the future.

## **Methodology and Workplan**

### **Materials**

The materials that were used throughout this project were also diverse. In an attempt to hold authentic literary texts up for comparison against texts specifically designed or adapted for L2 readers, it was necessary to source and use examples of both. There was also the question of text/student compatibility, taking into consideration the language difficulty, but also, the texts appeal and so likelihood to promote ER. The practical point of text length had

to be taken into account also, again not wanting to overload the students and cause unnecessary anxiety and demotivation. ER played yet another role when selecting the materials, in that it was necessary to source texts that had sufficient follow-on reading materials that could be suggested to the class for their self-study. The texts could have been of a genre which had multiple other short-stories, or even novels, that were readily available to them online. Similarly, it may have been the authors themselves that were promoted to the class, suggesting other works in their canon or perhaps further reading about their lives. With the original literary lessons, it was also necessary to create all of the additional materials. As previously mentioned, these often included audio/visual listening comprehension tasks, which informed the following discussion questions. In order to increase the multimodality of the class, interactive flashcards and vocabulary tests were also created and administered online using the application, Quizlet. To give a more in-depth account of all the materials included, a rundown of each of the four texts used and the additional materials that supported them can be found below.

### **Session 1: “The Yellow Wall-paper” (Perkins-Gilman, 1892)**

First published in 1892, this short-story by American author Charlotte Perkins-Gilman is considered one of the first works of Feminist Fiction. It also incorporates and subverts elements of the Horror genre and makes many interesting points about mental health, which were incredibly progressive for this period. It was selected as it offered an interesting mixture of genres whilst exploring some controversial and, still to this day, topical issues, ones which were likely to provoke enlivened debate during the class discussions. The mixture of genres, the way the story begins using many of the conventions of a typical ghost story, but comes to its climax in a wholly unexpected manner, would lend itself to questions

concerning reader expectations and how writers are able to toy with these, thus promoting critical thinking skills.

As is to be expected from a text of this period, there is some antiquated language, or more accurately, language that would not be commonly used in general spoken English today, but may still exist in the more formal settings of written legal, political or journalistic English.

With this in mind, there is no reason why students of this level should not be exposed to it, with the caveat that the teacher stresses the correct context for usage when covering the vocabulary. There is, of course, some danger that this language may cause confusion and frustration when the reader is encountering a large number of words that are unfamiliar to them, however, after being checked over thoroughly, the conclusion was reached that the majority of language that might pose problems for this level, was not language that would obscure meaning and thus make the activities impossible to complete. The activities themselves were also carefully crafted to be challenging yet attainable for the students, and before reading, stress was placed on the fact that it was not necessary to understand every single word, and if a passage was effecting your ability to understand the wider text, it was perfectly fine to use a dictionary. It was also decided that the student's ability to read, digest and understand a text of this type, considered by many to be a classic of American Literature, and to then complete the activities and discuss it with their classmates, would hopefully furnish the students with a sense of satisfaction and pride that would lead to increased motivation (McRae, 1991).

The story was supported with the use of an audio/visual listening text, which comprehension and subsequent discussion questions were created around. This text was

sourced from YouTube, more specifically, a channel by the name of Crash Course and can be found via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rteplKeNHPU>. The segment of the video that was used starts at 1.40 mins and ends at 3.55 mins. In this sense, you could say it has been adapted, as this selective use of the video could be seen as presenting an abridged version. However, other than to shorten the listening due to time constraints, and wanting to focus on background information about the author, this is again, an entirely authentic listening text, and one that presents the students with examples of both literary academic language, and everyday idiomatic language, all whilst being spoken at natural speed. The decision to focus on the authors background rather than the host's literary critique of the text, was made for two reasons. By focusing on the biographical elements, I wanted to give the students socio-historical context for the story before we launched the discussion section of the class, and in addition to this, I wanted to avoid undue influence over their own, original opinions regarding the story, thus promoting creative and critical competences. By focusing on the author's undeniably remarkable life, I was also able to recommend some additional reading material on this subject for ER.

**Session 2: "Fifteen Minutes of Fame", Cutting Edge, Upper-Intermediate Student's Book, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Cunningham et al, 2013)**

In order to draw comparisons between students attitudes and reactions regarding the use of literature in the classroom, as opposed to traditional texts found in general English textbooks, examples of these had to be used also. The first such example was found in the Cutting Edge Upper Intermediate book (Cunningham et al, 2013), and took its title from the famous Andy Warhol quote. "Fifteen Minutes of Fame" (p116/117) is not credited in the "Text Acknowledgements" (p180), and so we must assume that it was penned by one of the

co-authors of the textbook itself. The rationale behind using an Upper-Intermediate text was that the class consisted of a mixture of B2 and C1 students, and whilst the intention was to use challenging, authentic works of literature, this was with scaffolding and activities specifically designed to make them attainable for the level. Here the intention was to use both the text and the activities provided by the textbook, and so, it was important to be mindful of the students levels, and to strike a balance that would work for both. It is for this reason that texts from the final unit of the Upper-Intermediate book were used, as this textbook follows the traditional, synthetic style of syllabus design, building in perceived difficulty from beginning to end (Wilkins, 1976), meaning that the tasks included here would be at the higher end of B2 and the lower of C1, the area where the volunteers professed to be.

Another factor which made this text appealing, was the topic. As with the previous literary text, the topic of fame was one which was likely to stir strong opinions, which could then be translated into an active exchange during class discussions. This text is, admittedly, not as multi-dimensional as "The Yellow Wall-paper", focusing solely on one topic and being far more referential than representational (McRae, 1991). It is for this very reason, however, that it is a strong example of a typical reading drawn from a textbook, and, in its defence, it does make efforts to include examples of authentic vocabulary, the target language being entirely made up of informal, everyday phrases that are commonly used when discussing the topic.

In order to review the vocabulary from the previous class, the application Quizlet was utilised to create flashcards and an interactive quiz (see Appendices Item 6). As previously

stated, this was largely inspired by a desire to increase the multimodality of the class, in an effort to appeal to multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Each flashcard had a corresponding picture, which appeared again as prompts during the quiz, providing the students with additional visual guidance and making them more memorable for long-term vocabulary retention. It must be reiterated that the main focus of this study was the students attitudes towards literature, and not its effect on their attainment, however, attainment and motivation are inexorably linked, and it was considered good practice to conduct the class as you would in any other educational situation, albeit without any specific research goals regarding attainment.

### **Session 3: “We Can Get Them For You Wholesale” (Gaiman, 1998)**

The second of the literary texts was again a short-story, however, for this class, a more contemporary one, with central themes quite distinct from those of the “The Yellow Wallpaper”. In this satirical look at the perils of temptation, Gaiman draws upon ancient mythology and biblical tropes to create a humorous tale of an everyman brought to his downfall by his love of a bargain. It was chosen precisely because it is so different to the first of the short stories, wanting to provide the students with a variety of texts to read and discuss, and, as the group would be made up of volunteers, unfamiliar to both the teacher and each other, to attempt to appeal to everyone, without extensive prior knowledge of their tastes. This lack of knowledge as to the likes and dislikes of the class became a central issue, and one that will, again, be discussed at length later.

Despite the differences between the texts, there were certain similarities that would provide a continuity which was desirable. As with the previous story, the reader’s



expectations are subverted, and they are required to be receptive to subtle elements of tone that signify this subversion. This would provide the class with yet more practice in reading representational (McRae, 1991) texts critically in their L2. The students are then required to share their opinions, support and perhaps defend them, giving them another opportunity to articulate their thoughts into a coherent argument.

As with the first class, a listening text was used, on this occasion an interview with the author himself discussing Norse Mythology. It can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F59EfYScaE>. This was relevant to the text as it also utilises elements of mythology, and the interview gives us some interesting insights into the authors attitudes on how these ancient myths can inform modern fiction, and the relevance that they have to our lives today. These tales tend to be very archetypical, with characters and narratives that cross time periods and cultures, making stories inflected with the same features a good fit for this classes purposes. Whilst the listening text provides the students with some additional listening skills practice, again making the lesson more multimodal, it may also guide students to think about the work that has influenced the author, and help them to look for the evidence of this in the text, making connections between different works of literature, and hopefully, further piquing their interest in the subject as a whole.

#### **Session 4: “Richer Dead Than Alive”, Cutting Edge, Upper-Intermediate Student’s Book, 3<sup>rd</sup>**

##### **Edition (Cunningham et al, 2013)**

So as to source a text that was of the same level as the previous non-literature reading, and to continue on a topic that was familiar and popular with the group in the preceding textbook lesson, the same Cutting Edge book was used for the fourth and final session. Not

only was the reading from the same book, but from the same chapter, again, to achieve the desired B1/C2 level. As with the previous text, “Richer Dead Than Alive” (p120) does not receive an acknowledgement, so is assumed to be the work of one of the three co-authors. Once more, the topic is fame, but here the text is more specifically concerned with stars who have died but whose celebrity status lives on, continuing to be profitable after their demise.

Another similarity that this text shares with the other from Cutting Edge, is that it uses everyday English connected to the topic, the accompanying exercises focusing on this language and the reading itself putting it into context. However, the language covered by the exercises here does not exclusively focus on everyday phrases as before. Also included is quite an in-depth look at a grammar point. The focus is on the use of different, advanced forms of the infinitive and gerunds, and challenges students to choose the correct form in the structure of a sentence. The exercises are numerous, and whilst undoubtedly useful, the online setting of the class was not thought to be particularly conducive to students working individually on grammar exercises, and in order to optimise student talking time, it was thought better to go through the structure of the different forms as a class using the “Grammar” box (p121), students then being called upon to choose the correct options in the “Ten Things to Worry About if You’re Rich and Famous” (P121) activity. When this was completed, the class was split into two groups for a ranking exercise, reordering the list from 1 to 10 in terms of which factor would be the most serious/least serious and why. In this way, the class was able to cover the grammar, but in a more communicative, student-centred way.

The vocabulary from the third session was also reviewed, but Quizlet was not used on this occasion in order to present the language in a different way, keeping the classes varied and engaging. In this instance, the students were required to form their own sentences, on any subject they want to talk about, incorporating the new words and paying close attention to the different forms that they were required to use. Again, this exercise was deemed to suit the student-centred ethos of the classes, and also served to promote student creativity whilst reviewing and consolidating language that had been covered previously.

### **Procedure**

Procedural elements of each individual class have already been discussed in the previous section, as is unavoidable when looking at the materials used in a project of this nature, the materials and how they are used being inextricably linked. This section, however, will endeavour to focus on the procedures used in the project as a whole. Again, this may include features of the separate sessions, but the focus will be on the methods used to collect the data, and to achieve the previously stated objectives.

It is important first to outline the practicalities of the online setting, and how the classes were administered in this realm. Once the volunteers had been assembled, a WhatsApp group was created, where all communications concerning the classes took place (not including those that involved the sharing of personal information, such as email addresses, which were conveyed via private messaging in the same application). The first thing to be posted here, was the “Entry Questionnaire” (see Appendices Item 1), this being the means to collect the qualitative data concerning the students attitudes towards their English

studies in general, ER and the use of meeting applications, such as Zoom, which was the application used for the classes.

One week before each session, the link to the reading exercise was posted in the group chat with a brief introduction to the text to generate interest and two gist questions to consider whilst reading. Questions were provided so that the students were reading with a purpose, and would have to employ their reading skills and strategies actively throughout the process (Levy, 1996). These questions would then be discussed as a warm-up or early-stage activity in the following class. As previously mentioned, it was stressed that it was not important to understand every word, only the general meaning, and that dictionaries could be used if necessary.

The day before the class the link to the Zoom meeting was posted in the group chat. The students would then convene at the arranged time and the lesson could begin. The literature-based lessons were carried out using Google Slides (see Appendices Item 5/7) previously prepared by the teacher and shared via Zoom's inbuilt "Screen Share" function. The textbook-based classes were conducted using the same function, however, in this instance, sharing an online PDF of the textbook. After some class discussion of the previously set gist questions, the class would usually proceed to language-focused exercises, be that of vocabulary, everyday language of the type previously described, or a grammar point that was featured in the text. Again, this would be carried out in open class with students offering their answers or occasionally being called upon. In the case of the two sessions which included listening activities, the questions were gone through as a class before the students carried out the tasks individually. The video was also shared using the

inbuilt feature, sharing YouTube from the teachers terminal. Students were given the chance to listen twice and the “Closed Captions” subtitle feature was also available should the students have found the task too challenging. These subtitles, notoriously unreliable as they are, were checked by the teacher previously for errors, but fortunately, they were never needed to be used. In the case of the literature-based classes, the final activity was devoted to discussion questions, based around the themes of the reading, or a language point that was of interest. This was conducted using the “Breakout Rooms” function, creating two separate groups and then reconvening to share our thoughts as a class. This would segue into the final wrap-up section, where the teacher would share links with the class for readings that were connected to the lesson, in the hope that students might choose an item from the list to use for their personal ER.

As the project progressed, non-compulsory vocabulary review quizzes (see Appendices Items 2/3) were also posted in the chat. This took place at the same time as the text for the following class and the two gist questions were posted. In this way, the students were receiving extra exposure to the language covered, and would be better able to complete the review tasks that would appear in the upcoming lesson, whilst not feeling pressured into taking on too much if they did not have the time to devote to it. The final item posted in the group chat, was the “Exit Questionnaire” (see Appendices Item 4). Through direct comparison of the two questionnaires, it was hoped that insight into how the project affected the students attitudes could be gained.

## **The Study**

### **The Context**

First hurdle that was encountered when planning how to carry out this project, was assembling a group of suitable and willing volunteers. The common constraints of syllabi and lack of teacher autonomy, which is often found in the public and private language learning sector alike, was briefly alluded to in the Literature Review. This was certainly the case for this paper's author, and in order to conduct a study of this nature, it would have to take place outside the confines of this educational paradigm. This presented certain advantages and disadvantages, that will also be discussed at length later.

As the data intended to be collected was concerned with attitude and motivation, it was not of paramount importance that the students were of exactly the same level. Saying this, they needed to be able to read the texts without feeling demotivated by the often quite challenging language (Collie and Slater, 1987), and to discuss them without feeling intimidated by their peers, leading to decreased output and so, further demotivation. It was for these reasons that I chose to search for students who were between B2 and C1 level. The thinking behind this was as follows: if the lessons are aimed at higher level students, then the pool of authentic literary texts that can be chosen from is greatly increased, making it far more likely that a text which will be of interest to the students, and thus will inspire the motivation to take part in ER in their own time, can be found. This is equally true of the supporting materials that were used to augment the lessons and to increase their multimodality, a factor that makes the learning experience far more memorable and appeals to multiple intelligences. (Freyn, 2017). Again, these materials were typically

audio/visual, sourced from YouTube and were entirely authentic, without adaptation for L2 viewers, meaning that the students would need a certain level of competence for the exercises to be achievable, and not totally demoralising.

Another factor that informed this decision were the time constraints. The classes would take place over four weeks, with one hour long class per week. With higher level students, less time would need to be spent going over literary terms, explaining the instructions for each individual task, and for assisting in initiating group discussions. Students with a more advanced grasp of the language are afforded a certain amount of independence in their learning, are far more likely to be able to conduct effective peer-to-peer tutoring (Ariza Ariza & Viáfara González , 2009), and have greater ability when negotiating the delicate social interactions needed for effective group discussions and activities in their L2. In many cases, even at B1 level, the functional language of agreeing and disagreeing, softening opinions and coming to a consensus, needs to be reviewed before the types of group activities included in these lesson plans can begin. This is, of course, entirely achievable, and with correct text selection and dutiful scaffolding, there is no reason why classes similar to those included here could not be carried out with B1 learners, or lower even. This type of scaffolding is, however, time consuming, so with the limited time we had at our disposal, it seemed better to proceed with students for which these issues posed less of a problem.

Age range was another factor that was considered when finding the volunteers. If the study had taken place in a public school, and perhaps in a private language academy also, the students would probably have been of the same, or very similar ages. This is significant for a number of reasons. With continuity in the age of your class, a case can be made for it being

easier to select texts that will appeal to all members, and thus fulfil one of the prime requirements when making this selection, to choose texts that will capture your students imaginations, and increase their enthusiasm for reading and the language in general (Pellicer-Ortín and Romo-Mayor, 2020). This is perhaps more difficult with a diverse age range. Whilst it is true that with children, and to a certain extent, teenagers also, age plays a strong role in what will and will not appeal to a class, it could be argued that this is less of a concern with adults. Once adulthood had been reached, the teacher needs to worry less about what is age appropriate for the class, and a certain amount of maturity makes many adults more willing to give diverse literature a chance, particularly if a text can be selected which deals with universal themes and transcends barriers such as age or culture. It was with these factors in mind that the age range for this project was set from 18-60+. When the group was finalised, the age range was in fact between 24 and 56.

Culture also played a crucial role in this formative stage of the project. In order to promote the tenets of Connectivism previously cited in the Literature review, and to incorporate networked learning, a culturally diverse group was desirable. For this reason, ex-students were contacted and requested to take part in the project, as well as those who reside in Spain, who were contacted through a network of colleagues that attend the University of Alcalá. Through these methods, a small yet culturally diverse group was assembled of two Spaniards, two Argentinians, a Serbian and a Chinese student. Again, this kind of diversity could be seen as being a hinderance to text selection, however, employing the same rationale as mentioned above, attempting to find texts that had a universal appeal, it was hoped that these stumbling blocks might be avoided.



## **Data Collection**

The evidence gathered throughout this project was, as mentioned, qualitative, and regarded the students attitudes towards the use of literature, their current, and possible future ER habits, and the use of the online setting. It was obtained via “Entry” and “Exit” questionnaires, which were posted in the group chat and returned to the teacher’s email. The questionnaires were further supported by anecdotal evidence, collected in note form after each session. These two methods combined make up the findings of this project. The questionnaires themselves both consisted of 14 questions, the majority of which being single-answer, multiple choice questions. For some of them, more than one answer was acceptable, and this was possible as they were not attributed a binary value, due to the qualitative nature of the study. Also, in some instances, the volunteers were asked to give more written details, for example, in order to find out exactly what it was that the subject liked or disliked about digital meeting applications. This provided additional anecdotal evidence from the student’s perspective.

## **Entry Questionnaire**

The Entry Questionnaire was designed to collect information on the student’s educational background, current English study practices, attitudes towards literature, attitudes towards reading in general, and their opinions regarding the use of the digital meeting applications. The questions regarding background and current practices were included to aid in designing the course, giving some insight into what kind of educational setting was familiar to the students, how they chose to study English, their motivations and how much time they are able to allot to these studies weekly. The rest were included to shed light on their original attitudes to the core elements of this study, namely, literature, ER and the online classroom.

The intention was to see if these attitudes were at all influenced by the course, by comparing the evidence revealed here, to that of the Exit Questionnaire.

The results are presented here in table form and are divided into three for ease of display.

The questions which use the same choices of answers are grouped together, those that do not are separate. The questions, or parts of questions, that garnered written, anecdotal evidence do not appear in the tables and will be featured in the Discussion section. The number in the column represents the number of students who gave this answer, or in some cases, as previously mentioned, students were allowed to give multiple answers. These questions are indicated.

**Table 1**

	<b>All the time</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
I read works of literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc) in English.	1	1	3	1	0
I read works of literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc) in my own language.	0	3	2	1	0
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
I feel confident reading in English in general.	2	3	1	0	0
I feel confident reading works of literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc) in English.	2	1	3	0	0

I generally feel confident speaking in English.	2	3	0	1	0
I feel confident discussing works of literature that I have read.	1	1	4	0	0
English is extremely useful in my ever-day life.	5	1	0	0	0
I feel comfortable using Zoom/Skype for an English lesson.	3	3	0	0	0
I think that Zoom/Skype are good tools for business/social interaction.	3	3	0	0	0

**Table 2**

N.B. Students were allowed to mark more than one answer for this question.

	<b>Textbooks/Language Reference Books</b>	<b>Magazines/Blogs</b>	<b>Newspapers (online)</b>	<b>Literature</b>
When I read in English I tend to read:	3	2	2	3

**Table 3**

N.B. Students were allowed to mark more than one answer for this question.

	<b>Enjoyment/self-satisfaction</b>	<b>Learning new vocabulary/phrases</b>	<b>Learning grammar/sentence structure</b>	<b>Learning about other cultures</b>	<b>Other</b>
My main reason for reading in English is for:	5	2	1	1	0

## **Exit Questionnaire**

The Exit Questionnaire was designed to collect information on the students impressions of the course as a whole, with particular focus on the core elements of the study. As before, the information is displayed in table form, apart from the single question that asked for a written description. This will be included in the Discussions section, along with those from the Entry Questionnaire. The results are divided into two tables for ease of display.

**Table 4**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
The literary texts were enjoyable to read.	2	2	1	1	0
The textbook texts were enjoyable to read.	1	2	3	0	0
The literary texts were useful for improving my English.	4	2	0	0	0
The textbook texts were useful for improving my English.	2	4	0	0	0
I enjoyed discussing the literary texts.	5	1	0	0	0
I enjoyed discussing the textbook texts.	3	3	0	0	0
Discussing the literary texts was useful for improving my English.	4	2	0	0	0
Discussing the textbook texts was useful for improving my English.	2	4	0	0	0

The online setting was suitable for this kind of class.	6	0	0	0	0
I would use the suggested "Extensive Reading" links provided to find more literary texts that interest me.	2	3	1	0	0
I enjoyed making new learning connections with my classmates.	3	3	0	0	0
I found sharing our opinions useful for my understanding of the text.	3	3	0	0	0
I found the combination of literature and language study interesting and appropriate.	4	2	0	0	0

**Table 5**

N.B. Students were allowed to mark more than one answer for this question.

	<b>Reading the texts</b>	<b>The Vocabulary Exercises</b>	<b>The Video/Listening Exercises</b>	<b>The Discussion Questions</b>	<b>Learning Background Information about the Author/Text</b>
I enjoyed ..... the most:	2	3	1	3	0

### **Data Analysis**

When compared, the questionnaires and additional anecdotal evidence provide some interesting information regarding the students general attitudes towards studying English, and also to the topics of literature, ER and digital learning. As we are attempting to collect

information regarding the student's attitudes and not attainment, these methods were deemed most appropriate. Here an attempt will be made to interpret the data collected, and to consider how this should influence our approach going forward. We will also look at the shortcomings of the project, and how these may or may not have affected the results.

## **The Findings**

With regards to the Entry questionnaire, all of the data collected appears in the tables which can be found in the previous section, barring those questions that required the students to give numerical or more detailed, written responses. These questions were focused on the students previous and current English educational background, and, as previously stated, were included merely to guide in the design of the course, as opposed to providing any revelations concerning the focus of the study. The first of these questions, phrased as a statement, was "I have been studying English for \_\_\_\_\_ years". All of the students had been studying English for over 20 years, with two of them stating that it was closer to 40. This was unsurprising, given the age of the volunteers and their high level. The second question, again, phrased as a statement, "I am currently involved in some form of formal English education (eg. group classes, one-to-ones, online classes/apps, etc)", was answered "No" by all members of the class. However, this line of questioning did reveal an interesting fact that bore particular relevance to the main objectives of the study. Two of the volunteers, a couple, whilst not involved in any formal English education at this time, had created a language exchange with another couple who were native English speakers. This exchange involved them reading novels in English and Spanish and then meeting to discuss them. This was encouraging to discover, as not only were these two students incorporating

literature into their language learning studies via their group discussions, they were also regularly taking part in ER.

A question was included regarding the importance of English in the volunteers daily lives. This showed that it was very important with 5 answering “Strongly Agree” and one “Agree”, many giving extra written details and citing their professions being the main cause of this, being required to speak in English on a daily basis. The final background question was “On average, I study/use English in my free time for about \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week”.

Two students replied 0, three 2, and one 7. This was asked to gauge how much time the students could realistically devote to the project, and thus what length texts should be selected. However, it does have some relevance when we think about the question of ER.

This self-study time could possibly be increased, especially if the students were sufficiently motivated to read something that interests them, making the entire process enjoyable.

When we consider that the couple who are taking part in the language exchange gave their answers as 2 hours per week, this is exceedingly telling of their attitude towards the ER they were already engaged in. It seems unlikely that this practice would consist of only 2 hours, when they stated that they met with the other couple weekly. It could be that they did not consider the act of reading as part of their study routine, it being something enjoyable that they did in addition to this. This is, of course, merely speculation, but of interest nevertheless.

Many of the questions included were designed to discover what the students attitudes were towards reading in English in general, as opposed to reading works of literature. Also included was the question “I read works of literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc) in

my own language” designed to gain insight into their attitudes towards literature, even in their L1. When held in comparison to the same question, only with regards to reading in their L2, the results show that there is not so large a gulf between the regularity with which the students read literature in their L1s and L2s. The students in this study did read literature more regularly in their L1, which is unsurprising, but it seems that this enthusiasm for literature does translate over to their L2. When asked what it was that they read most regularly in English, there was an equal split for the highest scoring answer between “Textbooks/Language Reference Books” and “Literature”, again confirming an already strong regard for the use of literature in their English studies. This is supported by the top reason for reading in English being cited as for “Enjoyment/self-satisfaction” by 5 out of the 6 volunteers. Student confidence was also inquired about, with students claiming to have more confidence overall when reading texts of general English as opposed to literature, although this was not conclusive across the board, with some students claiming high levels of confidence in both, with the students who read literature more often being the ones who had a higher level of confidence in this area.

As a large part of the class was going to be discussing the texts, some questions were included to see if there was any disparity in students confidence levels when speaking in English in general, and when discussing works of literature. The results of this showed conclusively that there was a disparity, with all members of the class answering that they were confident or very confident when speaking in English in general, but only two giving these answers for literature, the rest being “Undecided”. Again, it was the couple who had had far more exposure to literature, and to the practice of discussing it, who stated the higher levels of confidence in this area.



The final factor that the questionnaire attempted to explore was the online setting of the class. Again, the students attitudes towards this were overwhelmingly positive, many giving extra details and stating that digital meeting applications where now part of their professional and personal lives, and increasingly so since the start of the pandemic. This was reassuring, as it could be conceivable that some students would be resistant to taking part in this form of class, particularly as it involves a great deal of group discussion, that many might feel would be hindered by the online environment.

The Exit questionnaire was designed to receive feedback on the student's impressions of the class in general, their reactions to both the traditional textbook texts and the literature-based classes and the elements of Connectivism that were provided by the online setting. By comparing these with the Entry questionnaire, it was hoped that they might highlight any shift in attitudes, or prevailing trends that the class had throughout the project.

Whilst the majority of students stated that they had enjoyed the literary texts, two marked "Undecided" and "Disagree", signifying that they had not, or at least, had not entirely. This was somewhat disappointing, but perhaps to be expected with a group of volunteers, many of whom the teacher had not met before the commencement of the course. With the greatest of efforts made to find texts that might appeal to all of the students, which included themes that were significantly universal or relevant to their lives today, it is still very difficult to account for individual taste, particularly when you do not have prior knowledge of your class. With the same question regarding the textbook extracts, no one outright disagreed that they were enjoyable, whilst no one strongly agreed that they were

either, leaving us to concluded that they trod the safe, middle ground, which is again, what you may have presupposed.

With four students marking “Strongly Agree” and two “Agree” to the question “The literary texts were useful for improving my English” it is evident that all of the students saw the benefit of studying these stories, even if a couple of them did not particularly enjoy the reading process. When we compare this to the result from the same question, yet in regards to the textbook, we see that we have two for “Strongly Agree” and four for “Agree”, again a strong affirmation of the student’s collective perception of the text’s usefulness. However, the superior strength of feeling for the literary texts is of interest. We can suppose that this may be due to the way in which they felt challenged by the stories, encountering unfamiliar language and being forced to use critical reading techniques to decipher the representational nature of the text, something not commonly practiced in the language classroom.

This favourable opinion of literature was reiterated in the answers to the class discussion questions. In this instance, all the students signified that they had enjoyed these activities, with literature, once more, receiving a greater share of the most positive responses, the results being five “Strongly Agree” for literature, to three for the textbook. When we compare the results on how useful the class found the discussions for improving their English, we again see that literature was favoured, four students marking “Strongly Agree” to just two for the textbook. According to the results, the discussion questions were also the most enjoyable part of the class, joint with the vocabulary exercises, showing that the students responded well to the communicative approach of the project.

An area where the group was in total agreement was with regards to the online setting, every member strongly agreeing that it was suitable for the class. This question invited the participants to give more written details, with many citing the ease with which the lessons could take place, the students not having to leave their homes, particularly as the classes were scheduled for weekday evenings. Also mentioned repeatedly was the “Breakout Rooms” feature, meaning that the students had a chance to discuss the questions in smaller groups, giving them increased opportunities to speak, before reconvening with the whole class to share their opinions. Again, some stressed that this mode of communication had become so natural to them in their daily lives, that it felt like a “face-to-face” class.

Two of the questions were designed to reveal information about the students attitudes towards Connectivism. “I enjoyed making new learning connections with my classmates” and “I found sharing our opinions useful for my understanding of the text” garnered the exact same results, three for “Strongly Agree” and three for “Agree”. This positive response is supported by the anecdotal evidence collected, the classroom dynamic being very positive and the classmates incredibly supportive and curious about one another’s lives. The one drawback was that, due to the tight scheduling of the classes, we didn’t always have time to indulge this curiosity.

The question regarding ER did not receive overwhelmingly positive results, and, when asked in the final class, the students admitted that they had not, as of yet, used the links provided. Again, this is perhaps unsurprising, taking into account the busy lives of the volunteers. Another factor that may have played a part in this, was the choice of texts themselves. This

was another area that received less than unanimous approval, and so may have influenced the student's willingness to investigate the genre, author or background of the texts further. Despite this, in response to the final question, "I found the combination of literature and language study interesting and appropriate" four marked "Strongly Agree" and two "Agree", suggesting that, overall, the students found the classes both engaging, and of practical worth to their continued English studies.

### **The Plan of Action**

As a volunteer project, as opposed to an ongoing class where the results could be taken into account and acted upon going forward, a comprehensive plan of action has not been formed. This is not to say that the results of the project will have no bearing on my teaching methods in the future, quite to the contrary. When I am in a position to introduce the use of literature into class activities again, I will most certainly be doing so, whether that be online or in a traditional classroom. The adjustments that I would make to my approach, with regards to the duration, text selection, administration of the ER element and other facets of the project are discussed further in the following section.

### **Conclusion**

#### **Limitations**

Before any finite conclusions are drawn, it may be useful to consider the limitations of this study, as these will undoubtedly have some bearing on said conclusions. The most obvious of these limitations is the sample size. A group of six people is not likely to provide a representative cross section of students with regards to multiple intelligences, preferred learning styles and numerous other factors that could affect the results of the study. In

addition to this, the length of the project is another apparent limitation. Due to time constraints, it was only possible to arrange four sessions, which meant just two literature sessions and two textbook sessions. It is not a stretch of the imagination to suppose that, had the project been longer, this too may have influenced the final results, the students becoming increasingly comfortable with the use of literature and perhaps feeling more confident and increasingly inspired to take part in ER of their own volition.

A limitation which was alluded to previously, and which also has some bearing on the ER aspect of this project, relates to the text selection. Had the class been familiar to the teacher at the start of the project, or at the least, if the Entry questionnaire had included more questions to help discern the classes preferences with regards to literature, texts that were more suited to their interests, and so more likely to promote ER, could have been chosen. This, again, relates to the length of the project, as had it been carried out over a longer period of time, the teacher's knowledge of the student's tastes would have increased.

The method of collecting the data was also somewhat flawed. Due to the online nature of the classes, the questionnaires were returned via email. This meant that they could not be completed anonymously, which could well have influenced the student's responses. It was stressed that they should answer all questions honestly without fear of offending anyone, however, this can never be absolutely guaranteed. With hindsight, it would have been more prudent to use an application such as Survey Monkey, where this kind of anonymity can be achieved. Unfortunately, at the design stage of the project, the teacher was unaware of such applications.

The combined B2/C1 class, whilst not causing any overt problems, was not entirely ideal. The students were largely able to complete the tasks designed around the texts and listening excerpts, without excessive difficulty. They were, as they were designed to be, challenging without being unachievable. However, I know of at least one B2 student who struggled with the reading of the literature texts, and this undoubtedly affected her enjoyment of them, and thus her motivation to use the links provided for ER.

### **Outcomes and Implications**

If we take the objectives outlined at the beginning of this paper, it is fair to say that three of the four have been either fully or partly achieved. The qualitative data collected was both insightful in terms of the use of literature, and in understanding the group's current ER, self-study habits. Whether this data is at all representative of students of this level at large, is another matter. This could only be ascertained if a further study were conducted on a much wider scale. If this were to take place, it could perhaps include a quantitative element where students who had studied using literature and who had been encouraged to carry out ER in their free time (perhaps with more stringent means for measuring that this had actually happened) were given Entry and Exit tests, the results of which could be measured against those of a test group, who had received the same number of study hours but only using the textbook readings. In this way, we could gain a clearer picture of how literature and ER combined can also affect attainment.

Through the evidence collected via both the questionnaires and the teacher's observations, it is clear that literature was indeed, incredibly successful in sparking lively classroom

discussions, ensuring that student talking time was ample and that the learning experience as a whole was memorable, thus making the language points covered more memorable also. Another advantage was that students received a lot of practice converting their opinions about the texts into arguments, having to then support and defend those arguments during the discussions. As previously stated, this is an extremely valuable skill which is transferable to a number of practical applications, particularly in the world of work. I believe that the students recognised this value, and that is why these activities scored so highly on the questionnaire.

Concerning the attempt to promote Connectivism, it is this point that could be described as being partly successful. By using the links provided, it was hoped that the students might forge their own educational path, with the teacher acting as “curator”. This, unfortunately, was not the case. However, the online setting did allow the students to make global learning connections with their classmates, some of which have been kept alive in the WhatsApp group chat, even after the end of the project. The digital setting was popular with all that took part and afforded the class an ease of administration that would not have been possible in a bricks-and-mortar school. An example of this is the way in which the materials could be sourced and distributed, and the connectivity of the WhatsApp group, meaning that all queries regarding the reading or vocabulary tasks could be shared, sometimes being answered by the teacher, sometimes by other members of the class.

The area where we could say that the project was less than successful, is that of ER. It was perhaps ambitious to think that along with the already challenging reading tasks which were required for the class, the volunteers, all with busy professional and personal lives, would be

able to find additional time in their schedules to carry out extra ER. This was the most probable cause for the unenthusiastic reaction to the suggested ER material, however, the in-class-literary text selection was also a likely secondary cause. Were further research to be carried out, where the primary focus was on the promotion of ER, it would be wise if it were conducted with a class that the teacher knows well, and can judge what text types will most appeal to the majority of its members. The importance of this factor, often highlighted in previous research, was brought to the fore once more during this project.



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## Appendices

### Item 1)

#### Entry Questionnaire

1. When I read in English I tend to read:

Textbooks/Language Reference Books    Magazines/Blogs    Newspapers (online)  
Literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc)

2. I read works of literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc) in English.

Never                  Rarely                  Sometimes                  Often                  All the time

3. I read works of literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc) in my own language.

Never                  Rarely                  Sometimes                  Often                  All the time

4. I feel confident reading in English in general.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

5. I feel confident reading works of literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc) in English.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

6. I generally feel confident speaking in English.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

7. I feel confident discussing works of literature that I have read.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

8. My main motivation for reading in English is for:

Enjoyment/self-satisfaction    Learning new vocabulary/phrases

Learning grammar/sentence structure                  Learning about other cultures

Other

Other (please give details) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. I have been studying English for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

10. I am currently involved in some form of formal English education (eg. group classes, one-to-ones, online classes/apps, etc).

Yes

No

Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. On average, I study/use English in my free time for about \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week.

12. English is extremely useful in my ever-day life.

Strongly agree

Agree

Undecided

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give details \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. I feel comfortable using Zoom/Skype for an English lesson.

Strongly agree

Agree

Undecided

Disagree

Strongly disagree

14. I think that Zoom/Skype are good tools for business/social interaction.

Strongly agree

Agree

Undecided

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give details (Why you like/dislike it?, How often you use it and in what circumstances? Etc)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Item 2)**

**Vocabulary Review Questions**

- fretful (adj.)
- fatuity (noun)
- undulating (adj.)
- stern (adj.)
- reproachful (adj.)
- scoff (verb, rg)
- sly (adj.)
- atrocious (adj.)
- hinder (verb, rg)
- querulous (adj.)

1. The rain ..... progress on construction of the new shopping mall.
2. The meal was absolutely ..... It was so disgusting!
3. He's so .....You can never tell what he has planned or if he is telling the truth.
4. His father was very ..... If he broke the rules he would receive a .....  
stare.
5. He's constantly complaining, he's so .....
6. She's a very ..... girl, she worries about everything.
7. That gazed out across the beautiful, ..... hills.
8. The .....of the government astounded him. He couldn't believe they  
could be so stupid.
9. He might have thought the idea was silly, but he didn't need to..... at her.

**Item 3)**

**Vocabulary Review 2**

1. It's always cheaper when you buy in .....
2. I don't know why rappers have to use such ..... language.
3. She always has a little ..... on her face when she sees a classmate being told off by the teacher.
4. Most cities have ..... telephone boxes because everyone has mobiles now.
5. My Granddad can remember the Queen's .....
6. They were working on the ..... that all of the equipment would be in good condition.
7. The boy was obsessed with material wealth. She'd never known such ..... in her life!
8. He didn't sleep well before the exam, he was ..... all night.
9. Cost Co. is a famous place where retailers go to buy their stock .....
10. He was totally ..... by the computer malfunction during his presentation.

Vocabulary can be found on Slide 5 from the previous lesson.

**Item 4)**

**Exit Questionnaire ARP**

1) The literary texts were enjoyable to read.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

2) The textbook texts were enjoyable to read.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

3) The literary texts were useful for improving my English.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

4) The textbook texts were useful for improving my English.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

5) I enjoyed discussing the literary texts.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

6) I enjoyed discussing the textbook texts.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

7) Discussing the literary texts was useful for improving my English.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

8) Discussing the textbook texts was useful for improving my English.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

9) The online setting was suitable for this kind of class.

Strongly agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

Please give details:

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10) I enjoyed ..... the most:

Reading the texts      The Vocabulary Exercises      The Video/Listening Exercises  
The Discussion Questions      Learning Background Information about the Author/Text

11) I would use the suggested "Extensive Reading" links provided to find more literary texts that interest me.

Strongly agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly disagree

12) I enjoyed making new learning connections with my classmates.

Strongly agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly disagree

13) I found sharing our opinions useful for my understanding of the text.

Strongly agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly disagree

14) I found the combination of literature and language study interesting and appropriate.

Strongly agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly disagree





## Item 5)

### “The Yellow Wall-paper” Google Slides

#### “The Yellow Wall-Paper” by Charlotte Perkins-Gilman

A Literacy Focused Generation Class



#### Learning Objectives

- To practice our critical thinking and discussion skills in English.
- To practice using the four core skills through integrated activities.
- To learn about the cultural and historical context of the story.
- To consider if and how the issues raised by the story are still relevant today.
- To have fun and enjoy using English in a friendly and supportive environment.

#### Warm-up Conversation Questions

- 1) “The Yellow Wall-Paper” was described by Alan Ryan as “one of the finest, and strongest, tales of horror ever written. It may be a ghost story. Worse yet, it may not.” If it is not a ghost story, what kind of story is it?
- 2) The story is also widely considered one of the first works of feminist fiction. What elements of the story could be described as feminist?

#### Vocabulary and Other Language

- scoff (verb, rg)
- sly (adj.)
- atrocious (adj.)
- hinder (verb, rg)
- querulous (adj.)
- fretful (adj.)
- fatuity (noun)
- undulating (adj.)
- wern (adj.)
- reproachful (adj.)

#### Listening Questions

1. Why was Gilman’s childhood “intellectually rich”?
2. Why did Gilman “know something about wallpaper patterns”?
3. What happened to her after the birth of her daughter?
4. How did her life change when she moved to Pasadena, California?
5. How did she die?

#### Passages of Interest

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin. It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

#### Passages of Interest

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him.  
He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

#### Passages of Interest

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

#### Final Questions of Reflection

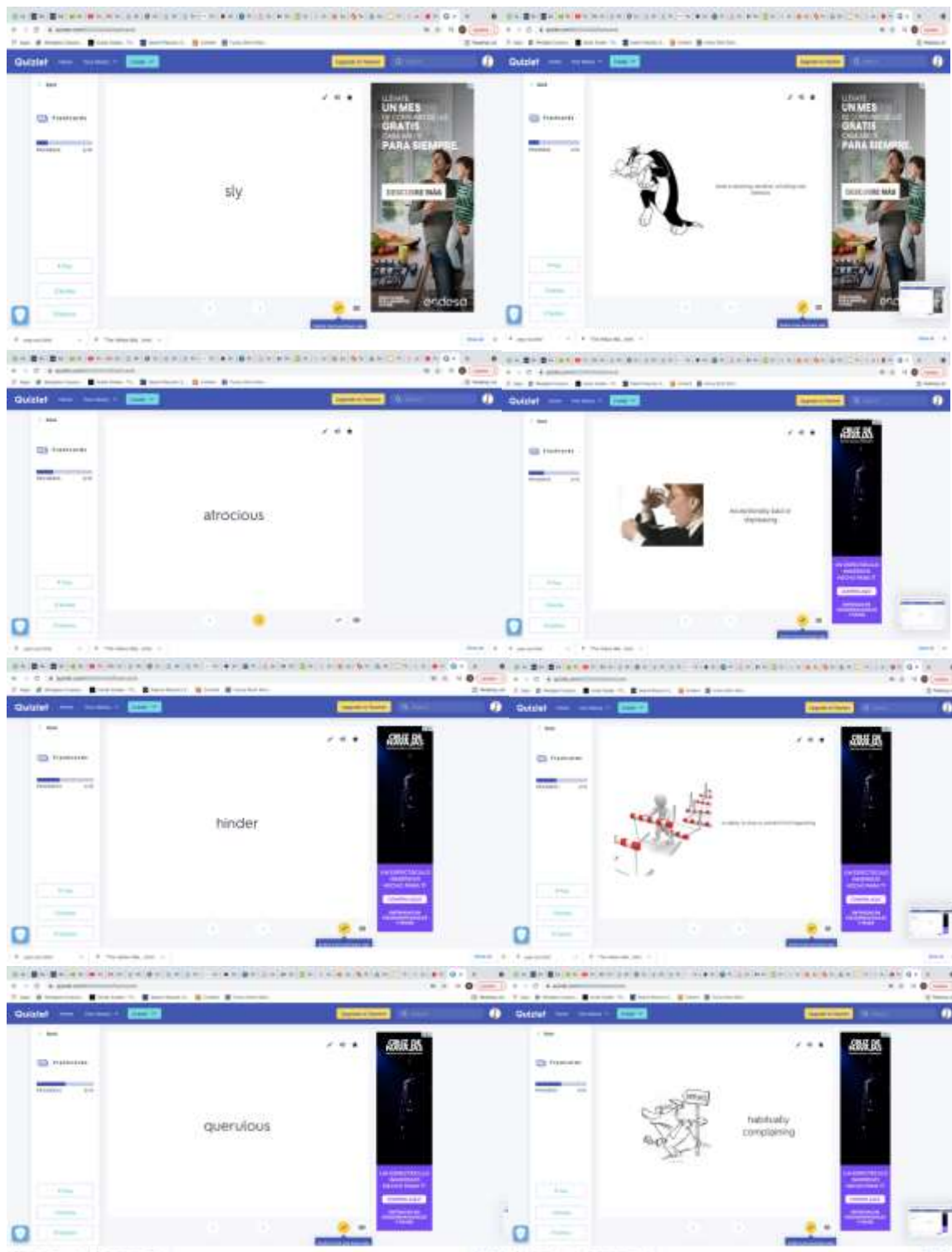
1. Why do you think there is sometimes only one woman behind the wallpaper, and sometimes more?
2. Is it significant that, at the end, John faints right across her path and she has to creep over him?
3. Are any of the themes raised by the story still relevant today? How?

#### Ideas for Further Reading/Listening

- [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Charlotte\\_Perkins\\_Gilman](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Charlotte_Perkins_Gilman)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plKoNHS1>
- <http://www.dorcasproject.com/short-stories/about-depression-mental-illness-trauma/>

Item 6)

“The Yellow Wall-paper” Quizlet (Examples)



## Item 7)

### “We Can Get Them for You Wholesale” Google Slides

# “We Can Get Them For You Wholesale”



Neil Gaiman

#### Learning Objectives

- To review the vocabulary from the previous class.
- To discuss the our first impressions of the story with the two questions as a guide.
- To use critical thinking skills to discuss the genre, themes and subtext of the story.
- To look at specific language from the text.
- To practice speaking and listening skills.

#### Vocabulary Review

- a household name for decades
- draws huge crowds wherever he/she goes.
- is/was an overnight sensation
- has been splashed across the newspapers recently.
- has a reputation for acting like a diva.
- tries hard to stay in the media spotlight.
- is ill-equipped to deal with the pressure of fame.
- is trying to make a comeback.



#### Discussion Questions

1. What genre is the story? Is it more than one genre? What elements of the story tell you this?
2. Is the story meant to be realistic? Why/Why not?



#### Vocabulary From the Text

• precept (noun)	• bulk (noun)
• vulgar (adj.)	• cupidity (noun)
• losing and turning (ph.)	• snicker (noun)
• to do away with SO/STH (ph. verb)	• wholesale (noun)
• unuffled (adj.)	• coronation (noun)

#### Listening Exercise




Pre-learn Vocabulary  
Norse (adj.), myth/mythology (noun), mitan (noun), junkie (noun)

Listening Questions

1. How was Gaiman first introduced to the Norse myths?
2. What did his friend Steven have?
3. Who were the most characters of the first myth Gaiman fell in love with?
4. What happened in the story?
5. What does Gaiman say is not included in most myths?


#### Discussion Questions

1. Do you think there is any connection between the myths discussed in the listening exercise and the story? Give examples.
2. Can you think of any other myths or legends that have similarities to the story?
3. Is there a moral to the story? If so what is it?
4. Are there any myths that are specific to your culture? Share them with the group.
5. Peter's main failing is his "inability to pass up a bargain". Does this also describe you?



#### Extended Reading Suggestions

- Norse Mythology (2017)
- Coraline (2002), also an animated movie (2009)
- American Gods (2001), also an Amazon Prime series (2017)
- Smoke and Mirrors (1968), short story collection



**Item 8) “The Yellow Wall-paper” Text.**

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/theliteratureofprescription/exhibitionAssets/digitalDocs/The-Yellow-Wall-Paper.pdf>

**Item 9) “We Can Get Them for You Wholesale” Text**

<https://mrdylitcirclestories.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/we-can-get-them-for-you-wholesale.pdf>

**Item 10) “Fifteen Minutes of Fame” Text**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/my-drive>

**Item 11) “Richer Dead Than Alive” Text**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/my-drive>