Year 9

English Work Pack 5

Parents/Carers – only complete as much, or as little, of these booklets as your circumstances allow at this difficult time.

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| Welcome to this week’s English topic!  **Reading Fiction**  **We will have fun learning to:**   * identify the ways in which writers use openings to engage the reader quickly. * identify how the conventions of different genres of fiction may be seen in the openings of stories. * identify the structural features evident in the extract and consider how openings function in the wider structure of the story or novel. * make personal responses to the passages using textual evidence, analysis and interpretation**.**   **Choose your own task level (green = easy, amber = slightly harder, red = challenge)** |

**LO: To be able to identify the ways in which writers use openings to engage the reader quickly.**

In this booklet, we will consider the ways in which an author begins a piece of fiction. While reading each one, we will practise some of the reciprocal reading techniques learned in booklet number four:

* Predict
* Clarify
* Question
* Summarise

We shall look at four aspects of these openings:

* the structure (the way the writing is organised e.g.  a main idea and details; a cause and then its effects; and/or different views of the topic)
* the language (the words chosen to convey ideas)
* character (the people in the story)
* plot development (how the content of the story starts – what it’s about)

while considering how authors attempt to engage the reader quickly.

The first extract is from the 19th century American novel, ‘Little Women’ by Louisa May Alcott. In this extract from the opening of the novel, the four March girls talk about a Christmas without the normal gifts they would have. This is because there is civil war in America and the girls’ father is away with the troops.

**Task 1 (Green)**

**a) Before reading the following extract, predict what you think it may be about (in the space provided after the extract)**

**b) Read the extract then clarify your understanding of difficult words by looking them up in the dictionary**

**c) Answer the questions that follow while looking for ways that the author tries to engage (hook) the reader quickly (check the glossary before you begin)**

**d) Summarise the extract (briefly explain what you think it is about)**

Little Women

**CHAPTER ONE**

‘Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents,’ grumbled Jo, lying on the rug. ‘It’s so dreadful to be poor!’ sighed Meg, looking down at her old dress.

‘I don’t think it’s fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all,’

added little Amy, with an injured sniff.

‘We’ve got Father and Mother, and each other,’ said Beth contentedly from her corner.

The four young faces on which the firelight shone brightened at the cheerful words, but darkened

again as Jo said sadly, ‘We haven’t got Father, and shall not have him for a long time.’

She didn’t say ‘perhaps never,’ but each silently added it, thinking of Father far away, where the

fighting was.

Nobody spoke for a minute; then Meg said in an altered tone, ‘You know the reason Mother proposed not having any presents this Christmas was because it is going to be a hard winter for everyone; and she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure, when our men are suffering so in the army. We can’t do much, but we can make our little sacrifices, and ought to do it gladly. But I am afraid I don’t.’ And Meg shook her head, as she thought regretfully of all the pretty things she wanted.

‘But I don’t think the little we should spend would do any good. We’ve each got a dollar, and the army wouldn’t be much helped by our giving that. I agree not to expect anything from Mother or you, but I do want to buy UNDINE AND SINTRAM for myself. I’ve wanted it so long,’ said Jo, who was a bookworm.

‘I planned to spend mine in new music,’ said Beth, with a little sigh, which no one heard but the hearth brush and kettle holder.

‘I shall get a nice box of Faber’s drawing pencils. I really need them,’ said Amy decidedly.

‘Mother didn’t say anything about our money, and she won’t wish us to give up everything. Let’s each buy what we want and have a little fun. I’m sure we work hard enough to earn it,’ cried Jo, examining the heels of her shoes in a gentlemanly manner.

‘I know I do—teaching those tiresome children nearly all day, when I’m longing to enjoy myself at home,’ began Meg, in the complaining tone again. ‘You don’t have half such a hard time as I do,’ said Jo. ‘How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady, who keeps you trotting, is never satisfied, and worries you till you you’re ready to fly out the window or cry?’

‘It’s naughty to fret, but I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world. It makes me cross, and my hands get so stiff, I can’t practice well at all.’ And Beth looked at her rough hands with a sigh that anyone could hear that time.

1. **Predict what you think this story may be about.**

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1. **Clarify your understanding of difficult words by looking them up in the dictionary**

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| **Difficult Word** | **Meaning** |
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1. **Answer the following questions on the extract:**

**First-Time Reading**

1. What characters are introduced in the opening of the novel? How are they related to each other?

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**Closer Reading**

1. Highlight the words that are spoken aloud. These are examples of **direct speech**.

How does this technique make the beginning of the story more interesting and make the reader want to read on?

**The story is made more interesting when characters speak aloud because** …-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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1. What **narrative perspective** is the story from? Do we see everything from one character’s point of view or is it a more general view of each girl?

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1. There are four girls in the extract. Select a quote that begins to give us clues about what they are like.

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| **Name of Character** | **Quote from extract that tells us something about them** |
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1. The girls each discuss the possibility of having no presents at Christmas. What is the effect of Amy’s lines here? How do the other characters feel?

**‘I don’t think it’s fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all,’ added little Amy, with an injured sniff.**

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1. Why do you think the author has added these lines to the text? What clues does it give the reader about what might happen in the rest of the novel? How does this help to engage the reader so that they read on?

**The four young faces on which the firelight shone brightened at the cheerful words, but darkened again as Jo said sadly, ‘We haven’t got Father, and shall not have him for a long time.’**

**She didn’t say ‘perhaps never,’ but each silently added it, thinking of Father far away, where the fighting was.**

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1. Are there any clues in the text about the social status of the girls? Include a quote that proves your answer.

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1. A pupil has written:

‘**Louisa May Alcott has created a very effective opening here. She makes the different characters come alive. Beth is shown as extremely quiet and content with her life while the others are more boisterous and demanding.’**

To what extent (how much) do you agree with these comments? You may comment on all the characters or concentrate on Beth. Explain your answer.

**e.g. I strongly agree (or mostly agree, or do not agree) with this statement because…**---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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1. **Bonus:**

Which of the girls do you think you would like best? Why? Remember to use quotations to explain your decision.

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1. **Summarise** the extract in 50 words or less.

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**Glossary of terms**

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| **Direct speech.** | Words directly spoken by the character themselves. Opposite of ‘reported speech’. |
| **Narrative perspective** | From whose point of view (perspective) the story is told. |
| **Quote** | Evidence from the text (a sentence or word to prove your point). |
| **Engage** | Interest or hook your reader to make them want to read more. |
| **Social status** | A person's standing or importance in relation to other people within a society e.g. whether the characters are rich/poor, educated/uneducated, single/married etc… and how these factors are viewed in society. |

**Task 2 (Amber) In addition to completing task 1, answer the extension questions below in the spaces provided in the green level (alongside the corresponding** (same) **question number).**

1. What is the **effect** of starting the novel in the middle of a conversation between the four girls?
2. Why do you think the author used this perspective?

**Task 3 (Red) In addition to completing task 1 and the extension questions in task 2, answer the further extension question below.**

1. Give one **noun** or **noun phrase** from the text that describes each character.

**LO: To be able to identify the ways in which use John Buchan openings to engage the reader quickly.**

The second extract we will consider comes from the first chapter of a short novel called ‘The Thirty-Nine Steps’ by John Buchan. Buchan was bored with the spy thrillers he was reading and decided to write one of his own. The story is about the adventures of Richard Hanney, a man born in Scotland but raised in Africa. He returns to his flat in London one evening and finds himself mixed up in a plot of anarchists\* and espionage\* in the days leading up to the First World War.

\*anarchist – individual who refuses to recognise the main authority of the land

\*espionage – the practice of spying

**The Thirty-Nine Steps**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**The Man Who Died**

Here was I, thirty-seven years old, sound in wind and limb, with enough money to have a good time, yawning my head off all day. I had just about settled to clear out and get back to the veld, for I was the best bored man in the United Kingdom.

That afternoon I had been worrying my brokers about investments to give my mind something to work on, and on my way home I turned into my club—rather a pot-house, which took in Colonial members. I had a long drink and read the evening papers. They were full of the row in the Near East (…) About six o’clock I went home, dressed, dined at the Cafe Royal, and turned into a music- hall. (…) The night was fine and clear as I walked back to the flat I had hired near Portland Place. The crowd surged past me on the pavements, busy and chattering, and I envied the people for having something to do. These shop-girls and clerks and dandies and policemen had some interest in life that kept them going. I gave half-a-crown to a beggar because I saw him yawn; he was a fellow-sufferer. At Oxford Circus I looked up into the spring sky and I made a vow. I would give the Old Country another day to fit me into something; if nothing happened, I would take the next boat for the Cape.

My flat was the first floor in a new block behind Langham Place. There was a common staircase, with a porter and a liftman at the entrance, but there was no restaurant or anything of that sort, and each flat was quite shut off from the others. I hate servants on the premises, so I had a fellow to look after me who came in by the day. He arrived before eight o’clock every morning and used to depart at seven, for I never dined at home.

I was just fitting my key into the door when I noticed a man at my elbow. I had not seen him approach, and the sudden appearance made me start. He was a slim man, with a short brown beard and small, gimlety blue eyes. I recognized him as the occupant of a flat on the top floor, with whom I had passed the time of day on the stairs.

‘Can I speak to you?’ he said. ‘May I come in for a minute?’ He was steadying his voice with an effort, and his hand was pawing my arm.

I got my door open and motioned him in. No sooner was he over the threshold than he made a dash for my back room, where I used to smoke and write my letters. Then he bolted back.

‘Is the door locked?’ he asked feverishly, and he fastened the chain with his own hand.

‘I’m very sorry,’ he said humbly. ‘It’s a mighty liberty, but you looked the kind of man who would understand. I’ve had you in my mind all this week when things got troublesome. Say, will you do me a good turn?’

‘I’ll listen to you,’ I said. ‘That’s all I’ll promise.’ I was getting worried by the antics of this nervous little chap.

There was a tray of drinks on a table beside him, from which he filled himself a stiff whisky-and- soda. He drank it off in three gulps and cracked the glass as he set it down.

‘Pardon,’ he said, ‘I’m a bit rattled tonight. You see, I happen at this moment to be dead.’ I sat down in an armchair and lit my pipe.

‘What does it feel like?’ I asked. I was pretty certain that I had to deal with a madman.

A smile flickered over his drawn face. ‘I’m not mad—yet. Say, Sir, I’ve been watching you, and I reckon you’re a cool customer. I reckon, too, you’re an honest man, and not afraid of playing a bold hand. I’m going to confide in you. I need help worse than any man ever needed it, and I want to know if I can count you in.’

‘Get on with your yarn,’ I said, ‘and I’ll tell you.’

He seemed to brace himself for a great effort, and then started on the queerest rigmarole. I didn’t get hold of it at first, and I had to stop and ask him questions. But here is the gist of it:

(…)

**Task 1 (Green)**

**a) Before reading the following extract, predict what you think it may be about (in the space provided after the extract)**

**b) Read the extract then clarify your understanding of difficult words by looking them up in the dictionary**

**c) Answer the questions that follow while looking for ways that the author tries to engage (hook) the reader quickly (check the glossary before you begin)**

**d) Summarise the extract (briefly explain what you think it is about)**

1. **Predict what you think this story may be about.**

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1. **Clarify your understanding of difficult words by looking them up in the dictionary**

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| --- | --- |
| **Difficult Word** | **Meaning** |
| Veld | Grassy plains of Southern Africa |
| Gimlety | Capable of piercing or boring through |
| Brokers |  |
| Investment |  |
| Colonial |  |
| Surge |  |
| Envy |  |
| Iiberty |  |
| Confide |  |
| Rigmarole |  |

**Answer the following questions on the extract:**

**First-Time Reading**

1. What do we learn about the main character in the first two paragraphs?

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**Closer Reading**

1. How do we feel about the main character, Hanney, by the end of the extract? Why?

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1. What **narrative perspective** is the story from? Do we see everything from one character’s point of view or is it a more general view of the action?

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1. Hanney discusses his mood and feelings at the beginning of the story. As the story opens, how is Hanney feeling about being in London?

**‘I would give the Old Country another day to fit me into something; if nothing happened, I would take the next boat for the Cape.’**

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1. Find a quotation from paragraph five that shows that the man at Hanney’s door is nervous or worried.

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1. Hanney’s unexpected guest dashes into the house and starts checking that the doors are locked. What is the impact of these actions on Hanney?

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1. Why do you think the author has added these lines to the text? What do they suggest about what might happen in the rest of the novel?

**‘It’s a mighty liberty, but you looked the kind of man who would understand. I’ve had you in my mind all this week when things got troublesome. Say will you do me a good turn?’**

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1. The man who arrives at Hanney’s door says:

‘**You see, I happen at this moment to be dead.’**

What is the impact of these lines? What may Hanney (and the reader) begin to think about the man?

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1. A pupil has written:

**‘John Buchan really sets up the story well. We are certain it is going to be an adventure story and we are certain it is going to be exciting.’**

To what extent (how much) do you agree with these comments? Remember to use quotations from the text to back up your ideas.

**e.g. I strongly agree (or mostly agree, or do not agree) with these comments because…**

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1. **Bonus:**

What story do you think the man tells Hanney? What kind of trouble might he be in? What makes you think this?

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**Summarise** the extract in 50 words or less.

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**Glossary of terms**

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| **Old Country** | England |
| **Cape.** | South Africa |

**Task 2 (Amber) In addition to completing task 1, answer the extension questions below in the spaces provided in the green level (alongside the corresponding** (same) **question number).**

3. Why do you think the author used this perspective?

4. What is the effect of his lines here?

**Task 3 (Red) In addition to completing task 1 and the extension questions in task 2, answer the further extension question below.**

1. Can you identify which genre of fiction this novel may be, from clues in the opening? Which clues helped you to reach your conclusion?

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| Crime | Fantasy | Romance | Science Fiction | Horror |
| Historical | Western | Inspirational |  |  |

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**LO: To be able to identify the ways in which use DH Lawrence openings to engage the reader quickly.**

The last extract we will consider comes from a novel called ‘The Rocking-Horse Winner’ by DH Lawrence. In the story, a young boy hopes to help his family, who are in financial difficulties, by betting on horse races. He believes he learns the identity of the winning horses by riding his own old rocking-horse and imagining the race. The opening centres round the family’s need for money.

**The Rocking Horse Winner**

There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. They looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her. And hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what it was that she must cover up she never knew. Nevertheless, when her children were present, she always felt the centre of her heart go hard. This troubled her, and in her manner she was all the more gentle and anxious for her children, as if she loved them very much. Only she herself knew that at the centre of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody. Everybody else said of her: “She is such a good mother. She adores her children.” Only she herself, and her children themselves, knew it was not so. They read it in each other’s eyes.

There were a boy and two little girls. They lived in a pleasant house, with a garden, and they had discreet servants, and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighbourhood.

Although they lived in style, they felt always an anxiety in the house. There was never enough money. The mother had a small income, and the father had a small income, but not nearly enough for the social position which they had to keep up. The father went into town to some office. But though he had good prospects, these prospects never materialised. There was always the grinding sense of the shortage of money, though the style was always kept up.

At last the mother said: “I will see if I can’t make something.” But she did not know where to begin. She racked her brains, and tried this thing and the other, but could not find anything successful. The failure made deep lines come into her face. Her children were growing up, they would have to go to school. There must be more money, there must be more money. The father, who was always very handsome and expensive in his tastes, seemed as if he never would be able to do anything worth doing. And the mother, who had a great belief in herself, did not succeed any better, and her tastes were just as expensive.

And so the house came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: There must be more money! There must be more money! The children could hear it all the time though nobody said it aloud. They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking-horse, behind the smart doll’s house, a voice would start whispering: “There must be more money! There must be more money!” And the children would stop playing, to listen for a moment. They would look into each other’s eyes, to see if they had all heard. And each one saw in the eyes of the other two that they too had heard. “There must be more money! There must be more money!”

It came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking-horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden, champing head, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and smirking in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly, and seemed to be smirking all the more self-consciously because of it. The foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reason but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: “There must be more money!”

Yet nobody ever said it aloud. The whisper was everywhere, and therefore no one spoke it. Just as no one ever says: “We are breathing!” in spite of the fact that breath is coming and going all the time.

**Task 1 (Green)**

**a) Before reading the following extract, predict what you think it may be about (in the space provided after the extract)**

**b) Read the extract then clarify your understanding of difficult words by looking them up in the dictionary**

**c) Answer the questions that follow while looking for ways that the author tries to engage (hook) the reader quickly (check the glossary before you begin)**

**d) Summarise the extract (briefly explain what you think it is about)**

1. **Predict what you think this story may be about.**

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1. **Clarify your understanding of difficult words by looking them up in the dictionary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Difficult Word** | **Meaning** |
| Bonny |  |
| Thrust |  |
| Discreet |  |
| Social Position |  |
| Materialise |  |
| Champing |  |
| Smirk |  |

**Answer the following questions on the extract:**

**First-Time Reading**

1. What initial impression do we get of the family?

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**Closer Reading**

1. List four things we learn about the family in the first three paragraphs.

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1. What **narrative perspective** is the story from? Do we see everything from one character’s point of view or is it a more general view of the action? Why do you think the author made this choice?

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1. DH Lawrence begins his story by describing the woman. What is the effect of starting the story with these lines? What may the reader think?

**There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust.’**

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1. What is the effect of the constant repetition of the phrase, ‘There must be more money!’?

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1. What is the impact of the phrase ‘They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery.’?

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1. **Summarise** the extract in 50 words or less.

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**Task 2 (Amber) In addition to completing task 1, answer the extension questions below in the spaces provided in the green level (alongside the corresponding** (same) **question number). For additional questions, answer below.**

1. At first, exclamation marks are not used after the phrase; later they are. What is the effect of this change?

7.Find an example of personification in the extract. How and why has the author used this technique?

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**Task 3 (Red) In addition to completing task 1 and the extension questions in task 2, answer the further extension question below.**

1. A teacher has written, ‘DH Lawrence creates an oppressive and anxious opening to his story, ‘The Rocking-Horse Winner’.’

To what extent do you agree with this comment? Remember to use quotations from the text to back up your ideas.

**I strongly agree/ partially agree/do not agree because…**

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1. Can you identify which genre of fiction this novel may be, from clues in the opening? Which clues helped you to reach your conclusion?

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**Check your understanding (All Levels)**

1. How do writers use openings to engage the reader quickly? Give examples. Hint – think about the words used, narrative perspective and characterisation etc…

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1. Can you identify any structural features in each extract? Why was this successful? Hint – think of narrative perspective, organisation of the opening etc…

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1. Which opening is your favourite? Why? Which features helped to engage you? Would you like to continue reading this novel and, why?

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