Year 11

Wider Reading



Booklet 1

Contents Page

Week 1: American Pastoral by Philip Roth Fiction

Week 2: Excerpt from ‘Our Phantom Ship: China’ Non-Fiction

Week 3: Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck Fiction

Week 4: Excerpt from ‘Behind the Wall’ Non-Fiction

Week 5: The Lonely Londoners by Sam Selvon Fiction

Week 6: Excerpt from ‘The Voyage of the Beagle’ Non-Fiction

Week 7: Kerfol by Edith Wharton Fiction

## Week 1: ‘American Pastoral’ by Philip Roth

*Roth is an American writer whose work often gives provocative explorations of Jewish-American identity. ‘American Pastoral’ charts three generations of a New Jersey family, showing their evolution from struggling immigrants, successful business owners in the booming post-war period, to* ***antiestablishment*** *political terrorism. This is a novel propelled by sorrow, rage and a deep* ***compassion*** *for its characters. In this extract, the narrator Nathan Zuckerman recalls the changing landscape of America since the end of World War Two.*

Let’s remember the energy. Americans were governing not only themselves but some two hundred million people in Italy, Austria, Germany, and Japan. The war-crimes trials were cleansing the earth of its devils once and for all. Atomic power was ours alone. Rationing was ending, price controls were being lifted; in an explosion of self-assertion, auto workers, coal workers, transit workers, maritime workers, steel workers – **laborers** by the millions demanded more and went on strike for it. And playing Sunday morning softball on the Chancellor Avenue field and pickup basketball on the asphalt courts behind the school were all the boys who had come back alive, neighbours, cousins, older brothers, their pockets full of separation pay, the GI Bill inviting them to break out in ways they could not have imagined before the war. Our class started high school six months after the unconditional surrender of the Japanese, during the greatest moment of collective **inebriation** in American history. And the upsurge of energy was contagious. Around us nothing was lifeless. Sacrifice and constraint were over. The Depression had disappeared. Everything was in motion. The lid was off. Americans were to start over again, en masse, everyone in it together.

If that wasn’t sufficiently inspiring – the miraculous conclusion of this towering event, the clock of history reset and a whole people’s aims limited no longer by the past – there was the neighbourhood, the communal determination that we, the children, should escape poverty, ignorance, disease, social injury and intimidation – escape, above all, insignificance. You must not come to nothing! *Make something of yourselves!*

Despite the undercurrent of anxiety – a sense communication daily that hardship was a **persistent** menace that only persistent **diligence** could hope to keep at bay; despite a generalized mistrust of the **Gentile** world: despite the fear of being battered that clung to many families because of the Depression – ours was not a neighbourhood steeped in darkness. The place was bright with **industriousness**. There was a big belief in life and we were steered relentlessly in the direction of success: a better existence was going to be ours. The goal was to *have* goals, the aim to *have* aims. This edict came entangled often in **hysteria**, the embattled hysteria of those whom experience had taught how little **antagonism** it takes to wreck a life beyond repair. Yet it was this **edict** – emotionally overloaded as it was by the uncertainty in our elders, by their awareness of all that was in league against them – that made the neighbourhood a **cohesive** place. A whole community perpetually **imploring** us not to be immoderate and screw up, imploring us to grasp opportunity, exploit our advantages, remember *what matters*.

## Questions

1. List three positive things happening in America after World War 2.

1. What kind of sentence structures are used at the end of paragraph 1 to show happiness and confidence?
2. What expectation is there of people in paragraph 2?

1. List three negative things happening mentioned in the last paragraph.

1. Do you think this extract is more optimistic (hopeful) or pessimistic (negative) about America’s future? Why?

## Vocabulary

**Match a word in bold to teach of the definitions. Memorise the words.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| announcement | dislike, opposition | panic |
| non-Jewish people | hard work | unified |
| kindness | begging | continued, ongoing |
| workers | drunkenness | anti-government |

## Your interpretations

**Imitate Roth’s style by writing a similar piece about how Britain feels today. Use Roth’s sentence structures and lots of advanced vocabulary.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Week 2: Excerpt from ‘Our Phantom Ship: China’

**OUR Phantom Ship has deposited our friend, Henry Rubley, Esquire, at Adelaide, and has now returned to China.**

Since a typhoon occurs not much oftener than once in about three years, it would be odd if we should sail immediately into one; but we are fairly in the China seas, which are the typhoon’s own peculiar sporting ground, and it is desperately sultry, and those clouds are full of night and lightning, to say nothing of a fitful gale and angry sea. Look out! There is the coast of China. Now for telescope to see the barren, dingy hills, with clay and granite peeping out, with a few miserable trees and stunted firs. That is our first sight of the flowery land, and we shall not get another yet, for the spray begins to blind us; it is quite as much as we can do to see each other. Now the wind howls and tears the water up, as if it would extract the waves by their roots, like so many Ocean’s teeth; but he kicks sadly at the operation. We are driven by the wild blast that snaps our voices short off at the lips and carries them away; no words are audible. We are among a mass of spars and men wild as the storm on drifting broken junks; a vessel founders in our sight, and we are cast, with dead and living, upon half a dozen wrecks entangled in a mass, upon the shore of Hong Kong; — ourselves safe, of course, for left at home whatever could be bruised upon the journey. How many houses have been blown away like hats, how many rivers have been driven back to swell canals and flood the fields, (whose harvest has been prematurely cropped on the first warning of the typhoon’s intended visit,) we decline investigating. The evening sky is very wild, and we were last night under the typhoon at sea; to-night, are in the new town of Victoria, and will be phantom bed-fellows to any Chinaman who has been eating pork for supper. The Chinese are very fond of pork, or anything that causes oiliness in man. A lean man forfeits something in their estimation; for they say, “He must have foolishness; why has he wanted wisdom to eat more?”

Hong Kong was one of the upshots of our cannonading in the pure and holy Chinese war; and as for the new town of Victoria, we shall walk out of it at once, for we have not travelled all this way to look at Englishmen. The island itself is eight or ten miles long, and sometimes two or sometimes six miles broad. It is the model of a grand mountain region on a scale of two inches to the foot. There are crags, ravines, wild torrents, fern-hills; but the highest mountain does not rise two thousand feet. We stand upon it now. Quite the contrary to our usual experience, we found, in coming up, the richest flowers at the greatest elevation. The heat and dryness of the air below, where the sun’s rays are reflected from bare surfaces, is said to be oppressive, and perhaps the flowers down there want a pleasant shade.

Questions

**True or False? Decide whether you think that these statements about the attitude of the writer are true or false.**

1. He is surprised that the ship sails into a typhoon. TRUE / FALSE
2. He is impressed by his first sight of China. TRUE / FALSE
3. He is very concerned about the destruction that he sees around him. TRUE / FALSE
4. He is interested in the habits of Chinese people. TRUE / FALSE
5. He wishes to discover what Hong Kong is like. TRUE / FALSE
6. He finds Hong Kong different to expectations. TRUE / FALSE

**Prove it! Provide evidence for your view of the statements by finding a quotation to support each of them. Write the quote next to the same number used for each statement above.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

**‘Zoom in’ on language. Highlight or underline words in your chosen quotations which you find interesting. Identify examples of specific techniques which have been used e.g. imagery, repetition, use of pronouns etc. and then comment on their effects.**

## Week 3: ‘Of Mice and Men’ by John Steinbeck

*John Steinbeck’s classic novella explores life in during the American Depression of the 1930s. George and his vulnerable friend Lennie find work on a farm and try to stay out of danger.*

“Look, Lennie, if you get in any kind of trouble, you remember what I told you to do?"

Lennie raised up on his elbow. His face contorted with thought. Then his eyes moved sadly to George's face. "If I get in any trouble, you ain't gonna let me tend the rabbits."

"That's not what I meant. You remember where we slep' last night? Down by the river?"

"Yeah. I remember. Oh, sure I remember! I go there an' hide in the brush."

"Hide till I come for you. Don't let nobody see you. Hide in the brush by the river. Say that over."

"Hide in the brush by the river, down in the brush by the river."

"If you get in trouble."

"If I get in trouble."

A brake screeched outside. A call came, "Stable- buck. Oh! Sta-able buck."

George said, "Say it over to yourself, Lennie, so you won't forget it."

Both men glanced up, for the rectangle of sunshine in the doorway was cut off. A girl was standing there looking in. She had full, **rouged** lips and wide-spaced eyes, heavily made up. Her fingernails were red. Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like sausages. She wore a cotton house dress and red mules, on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers. "I'm lookin' for Curley," she said. Her voice had a nasal, **brittle** quality.

George looked away from her and then back. "He was in here a minute ago, but he went."

"Oh!" She put her hands behind her back and leaned against the door frame so that her body was thrown forward. "You're the new fellas that just come, ain't ya?"

"Yeah."

Lennie's eyes moved down over her body, and though she did not seem to be looking at Lennie she bridled a little. She looked at her fingernails.

"Sometimes Curley's in here," she explained.

George said **brusquely**. "Well he ain't now."

"If he ain't, I guess I better look some place else," she said playfully. Lennie watched her, fascinated.

George said, "If I see him, I'll pass the word you was looking for him."

She smiled archly and twitched her body. "Nobody can't blame a person for lookin'," she said. There were footsteps behind her, going by. She turned her head. "Hi, Slim," she said.

Slim's voice came through the door. "Hi, Good-lookin'."

"I'm tryin' to find Curley, Slim."

"Well, you ain't tryin' very hard. I seen him goin' in your house." She was suddenly **apprehensive**.

"'Bye, boys," she called into the bunkhouse, and she hurried away.

## Questions

1. What does George tell Lennie to do if he gets in trouble?

1. Who appears in the doorway directly after this?

1. What colour is associated with this character? What might this suggest about her?

1. Why might someone describe this character as attention-seeking and provocative?

1. Why might someone describe this character as vulnerable?

## Vocabulary

**Match a word in bold to teach of the definitions. Memorise the words.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| hard but  breakable | roughly | worried | made red |

## Your interpretations

**Complete the paragraph openings. Include short quotations in your answer.**

Steinbeck hints that life for women in 1930s America was challenging because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Week 4: Excerpt from ‘Behind the Wall’

People’s images of countries are rich in such buried sediment, which goes on haunting long after experience or common sense has diluted it. And by now – as we floated above the wrung-out steppes of the Gobi – other strata had overlaid it first. In the anarchy of the Cultural Revolution, between 1966 and 1976, the Chinese people had not merely been terrorised from above but had themselves – tens of millions of them – become the instruments of their own torture. The land had sunk into a peculiar horror. A million were killed; some thirty million more were brutally persecuted, and unknown millions starved to death. Yet it was less the numbers which appalled than the refinements of cruelty practised – in once province alone seventy-five different methods of torture were instituted – and I never thought of the country now without being dogged by a tragic question-mark.

The woman was rummaging in her handbag. In the seats behind us a conclave of Beijing businessmen sprawled, their shirt collars open, their eyes closed. I was seized by the foolish idea that each one of them was withholding some secret from me - some simple, perfect illumination. Because that is the foreigner’s obsession in China. At every moment, round ever corner, the question Who are they? erupts and nags. How could they be so led? How could they do what they had done? And had they ever changed – this people of exquisite poetry and refined brush-strokes and pitilessness?

A billion uncomprehended people.

Beneath us now, where the last hills tilted south-eastward out of Inner Mongolia into the huge alluvial basin of the Yellow River, I could see the divide between plateau and plain, agricultural hardship and sufficiency, drawn vertically down the earth’s atlas with the precision of a pencil-stroke. To the west brown, to the east green.

Within half an hour we would be landing in Beijing – old Peking – and as if these last airborne minutes might liberate us from inhibitions, I started talking with the woman about the Cultural Revolution. She turned quizzically to me and asked: ‘What do you think of Mao Zedong in the West?’

I said we thought him a remarkable leader, but inhumane.

She said coldly: ‘Yes. He made mistakes.’

Mistakes! He had caused more than sixteen million deaths. Sometimes he had acted and talked about people as if they were mere disposable counters on an ideological gameboard. And she talked of mistakes. It was how the Russians spoke of Stalin. I said tightly – I felt this might be my last (and first) chance to vent anger in China: ‘All that suffering inflicted on your people! How can you forgive that?’ Then I added: ‘I think he became a monster.’

She went quiet and stared somewhere beyond me. The fact did not seem to have occurred to her before. Then she said simply: ‘Yes.’

For some reason I felt ashamed. Whatever she meant by her ‘Yes’, its tone – distant, as if admitting something irrelevant – signalled that I did not understand. She fastened her seat-belt. I said: ‘Of course it’s hard for us in the West to imagine …’

Us in the West. We must seem outlandish, I thought, with our garish self-centredness, our coarse opulence, our sentimentality. Somebody had told me that the Chinese found our big feet and noses preposterous, and that to them we smelt. The next moment I had asked the woman penitently: ‘Do we smell?’

Her fragile face smiled back at me. ‘Yes, of course.’

I baulked. ‘Very much?’

‘Oh yes. All the time.’

I suppose that her bemused smile was there to cover the embarrassment. But I asked finally, edging a little away: ‘Do I smell?’

‘Yes.’

It was too late to go back now. ‘What of?’

‘What?’

‘What of? What do I smell of?’

‘Oh!’ She plunged her face into her hands in a sudden paroxysm of giggles. ‘Smell. I thought you said smile!’ The tinkle and confusion of her laughter sabotaged the next few sentences, then she said: ‘Only in the summer. Westerners sweat more than Chinese. That’s all, that’s all. No, you don’t … smell. No, really … no …’

We were coming in to land.

Questions

**Answer these questions in full sentences and support with a short quotation wherever possible.**

1. How many people does the writer claim were affected by the Chinese Cultural Revolution?

2. What does the writer find most shocking about the events which took place?

3. What does the writer think about China?

4. What do you think is the ‘foreigner’s obsession in China’ according to the writer?

5. When the writer looks out of the aeroplane window he uses a series of contrasts to describe what he sees. Write down one of these contrasts. What might it suggest about China?

6. How does the writer feel about the woman’s comment that Mao Zedong (also known as Mao Tse-tung) ‘made mistakes?’

7. Which question does the writer ask the woman about western habits?

8. Which question does the woman think the writer has asked?

9. How does the woman’s confusion and misunderstanding create humour at the end of the article?

## Week 5: ‘The Lonely Londoners’ by Sam Selvon

*‘The Lonely Londoners’ was the first novel to portray the chilly welcome given to the early Caribbean immigrants to the city. It is a narrative of surprising warmth in a story of race, exile and survival, following the experiences of Moses who has newly arrived in London from Trinidad. Selvon was a pioneer in the use of dialect in his novels.*

The place where Tolroy and the family living was off the Harrow Road, and the people in that area call the Working Class. Wherever in London that it have Working Class, there you will find a lot of spades. This is the real world, where men know what it is to hustle a pound to pay the rent when Friday come. The houses around here old and grey and **weatherbeaten**, the walls cracking like the last days of **Pompeii**, it ain’t have no hot water, and in the whole street that Tolroy and them living in, none of the houses have bath. You had was to buy one of them big galvanise bath and boil the water and full it up, or else go to the public bath. Some of the houses still had gas light, which is to tell you how old they was. All the houses in a row in the street, on both sides, they build like one long house with walls separating them in parts, so your house jam up between two neighbours: is so most of the houses is in London The street does be always dirty except if rain fall. Sometimes a truck does come with a kind of revolving broom and some pipes letting out water, and the driver drive near the pavement, and water come out the pipes and the broom revolve, and so they sweep the road. It always have little children playing in the road, because they ain’t have no other place to play…

It have people living in London who don’t know what happening in the room next to them, far more the street, or how other people living. London is a place like that. It divide up in little worlds, and you stay in the world you belong to and you don’t know anything about what happening in the other ones except what you read in the papers. Them rich people who does live in Belgravia and Knightsbridge and up in Hampstead and them other plush places, they would never believe what it like in a grim place like Harrow Road or Notting Hill. Them people who have car, who going to theatre and ballet in the West End, who attending premiere with the royal family, they don’t know nothing about hustling two pound of Brussel sprout and half-pound potato, or queuing up for fish and chips in the **smog**. People don’t talk about things like that again, they come to kind of accept that is so the world is, that it bound to have rich and poor, it bound to have some live by the **Grace** and other who have plenty. That is all about it, nobody does go into detail. A poor man, a rich man. To stop one of them rich tests when they are going to a show in **Leicester Square** and ask them for a bob, they might give you, but if you want to talk about the conditions under which you living, they haven’t time for that. They know all about that already. People get tired after a time with who poor and who rich and who well off, they don’t care any more.

It have a kind of **communal** feeling with the Working Class and the spades, because when you poor things does level out, it don’t have much up and down. A lot of the men get kill in war and leave widow behind, and it have bags of these old geezers who does be pottering about the Harrow Road like if they lost, a look in their eye as if the war happen unexpected and they can’t realise what happen to the old Brit’n.

## Questions

1. What do you learn about Tolroy’s area?

1. How does the writer criticise the class system in paragraph 2?

1. Why do you think the writer chose to write in dialect? What does it suggest about the narrator?

1. How has World War 1 changed the area (paragraph 3).

## Vocabulary

**Match a word in bold to teach of the definitions. Memorise the words.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| An ancient city in the Roman empire that was destroyed by a volcanic eruption. | Collective, shared by those in a community | A famous area of theatres in London. |
| A virtue coming from God. | Damaged or worn. | A thick fog. |

## Your interpretations

**Complete the paragraph opening. Include short embedded quotations in your answer.**

The writer presents London as a highly divided place in this extract through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week 6: Excerpt from ‘The Voyage of the Beagle’

While going one day on shore near Wollaston Island, we pulled alongside a canoe with six Fuegians. These were the most abject and miserable creatures I anywhere beheld. On the east coast the natives […] have guanaco cloaks, and on the west they possess seal-skins. Amongst these central tribes the men generally have an otter-skin, or some small scrap about as large as a pocket-handkerchief, which is barely sufficient to cover their backs as low down as their loins. It is laced across the breast by strings, and according as the wind blows, it is shifted from side to side. But these Fuegians in the canoe were quite naked, and even one full-grown woman was absolutely so. It was raining heavily, and the fresh water, together with the spray, trickled down her body. In another harbour not far distant, a woman, who was suckling a recently-born child, came one day alongside the vessel, and remained there out of mere curiosity, whilst the sleet fell and thawed on her naked bosom, and on the skin of her naked baby! These poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, and their gestures violent. Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world. It is a common subject of conjecture what pleasure in life some of the lower animals can enjoy: how much more reasonably the same question may be asked with respect to these barbarians! At night five or six human beings, naked and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of this tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground coiled up like animals. Whenever it is low water, winter or summer, night or day, they must rise to pick shellfish from the rocks; and the women either dive to collect sea-eggs, or sit patiently in their canoes, and with a baited hair-line without any hook, jerk out little fish. If a seal is killed, or the floating carcass of a putrid whale is discovered, it is a feast; and such miserable food is assisted by a few tasteless berries and fungi. […]

Their country is a broken mass of wild rocks, lofty hills, and useless forests: and these are viewed through mists and endless storms. The habitable land is reduced to the stones on the beach; in search of food they are compelled unceasingly to wander from spot to spot, and so steep is the coast, that they can only move about in their wretched canoes. They cannot know the feeling of having a home, and still less that of domestic affection; for the husband is to the wife a brutal master to a laborious slave. Was a more horrid deed ever perpetrated, than that witnessed on the west coast by Byron [John Byron (1723-86), navigator], who saw a wretched mother pick up her bleeding dying infant-boy, whom her husband had mercilessly dashed on the stones for dropping a basket of sea-eggs! How little can the higher powers of the mind be brought into play: what is there for imagination to picture, for reason to compare, for judgment to decide upon? to knock a limpet from the rock does not require even cunning, that lowest power of the mind. Their skill in some respects may be compared to the instinct of animals; for it is not improved by experience: the canoe, their most ingenious work, poor as it is, has remained the same, as we know from Drake, for the last two hundred and fifty years.

Questions

1. What is the name of the ship which Charles Darwin travelled in?

2. On which island in Tierra del Fuego was Charles Darwin near when he went on shore?

3. How many Fuegians did Charles Darwin see in the canoe?

4. What did he notice about their clothing?

5. What did they have on their faces?

6. How do they sleep?

7. What do they eat?

8. Which part of the island do they live on?

9. How do they treat their wives?

10. What is their greatest achievement?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Technique | Example | Effect |
| adjectives | ‘These were the most abject and miserable creatures …’ |  |
| exclamatory sentences | ‘the sleet fell and thawed … on the skin of her naked baby!’ |  |
| opinion | ‘Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow-creatures …’ |  |
| fact | ‘as we know from Drake, for the last two hundred and fifty years.’ |  |
| lists | ‘their hair entangled, their voices discordant, and their gestures violent.’ |  |
| adverbs | ‘they are compelled unceasingly to wander from spot to spot …’ |  |
| rhetorical questions | ‘How little can the powers of the mind be brought into play?’ |  |
| pattern of three | ‘for imagination to picture, for reason to compare, for judgment to decide upon?’ |  |
| simile or metaphor | ‘about as large as a pocket-handkerchief.’  ‘coiled up like animals.’ |  |
| emotive language | ‘her bleeding dying infant-boy, whom her husband had mercilessly dashed on the stones …’ |  |

Week 7: ‘Kerfol’ by Edith Wharton

**The extract below is from Part 1 of a story called Kerfol, first published in 1916 by Edith Wharton. In the extract the narrator, who remains unnamed throughout the story, goes to visit a grand house in Brittany in France which he is thinking of buying. The house is called ‘Kerfol’.**

The building was so fine that I felt a desire to explore it for its own sake. I looked about the court, wondering in which corner the guardian lodged. Then I pushed open the barrier and went in. As I did so, a dog barred my way. He was such a remarkably beautiful little dog that for a moment he made me forget the splendid place he was defending. I was not sure of his breed at the time, but have since learned that it was Chinese, and that he was of a rare variety called the ‘Sleeve-dog.’ He was very small and golden brown, with large brown eyes and a ruffled throat: he looked like a large tawny chrysanthemum. I said to myself: ‘These little beasts always snap and scream, and somebody will be out in a minute.’

The little animal stood before me, forbidding, almost menacing: there was anger in his large brown eyes. But he made no sound, he came no nearer. Instead, as I advanced, he gradually fell back, and I noticed that another dog, a vague rough brindled thing, had limped up on a lame leg. ‘There’ll be a hubbub now,’ I thought; for at the same moment a third dog, a long-haired white mongrel, slipped out of a doorway and joined the others. All three stood looking at me with grave eyes; but not a sound came from them. As I advanced they continued to fall back on muffled paws, still watching me. ‘At a given point, they’ll all charge at my ankles: it’s one of the jokes that dogs who live together put up on one,’ I thought. I was not alarmed, for they were neither large nor formidable. But they let me wander about the court as I pleased, following me at a little distance—always the same distance—and always keeping their eyes on me. Presently I looked across at the ruined facade, and saw that in one of its empty window-frames another dog stood: a white pointer with one brown ear. He was an old grave dog, much more experienced than the others; and he seemed to be observing me with a deeper intentness. ‘I’ll hear from him,’ I said to myself; but he stood in the window-frame, against the trees of the park, and continued to watch me without moving. I stared back at him for a time, to see if the sense that he was being watched would not rouse him. Half the width of the court lay between us, and we gazed at each other silently across it. But he did not stir, and at last I turned away. Behind me I found the rest of the pack, with a newcomer added: a small black greyhound with pale agate-coloured eyes. He was shivering a little, and his expression was more timid than that of the others. I noticed that he kept a little behind them. And still there was not a sound.

I stood there for fully five minutes, the circle about me—waiting, as they seemed to be waiting. At last I went up to the little golden-brown dog and stooped to pat him. As I did so, I heard myself give a nervous laugh. The little dog did not start, or growl, or take his eyes from me—he simply slipped back about a yard, and then paused and continued to look at me. ‘Oh, hang it!’ I exclaimed, and walked across the court toward the well.

As I advanced, the dogs separated and slid away into different corners of the court. I examined the urns on the well, tried a locked door or two, and looked up and down the dumb façade; then I faced about toward the chapel. When I turned I perceived that all the dogs had disappeared except the old pointer, who still watched me from the window. It was rather a relief to be rid of that cloud of witnesses; and I began to look about me for a way to the back of the house. ‘Perhaps there’ll be somebody in the garden,’ I thought. I found a way across the moat, scrambled over a wall smothered in brambles, and got into the garden. A few lean hydrangeas and geraniums pined in the flower-beds, and the ancient house looked down on them indifferently. Its garden side was plainer and severer than the other: the long granite front, with its few windows and steep roof, looked like a fortress-prison. I walked around the farther wing, went up some disjointed steps, and entered the deep twilight of a narrow and incredibly old box-walk. The walk was just wide enough for one person to slip through, and its branches met overhead. It was like the ghost of a box-walk, its lustrous green all turning to the shadowy greyness of the avenues. I walked on and on, the branches hitting me in the face and springing back with a dry rattle; and at length I came out on the grassy top of the chemin de ronde. I walked along it to the gate-tower, looking down into the court, which was just below me. Not a human being was in sight; and neither were the dogs. I found a flight of steps in the thickness of the wall and went down them; and when I emerged again into the court, there stood the circle of dogs, the golden-brown one a little ahead of the others, the black greyhound shivering in the rear.

‘Oh, hang it—you uncomfortable beasts, you!’ I exclaimed, my voice startling me with a sudden echo. The dogs stood motionless, watching me. I knew by this time that they would not try to prevent my approaching the house, and the knowledge left me free to examine them. I had a feeling that they must be horribly cowed to be so silent and inert. Yet they did not look hungry or ill-treated. Their coats were smooth and they were not thin, except the shivering greyhound. It was more as if they had lived a long time with people who never spoke to them or looked at them: as though the silence of the place had gradually benumbed their busy inquisitive natures. And this strange passivity, this almost human lassitude, seemed to me sadder than the misery of starved and beaten animals. I should have liked to rouse them for a minute, to coax them into a game or a scamper; but the longer I looked into their fixed and weary eyes the more preposterous the idea became. With the windows of that house looking down on us, how could I have imagined such a thing? The dogs knew better: they knew what the house would tolerate and what it would not. I even fancied that they knew what was passing through my mind, and pitied me for my frivolity. But even that feeling probably reached them through a thick fog of listlessness. I had an idea that their distance from me was as nothing to my remoteness from them. The impression they produced was that of having in common one memory so deep and dark that nothing that had happened since was worth either a growl or a wag.

Questions

**Write down 5 things you learn about the dog in the first paragraph.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Find and highlight the three sections which mention the black greyhound.**

**Your Interpretations:**

**From reading the extract, what do you find out about the black greyhound?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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