

Reading Activities

A Workshop
by Robert Hill

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

- 1** to elicit or pre-teach vocabulary that will be important
- 2** to activate schemata
- 3** to encourage learners to predict what might happen

3 Everyone agrees that good readers are readers who make predictions about what they are going to read. But some don't approve of "guesswork".

- Encourage predictions from:
- the title. (N.b. post reading task)
- illustration(s).

Standard questions such as 'Who can you see?', 'What are they doing?', 'How are they feeling?', 'What do you think has just happened?' are all useful.



Encourage predictions from:

- The first sentence.
- ‘My story really begins when I was ten years old. I was living with my aunt, Mrs Reed, because my mother and father were both dead.’
- **BUT** different ‘points of entry’ are possible:
- Extract a significant sentence from the text and ask ‘What do you think happens to lead up to this?’ The sentence chosen can even be the last sentence of the text.
- ‘Perhaps I’ll be happy at school,’ I thought. ‘Maybe there will be someone who likes me. I could find some friends there.’

Different 'points of entry'

Extract some significant sentences from the text, write them on the board in scrambled order, and ask the class to suggest the order in which they will occur (this will make them think about plot).

- When I woke up, I was in my own bed.
- Mrs Reed was very rich and her house was large and beautiful, but I was not happy there.
- 'I cry because I am miserable,' I replied.
- The doctor looked at me kindly. 'I see,' he said. 'Would you like to go away to school?'
- He stared at me for a long time, and then, suddenly, he hit me.

Different 'points of entry'

Write some significant words on the board.

Learners predict in what context they will occur (e.g. in relation to what possible event, or to what kind of character).

- a dark, cold room
- a large, heavy book
- cruel cousins
- a kind doctor

Different 'points of entry'

Extract a passage and eliminate some of the words or phrases (gap-filling procedure). This is a prediction activity, not a language test, so eliminate words to do with plot / character. Learners fill in the gaps and then check their ideas when they read.

'Take her to the red room and,' she told them. The red room was and A servant had told me that Mrs Reed's husband had the room. Nobody ever went there

Step Three B1.2

READING & TRAINING

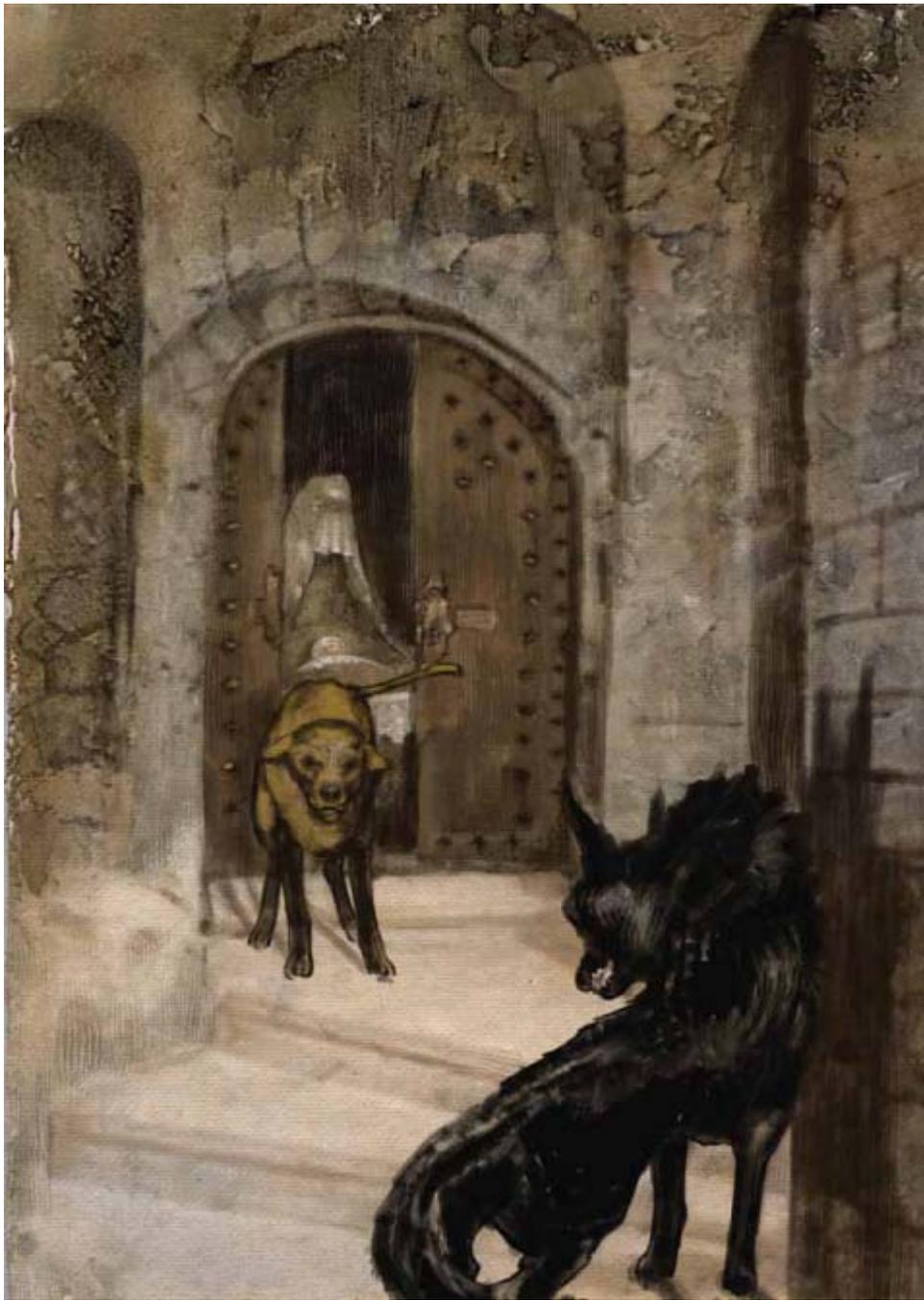
Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre



AUDIO CD









1

Nasreddin and the coat

It was 8 o'clock in the morning. Nasreddin was upstairs. His wife was downstairs in the kitchen.

'Your breakfast's ready!' she called. Two minutes later she heard a loud noise in the hall.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

'Oh my goodness! What's that noise?' she said.

She dropped the plates and ran into the hall. Nasreddin was there. He was on the floor at the bottom of the stairs.

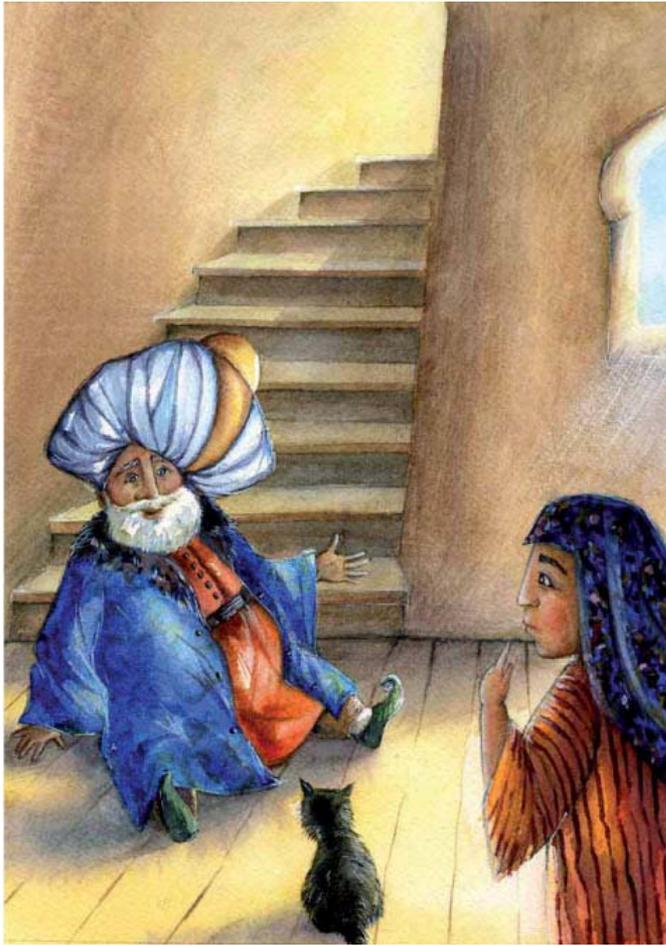
'What was that loud noise?' she asked. 'Are you alright, Nasreddin?'

'Yes, I'm fine, my dear,' he replied. 'It was my coat. It fell down the stairs.'

'But coats don't make a noise!' said his wife. 'I heard a loud THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!'

'Well... you see, my dear,' said Nasreddin. 'I was inside it at the time.'

From picture book to cartoon: bubbles & clouds



- 1 N thinking
- 2 N speaking
- 3 N's wife thinking
- 4 N's wife speaking
- 5 Both N & N's wife thinking
- 6 Both N & N's wife speaking
- 7 N speaking but N's wife thinking
- 8 N thinking but N's wife speaking
- 9 The cat thinking
- 10 The cat thinking + any of 5, 6, 7 or 8...





What is Juliet thinking?

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____ ,

(4) _____ (5) _____ (6) _____

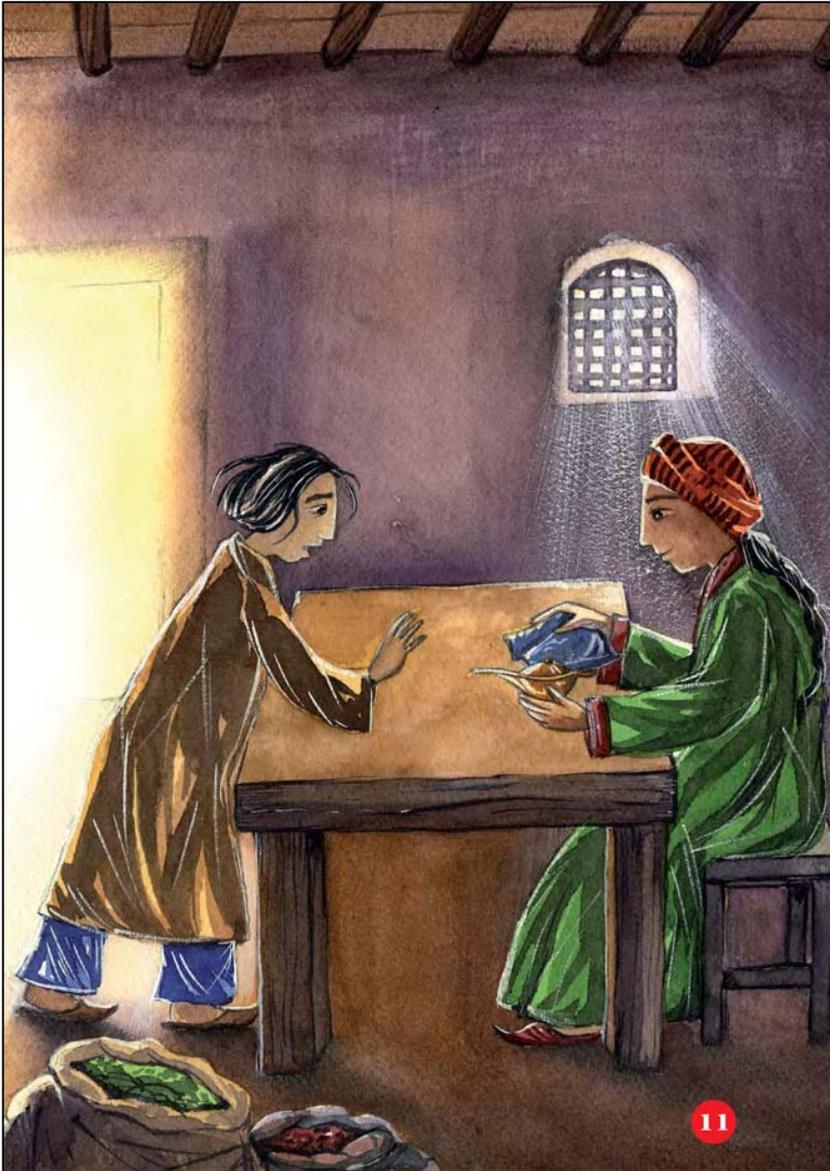
(7) _____ (8) _____ (9) _____ .

“Pictures and balloons”

- Major skills involved, which students use even unconsciously:
 - Syntax (the ‘horizontal axis’ of choice)
 - Vocabulary (the ‘vertical axis’ of choice)
 - Text cohesion

- For big classes, use more than one character. Different teams guess different bubbles/clouds.

Pictures aren't graded; language is



- Be careful! It's magic!
- No! Don't rub it! It's magic!
- Be careful! That lamp is magic! If you rub it, a genie will appear!
- My goodness! Don't rub that lamp! You don't know what might happen!
- Mum, no! Listen, I've told you a thousand times... (etc.)

(1) _____ (2) _____ ! (3) _____

(4) _____ (5) _____ (6) _____ !

(7) _____ (8) _____ (9) _____

(10) _____ , (11) _____ (12) _____

(13) _____ (14) _____ !

“Pictures and balloons”

- If students get stuck on a word, don't tell them!
- Break down a line, e.g. (14) _____ , to show the number of letters in the word (14) _ _ _ _ _
- Give the 1st letter, eg (14) a _ _ _ _ _ , or the last letter, eg (14) _ _ _ _ _ r , or even 1st & last.
- Give most letters, but never let students give up!
- Use of the L1?
- The same materials work for a different activity: the ‘rub out’.







A Dame School (about 1840) by Thomas Webster.

In 'dame schools', an early kind of private elementary schools, lessons were generally taught by women. These schools were often located in the home of the teacher.



In this scene from Franco Zeffirelli's *Jane Eyre* (1996) Charlotte Gainsbourg as Jane teaches Adèle; you will read about Jane's new teaching job in the next chapter.



The Governess (1844) by Richard Redgrave.

Other activities with visuals



Writing balloons, clouds
& captions (1st, 2nd,
3rd person forms)

Creating cartoons or
graphic novels

Creating posters

Creating film-style
posters (as 'trailers')

“Hot Seating”

- Oral questioning and answering ‘in role’
- Lower levels – just comprehension
- Higher levels – inference (from the text) and interpretation (extra-textual)
- Minor characters often have much to say!
- See *Black Cat Readers Guide* pp 17 & 19

“Hot Seating”

Some questions can be provided by the teacher:

- T’s questions can be full (‘Where do you live?’) or dehydrated (‘Where/you/live?’).
- Learners can rank these questions or choose x number from them.
- Learners can add to them (specify a number).

Questions can be provided by learners:

- They brainstorm in groups and write them down (with peer correction?), & then learners are chosen for the hot seat.
- Final oral work, e.g. a ‘real’ press conference.

“The Word Box”:

- Teacher to students or teacher to team...
- Ask for a translation of the word (L1 to FL or FL to L1)
- Give a definition (in FL or L2) and ask students for the word
- Say a gapped sentence using the word
- Ask for the spelling
- Write the word – scrambled - on the board
- Ask for a synonym or antonym of the word
- Ask students for a sentence using the word

“The Word Box”: Final Activities

- Ask students to make word squares, word snakes, bingo boards
- Ask students to make pattern poems
- Take several words out of the box: ask students to make up a sentence(s) or paragraph(s) using the words ... e.g. a mini-saga
- Ask students to make a haiku^o using some of the words (^o 3-line poem of 5, 7 & 5 syllables)
- Ask students to write an alternative ending, or beginning of a sequel (e.g. “Ten years later, ...”)

Summary-based Activities

Some film-based activities from *The Black Guide to Graded Readers* (p. 29)

- Suggest a cast for a new film. Actors from all nationalities possible. Make-up possible. Learners explain & justify choices, then debate & vote in class for best cast.
- Invent another setting in time/place. Film-makers create new settings for Shakespeare, & for all classic stories. Think of adapting major details (e.g. clothes, accommodation, transport, weapons, etc.) & suggest locations. Often interesting to focus on the film's opening – before, during and right after credits.
- Suggest the soundtrack for all the film or for key scenes. Some directors use classical music (e.g. Kubrick) & some popular music (e.g. Scorsese, Tarantino); any kind of music is possible.
- Suggest changes to film script: what episodes and/or characters could be cut/reduced? What might be increased/added? OR, compare book with a film version.
- Plan a trailer or a design a poster for a new film.

Romeo and Juliet



Impossible dream.

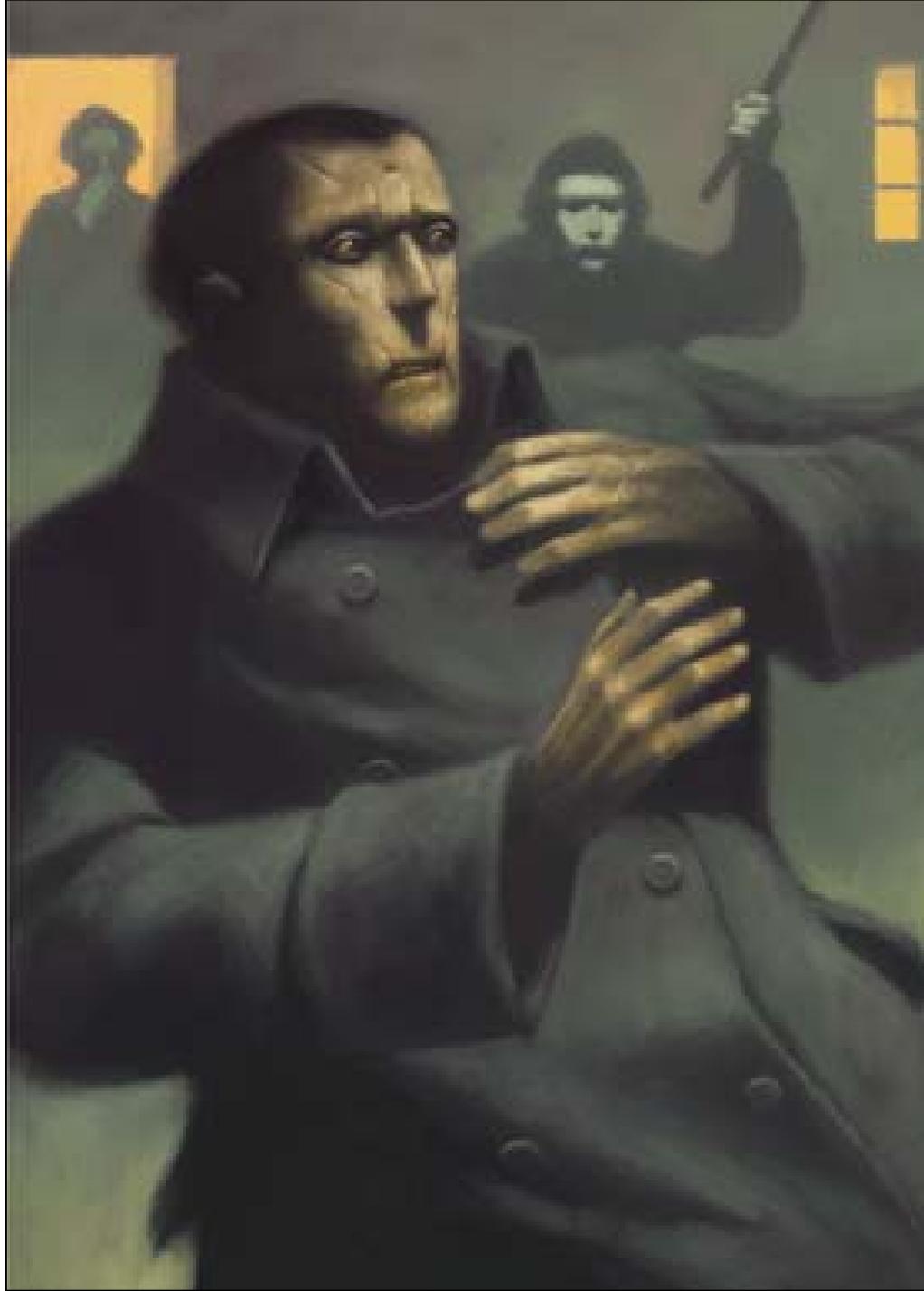
Their love ended in death, but
they live forever.

The Characters



From left to right: Robert Walton, Frankenstein's mother, Frankenstein's father, Elizabeth, William, Victor Frankenstein, the creature, Henry Clerval, Justine, De Lacey, Safie, Agatha, Felix.







6 Reading pictures

Compare the two pictures on pages 59 and 109. Remind yourselves of what is happening.



In pairs or small groups, note down in the table below

- in column 2, things that the pictures have in common,
- in columns 1 and 3, things that are different between the two.

Here are some ideas to start: which column will you put them in?

- There is warmth and light inside.
- The creature has been inside.
- The creature dreams of being inside.

Now continue with as many ideas as you can.

1: Outside the cottage	2: Outside the cottage & Outside the hotel room	3: Outside the hotel room
.....
.....
.....

7 Writing

Haikus, originally a Japanese form of poem, are three-line poems. There is no rhyme, but the first line has 5 syllables, the second 7 syllables, and the third 5 syllables. Here are two examples:

Outside the cottage

Inside: light, warmth, love.
People talk and play music.
I can only watch.

Outside the hotel room

Two desperate men.
One has loved and lost a wife,
One never knew love.

Now you write a pair of haikus to go with the pictures. You can write from the creature's point of view (as in "Outside the cottage") or from an external point of view (as in "Outside the hotel room").

8 Paradise Lost

After receiving Elizabeth's letter in Paris, Frankenstein says:

'I dreamt of the paradise of her love, but the apple was already eaten, and the angel was ready to drive me out of the garden.'

He refers to the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible, which is also told in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (page 48).

But Eve ate the apple first. Eating the apple meant not being innocent any more; it meant knowing what sin was. So what does Frankenstein mean when he says 'but the apple was already eaten'?

9 Frankenstein's behaviour

- 1 Frankenstein refers to *Paradise Lost*, a book which the creature loves. This is just one of the moments in Part Seven in which Frankenstein behaves in a similar way to the creature. What other similar behaviour can you see?
- 2 Does Frankenstein realistically think he can kill the creature?

10 Cinematic moments

In pairs or small groups, look through Part Seven: which are the most horrifying moments? Choose one or two scenes to film (not necessarily horrifying moments). Describe how you would film it/them to the class. If you need, refer back to the special terms on page 51.

Haikus inspired by *Frankenstein* pictures



Outside the cottage

Inside: light, warmth, love.
People talk and play music.
I can only watch.



Outside the hotel room

Two desperate men.
One has loved & lost a wife,
One never knew love.

Robert Hill

robhill@tin.it