

The Hand that Feeds Me

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Key & Teacher's Notes

Pre-reading activities

(Activating students' schemata)

★ Visual learners ★ Audio-lingual learners ★ Kinaesthetic learners

- ★ **A** Ask sts: What are hands used for? Show picture(s) 1, 2, and 3. In groups, sts draw a hand and cut it out. On each finger, they write one of the things they use their hands for. You may want to post all the hands on the wall.
- ★ Help the students with vocabulary. Make sure that you pre-teach the word *feed*.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

- ★ B Show pictures 4 and 5 and discuss sts reactions to them. Suggested questions:
★ Where do homeless people sleep? What do they eat? What do they do all day? What kind of people are homeless in your town? Do you know of any organisations that help homeless people?

Elicit words like *poking in a barrel/litter bin*, *grazing*, *alley* (from the story) and *The Big Issue* magazine (or your country's equivalent).



Picture 4



Picture 5

- ★ **C** Make room in the middle of the classroom. Tell sts to imagine they are somewhere else in the room, looking at it from a different perspective. If possible, they can go and sit on the floor, etc. For 3 minutes, they think about (or write) what they see, feel, smell, hear (noises from the playground)... Then, ask for volunteers to tell the others what they wrote/thought about.

The aim of this activity is to make sts look at familiar situations from a different perspective. It is important to elicit words like *scent, hollering, whooping, shouting,....*

- ★ **D** The aim of this activity is to pre-teach vocabulary, to speculate about the characters and to imagine what is going to happen. The idea is to motivate sts to read the story.



Give sts 2 or 3 of the following excerpts:

- *It's not always smart to take meat from strange men, but this guy seemed genuine enough. I checked the meat out carefully, and then I ate it. It was good. Topped me up nicely. (lines 11-13)*

Ask sts: Who is "I"? And who is "this guy"? ("I" - the narrator – obviously a hungry one; "this guy" – the person who supplied the meat - was OK type)

- *The blood was dry on top, but still runny under the crust. The old guy's body was pretty warm. Whatever had happened wasn't long over.(lines 23-24)*

Ask sts: What had happened? ("old guy" was recently dead – and had been cut)

- *I was extremely cautious as I drew close. I wasn't quite sure what I would do. I only knew that I would do something. (lines 58-8)*

Ask sts: Why was the narrator careful? ("drew close" implies proximity to something – in this case something that offered danger?)

At this point, sts are ready to read the story on their own.

You can suggest further reading by the same author or by other authors (e.g. Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Francesca Beard's poem about "Fluffy").

- ★ D Tell sts to imagine that this story was made into a film. They must choose the soundtrack for the different scenes and explain their choice.
- ★ Alternatively, you can bring the music for the different scenes and sts prepare an expressive reading of parts of the story according to the rhythm of the music.
- ★ E This activity is meant for lower levels. In groups, sts draw a storyboard of the different scenes in the story. You can either give them the scenes or they can choose what they want to draw. Drawings are then posted on the walls.
- ★ F The aim of this activity is to discuss values, i.e. the meaning of justice.
(Lower levels): Go back to the quotation "I was pleased with my justice" (line 85) Ask sts: Have you or anyone you know ever been in a situation where they saw something that they should have reported, but didn't? What was it? Eg: shoplifting, bullying, cheating in a test..

Why don't people usually report this kind of thing?

(Higher levels): Go back to the quotation "I was pleased with my justice" (line 85). Show sts some of the quotations about justice and discuss the different views they represent.




- "We become just by doing just acts". (Aristotle)
- "Charity begins at home and justice begins next door". (Charles Dickens)
- "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". (Martin Luther King)
- "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". (Hammurabi Code, King of Babylon)
- "An eye for an eye makes the world go blind". (Gandhi)
- "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you". (Jesus Christ)

Have a debate on these issues. You might want to use some of the following questions: Do you think that the dog would have acted the same way if the homeless man hadn't given him food and company? What would you have done if you were in the dog's place? What if you were the next person to walk by and see the scene? Could this have happened in the place where you live? How do people usually react to a homeless person lying on a doorstep?

As a follow-up of this activity, you might want to show the film *Pay it forward*, by Mimi Leder (2000) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0223897/>

NOTE: *NewScientist* published an article about the sense of justice and intelligence of dogs in its August 23, 2008 issue. You may want to mention it to your sts, depending on their interests and levels.

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg19926700.200-dogs-arent-stupid-wolves-they-are-much-smarter.html>

-  G The aim of this activity is to get sts acquainted with *The Big Issue* and other organisations helping homeless people in their country. Ideally, sts should work in pairs or groups of three per computer.
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-  Tell sts to visit the site www.bigissue.com. They will do some research and complete a task (webquest) about this organisation. This can include visiting their country's site of the organisation or of a similar NGO. They then present their work to the class and their colleagues take notes on the new info.

Make sure you confirm that the information on the website is still valid when you are using it.

Here's an example of a task, with two versions so that not all the sts are doing the same thing.

Version 1

Visit the website www.bigissue.com and do the tasks that follow:

1. Find out about the history of the magazine and fill in the table:

Year it was founded	1991
Who founded it	A. John Bird & G. Roddick (from Body Shop)
Where was it published for 1 st time	London
Original idea	Street News, New York

2. How does The Big Issue work?
3. Click on the "Code of Conduct" and choose the three rules that strike you as the most surprising/shocking/interesting ones. Explain why.
4. How can you contribute to the Big Issue foundation?

Version 2

Visit the website www.bigissue.com and do the tasks that follow:

1. Find out about the history of the magazine and fill in the table:

Year it was founded	1991
Who founded it	A. John Bird & G. Roddick (from Body Shop)

Where was it published for 1 st time	London
Original idea	Street News, New York

2. Click on the link INSP and find which countries have a similar magazine. Read about the magazine in your country.
3. Who are the vendors?
4. How can you contribute to the Big Issue foundation?

About the Author

The author's site provides extensive information about his work and life. You can visit it at www.michaelzlewin.com. There is a "Chit & Chat" section where sts can ask questions and make comments.

Word Work

- ★ A Show picture as motivation (see power point slide show). Get sts reactions.
- ★



Sts go back to the text to look for adjectives/phrases used to describe personality to fill in the table. Discuss the meaning of their lists (i.e. the inversion of values and attitudes).

The dog	The three men
<i>self-disciplined (line 60)</i>	<i>boisterous (line 50)</i>
<i>cautious (line 48)</i>	<i>drunk (line 52)</i>
<i>I'm not a coward (lines 65-6)</i>	<i>rough with each other (line 50)</i>
<i>I was pleased with my justice (line 85)</i>	<i>loud (line 51)</i>
<i>I cried (line 86)</i>	<i>unsteady (line 52)</i>

	<i>cowards (line 82)</i>
	<i>yelled ugly things (line 65)</i>
	<i>three young killers (line 71)</i>