

Ullswater

Introduction

'Ullswater' is the 16th in the BritLit series of teacher resource kits for secondary schools, and the 31st kit in the overall project.

The Project. The BritLit project was started in 2002 with the intention of providing Portuguese teachers of English in the state sector additional resource material for the extensive reading requirements of years 10 and 11. It is a joint venture between the British Council in Portugal and APPI (Associação Portuguesa de Professores de Inglês.) While aimed initially at the Portuguese market, the usefulness of the project as an international model was recognised and generic versions of the resources kits are being developed.

As a result of the project becoming regionally based, BritLit kits are now being developed in Italy. In fact the materials for 'Ullswater' have been written by a small and dedicated team of Italian state school teachers in collaboration with the British Council in Naples.

The Resource Kits. Much of the material provided is intended to be used with mixed ability classes and while the input from the materials is the same, the output from the students will vary considerably. Other materials are generally classed according to their degree of difficulty using the ALTE levels (Frame work) now adopted by many European countries through the Council of Europe as benchmark criteria for language assessment. (http://www.alte.org/can_do/cef.cfm). The resource kits provide a never-ending source of material for the teacher inasmuch as teachers are asked to contribute their own experiences and ideas to the project; we would like to see the materials mutate and mature with use. One of the advantages of using an electronic form is that each section can easily be personalised; we would be interested to see examples of this approach.

This Kit. The materials presented are for class work on Romesh Gunesekera's story 'Ullswater'. It is a short kit, inspired by other Britlit kits: 'Carapace' and 'A House in the Country'. It was developed after a visit to Naples by the author in 2006. Like other BritLit kits, it is intended for the development of language and cultural understanding rather than as a source of literary study. There are four parts: **Characterisation, Context, Word Work, After Reading**, plus a **Teachers key**. As with all other BritLit productions, this is called a 'kit' to emphasise the fact that you, the teacher, are expected to assemble the component parts yourself, using the parts you require in the order you prefer. This is not, therefore, a course, simply a resource which can be picked over with some items used and others discarded. For this reason, each worksheet or worksheets within a sub-heading stand alone, and do not require work to have been done on any other worksheet. It is intended that the order in which the work is done is largely up to the teacher responding to the needs of their class. However, we would make the following suggestions:

- Some of the worksheets have been designed with preparation for reading the text in mind. In other words, the intention is that these worksheets are to be used **before** the students read the text. The reason is simply that by quoting from the

text and dealing with language and content piecemeal in these sections, we assume that this will help the student to a more fluent reading of the text, without the need to break off and consult for meaning.

- We also advise that all the work in the section ‘Characterisation’ is done before the students are asked to read the complete text. This section is designed to ‘fast-track’ students into an appreciation of the situation the characters in the story find themselves in.
- The ‘Context’ section can be done either before or after the text has been read, as can the work in ‘Word Work’, although we would recommend that this latter section is tackled after the text has been read.
- As the title suggests, the section ‘After Reading’ is to be tackled once all the other work has been completed. It attempts to ‘wrap up’ the work on the story, and to look forward to alternative texts.
- Some worksheets provide links to sites that are relevant to the work being presented and it is assumed that teachers will develop their own materials from these links. Please note, however, that some material may be subject to copyright restrictions, over which the BritLit Project has no control. Please help us by reporting any broken or disused links.
- Copyright permission has been obtained where applicable. All BritLit material is photocopyable.

We very much welcome your contribution to the project. Much of the material in the current kit has been contributed by state school teachers working in collaboration with the project team and we invite you to contribute your ideas and experience so that future versions of this material will present an even wider choice of opportunities for students to explore language and culture through literature.

The story ‘Ullswater’ is a story about the relationship between two very different brothers and how various factors have caused them to grow apart. One brother describes their relationship to his nephew who wants to know more about who his father really was and why he committed suicide.

Acknowledgements

This short kit has been assembled by Lucia Zarelli, Marilena Annunziata, Franca Alfieri and Antonietta Verdesca from the ISIS Albertini school in Nola; Laura Campagnone from La Nunziatella School In Naples; and Ellen Darling at the British Council in Naples.

The photo of Ullswater is used courtesy of <http://www.lakedistrictdesktops.com>

Section	Worksheet or Activity	Content	ALTE
<i>Pre-Reading - Characterisation</i>	Victor, Senaka and Ranjit	A listening and quotes from the text introduce us to the three principle characters	
	Victor and Senaka	We take a closer look at the two brothers and	

		their ideas on life, using quotes from the text	
	Sonia, Victor and Senaka	Senaka's wife is introduced and we find out more about Senaka and Viktor's relationship, using quotes from the text.	
Context	Quiz and Text*	Assuming that most students knowledge of Sri Lanka is very slight, this light hearted quiz leads into a brief history	
	Sri Lanka*	A series of texts from Sri Lanka give an opportunity to learn more about different aspects of modern Sri Lanka, and to present students with a challenging multiple matching reading task.	
	Arranged Marriages*	Two texts, one for and one against arranged marriages lead naturally to a discussion on the topic	
	Romesh Gunsekera*	A brief biography of the writer	
	Setting the scene	A series of questions and quotes lead students to imagine/predict some of the detail of the story they are going to read.	
	Mahatma Gandhi	One of Victor's early heroes is Mahatma Gandhi, so students read a biography of his life and answer some questions. Followed by a debate about non-violent protest.	
	The Romantic Poets, Wordsworth and "Daffodils"	Students read about the romantic poets and listen to and read Wordsworth's 'Daffodils'.	
Word Work	Vocabulary	Matching personality adjectives and their definitions and using them to talk about Senaka and Victor.	
	Language in Use	Use of 'wish' for impossible present and future situations, using the text as a source.	

	Glossary	Contextualised meanings of some key words.	
After Reading	Comprehension Check	Students answer true false questions about the story.	
	Writing a letter	Students write a letter from Senaka to his wife explaining his drink problems.	
	Creating a dialogue	Students imagine a conversation between Senaka and his future father-in-law.	
	Writing a letter	Students write a letter from Sonia to a friend complaining about her husband's behaviour.	
	Giving advice	Students pretend to be Viktor and give advice to Senaka.	
	Making comparisons	Students compare drinking culture in their own country and Sri Lanka	
	Making up	Students write a dialogue where Ranjit forgives his father and tries to mend their relationship.	
	Dating	Students imagine the conversation between Senaka and Sonia when they first started seeing each other.	
	Love and Marriage	Students give their personal opinions about love and marriage.	

*** Material also appears in BritLit kit 7, 'A House in the Country' and BritLit kit 9, 'Carapace' (two other Romesh Gunesequera stories).**