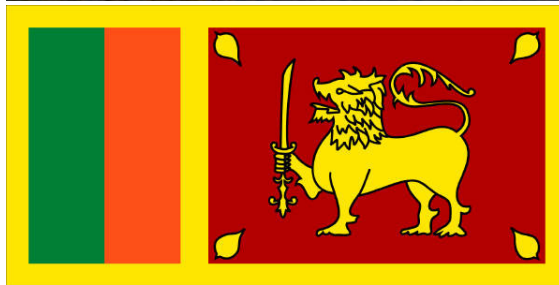


Ullswater

Pre-reading

Context

Setting the scene



You are going to read a story called 'Ullswater' by Romesh Gunsekera. Look at the pictures and use your imagination to guess the answers to the following questions:

1. Where do you think the story is set?
2. What do you think the relationship between the two characters is?
3. How old do you think they are?
4. What are they talking about?
5. Where have they chosen to meet?
6. Where do they come from originally?

Discuss your ideas in groups.

Read the first two paragraphs of the story and check whether you are right.

Ranjit said he wants me to feel at home so he took me to a pub on the road above the lake. It was a fine summer's day. We sat outside. You must have some English beer, he said; he placed two pints of dark brown bitter between us and sat leaning forward with his elbows on the table. He had been wanting to talk to me ever since I arrived in England, but with his young family around there had never been quite the right moment until now. And now he was so anxious that his whole face become contorted when he spoke. He said that lately he'd been feeling uncomfortable. He couldn't sleep at night. It was because of his father; he felt he knew so little about his father - my brother, Senaka - and he couldn't stop thinking about him. What the hell happened Uncle? He shook his head trying to clear it. What happened to him in the end?

Now answer the following questions:

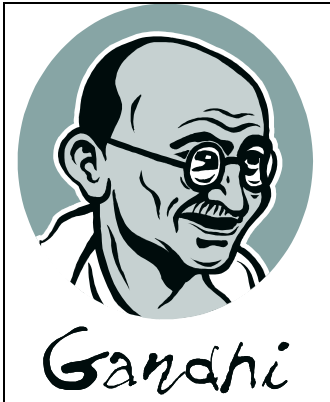
1. Who are the two main characters involved in the story?
2. Where did Ranjit take his uncle and why?
3. Why did Ranjit feel so anxious and uncomfortable?
4. Why did Ranjit ask his uncle to meet him?
5. What do you think might have happened to Senaka in the end?

Work in pairs, then compare your ideas with another group.

Ullswater

Context

Mahatma Gandhi



Senaka is conservative in politics and dreams of England. Victor's idealism, on the other hand, leads him to dream of India and one of its outstanding figures, Mahatma Gandhi.

Tell your partner what you know about Mahatma Gandhi.

Read the passage below about his life and answer the following questions.

1. What was the role of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian independence?
2. What was the "Salt March"?
3. Where did Gandhi first develop his philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience?
4. When did India become independent?
5. Why did many Muslims want to have their own Muslim state?
6. Who killed Gandhi and why?

MAHATMA GANDHI

Mohandas K. Gandhi was born into a Hindi family in India in 1869 and was greatly influenced by his devout mother. At the age of 18, Gandhi went to University College London to train as a barrister. He returned to India after being called to the bar of England and Wales, but he had limited success establishing a law practice in Bombay.

He decided to emigrate with his family to South Africa, accepting a year-long contract from an Indian firm to a post in Natal. It was in South Africa that Gandhi first employed his ideas of peaceful civil disobedience in the Indian community's struggle for civil rights.

Upon his return to India, he organised poor farmers and labourers to protest against oppressive taxation and widespread discrimination. Assuming leadership of the Indian National Congress, Gandhi led nationwide campaigns for the alleviation of poverty, for brotherhood among differing religions and ethnicities, for the independence of India from foreign domination. Gandhi famously led Indians in the disobedience of the salt tax on the 400 Kilometre Dandi Salt March in 1930. He was imprisoned for many years on numerous occasions in both South Africa and India. Throughout his life, Gandhi remained committed to non-violence and truth even in the most extreme situations.

In 1947, Britain agreed to give India its independence. But Muslims, who represented a minority in India with respect to the Hindus, were afraid that they would be discriminated against in a Hindi state. The Muslims asked to have their own

Muslim state and in August 1947 India was partitioned and the autonomous Muslim state of Pakistan was created. Many thousands of people, however, were killed in the fighting between Hindus and Muslims.

Some people blamed Gandhi for the situation, forgetting the important role he had played in leading his people to independence. In January 1948 Gandhi was shot and killed by a Hindi militant who held Gandhi responsible for weakening India by insisting upon a payment to Pakistan.

You are going to take part in a debate about the following subject:

“The only successful forms of protest are non-violent”.

Your teacher will put you into 2 groups. One group supports this idea, the other is against it.

In your groups, think of as many points as you can to support your argument and make notes on them. Now prepare a speech justifying your point of view.

Both groups will present their ideas. Listen to the other group and think of counter-arguments.

Each group will then reply to the other. Take a vote to decide who is right.

Context

The Romantic Poets

“Ullswater” is part of the Lake District and there are several references to the Lake District in the story. Senaka, in particular, likes reading the Lake Poets.

- Can you mention any of them?
- Which historical period did they live in?
- Which literary movement did they belong to?

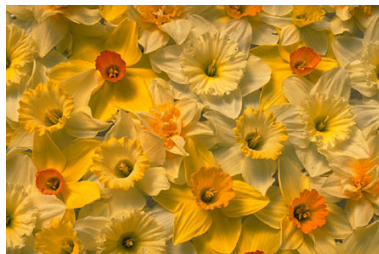
Find out the answers by reading the extract below:

The Lake Poets

The best known lake poets are Wordsworth and Coleridge, who lived in the Lake District and devoted much of their work to writing about the Lakes. They belonged to an artistic and intellectual movement originating in Europe in the late 18th century, known as Romanticism, which is characterized by an interest in nature and emphasis on the individual's expression of emotion and imagination. Other poets of this genre are Blake, Byron, Shelly and Keats. Political and social events, such as the rapid industrialisation of Britain and the French revolution had a major impact on the work of the romantic poets.

Daffodils by W. Wordsworth

William Wordsworth was born in 1770 and spent most of his life in the Lake District. He died at Rydal Mount in 1850, and is buried, with his family, in Grasmere. Wordsworth's famous poem about daffodils was composed in 1804, two years after he saw the flowers walking by Ullswater on a stormy day with his sister, Dorothy.



Read the poem and see if you can guess the missing words. Compare your ideas with a partner.

Now listen and try to fill in the blanks in the text

Daffodils

I wandered.....as a cloud
That floats on.....o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And..... on the milky way,
They stretched in never..... line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in.....dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the.....leaves in glee;
A poet could not be but ,
In such a..... company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In.....or in.....mood,
They flash upon that..... eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with..... fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Read the poem again. Match the description to the verse of the poem.

- a) I often remember when I saw the daffodils and feel happy again at the memory.
- b) I enjoyed looking at the daffodils for a long time, but didn't realise at the time what a happy memory this experience would give me in the future.
- c) I was out walking on my own when I suddenly came across a beautiful field of daffodils by the lake.
- d) There were so many daffodils.

Can you finish the sentences about the poem?

This poem is meant to give pleasure and joy: in fact daffodils are brightly coloured like the sun, dancing in the , they give and fill the poet's heart with.....

Everything seems to come alive and there is happiness everywhere.

The cloud.....on high
The starsand.....
The wavesand.....

The daffodils, like people, have feelings and emotions.

They are in fact.....andin the breeze, andtheir heads in sprightly dance.

What do you think?

- 1) Who are the characters of the poem?
- 2) Even if the words are very simple what makes the poem so unique?
- 3) Do you see yourself in the poem?
- 4) Have you ever experienced such feelings looking at nature?
- 5) How important is nature in your life?
- 6) Can recreating an experience give you the same pleasure as living it?
Why/Why not?

The poem was turned into a rap in 2007 to commemorate its bicentenary and you can listen to it here

<http://www.golakes.co.uk/wordsworthrap/>

Work in small groups. Choose another poem by a romantic poet and turn it into a modern day rap.

Ullswater

Context

Father and Son

Here are two poems from the English poet, Lawrence Sail, which explore some of the relationships between father and son.

Poem 1

Child Holding a Yacht

Pre-teach vocabulary:

fit snugly	fit comfortably
sails hoisted	sails taken up into working position
burgee	triangular flag showing colours of the yacht club
masthead	highest point of the pole set to carry sails
heeled	turned
stiffening breeze	a wind getting stronger
gybed	(or <i>jibed</i>) change sails to alter course
nodded at anchor	moved up and down on the waves
tanglements	intertwined, confusions, traps
Sargasso	islands of weeds floating in N. Atlantic
outdone	overcome

Hand out copies of poem to students.

Read poem to students aloud.

Questions: What is the poet looking at? Why is the camera lying?
 What doesn't he believe he sees? Why?
 What makes him believe in the truth of the photograph.

Child Holding a Yacht

The camera must be lying - he knew
as soon as he saw the picture, with the yacht
shrunk to fit snugly under his arm,
even with the sails hoisted and the burgee
run up at the masthead.

It told him nothing of the boat he manned —
how it fronted the waves, heeled smartly over
in a stiffening breeze, or gybed to change course,
or nodded at anchor, its hull ribbed
with the lagoon's clear light.

You'd never think, to look, that capes
had been rounded, enormous seas weathered,
the tanglements of the Sargasso outdone —
and he as navigator, crew, skipper,
single-handed in all this.

But when he saw in his own face the joy
which had him shouting wordlessly
and not quite knowing what to do —
in this at least, he had to admit,
the camera did not lie.

from *Eye-Baby* ©2006 Lawrence Sail

Poem 2

The Nightmare

Pre teach vocabulary:

overfalls of sea-change madness	no real explanation; students might discuss possibilities, out of context
false bearings	map coordinates that were false
the swell of them heaved	the movement of the wave caused energy pushed
stare	constant look

Read poem aloud before handing out.

Hand poem out and then get a student to read it aloud (or do it again yourself if need be)

Questions:

Who is telling the poem – the father or the child?

What were the “false bearings?”

What was the delusion?

Is there a relationship between this poem and the previous one? i.e. is the child with the yacht the same person (but now grown up)?

NB - no ‘true’ answers here. Students inclined towards business studies will hate you for this; all answers are right, if the intention was honest.

The Nightmare

Each time, the same:
his father standing
in the bedroom doorway,
staring in

But the truth was worse:
his father lost
in the gaining overfalls
of sea-change madness

Once he had radioed
the false bearings
there was no going back:
the trap worked itself

One lie broke
onto another:
the swell of them heaved,
racing to the horizon

Until deception
became delusion:
*/ catch things almost
before they start falling*

Once he recalled
a photo: of himself
at seven, proudly
holding a yacht

And more than once
he saw himself standing
in a doorway, returning
his son's stare

from *Eye-Baby* ©2006 Lawrence Sail

Context

Romesh Gunsekera - A Biography

Complete the following biography of writer Romesh Gunsekera by choosing the best word (A, B or C) from the choice given, and then answer the questions.

Romesh Gunsekera was born in Sri Lanka in 1954, moving to London in 1972. He grew up __1__ both English and Sinhala. Gunsekera __2__ the Liverpool College Poetry Prize in 1972, the Rathborne Prize in Philosophy in 1976, and the first prize in the Peterloo Open Poetry Competition in 1988. Gunsekera's first book, 'Monkfish Moon', was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year while his first novel, 'Reef', was shortlisted for the 1994 Booker Prize.

'Monkfish Moon' is a collection of stories that tell about the political __3__ in Sri Lanka. The first story, "A House in the Country," follows Ray, who returns to Sri Lanka from England, and Siri, Ray's houseboy. Ray returns to Sri Lanka at a very confusing period in Sri Lanka's history. In 'Batik,' a husband and wife find themselves struggling to keep their marriage intact. Because Nalini is Sinhalese and her husband, Tiru, is Tamil, they have __4__ to London where Nalini finds her partner becoming increasingly distant as the violence at home continues to __5__. In the title story, Peter, a wealthy Sri Lankan businessman, begins to show exactly how far off course his life has moved during an uncomfortable dinner party with family and friends. Other stories include "Captives," "Ullswater," "Storm Petrel," "Ranvali," "Carapace," and "Straw Hurts."

'Reef', Gunsekera's first novel, describes the __6__ and adolescence of Triton, a restaurateur from Sri Lanka. Triton, a young boy, finds himself a servant to Mr. Salgado, a wealthy marine biologist. In the service of Mr. Salgado, Triton __7__, becomes an expert chef, and witnesses the destruction of his country.

Although Gunsekera's writings may seem to require that the reader should have some __8__ knowledge of the history, culture and politics of Sri Lanka, Gunsekera believes that the reader can appreciate his stories with or without such knowledge. Gunsekera had this to say about his __9__ audience: "The kind of writing that I'm interested in doesn't really demarcate the world in terms of this kind of reader or that kind of reader. The __10__ division you have, I think, is between people who read and people who don't read, for lots of reasons. At the same time I do know that people who are readers also have a background and also have a physical __11__, and they have a set of experiences and they bring all of those to a book. People who, for example, know nothing about the __12__, the setting of a story or a book, say, Sri Lanka, get something very different out of the book; perhaps a discovery of something unfamiliar. If they already know the place they get something else. They also get a sense of discovery, but it's a sense of discovery of the familiar, perhaps"

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. | A talking | B speaking | C articulating |
| 2. | A won | B gained | C obtained |
| 3. | A upset | B consternation | C upheaval |
| 4. | A revisited | B removed | C relocated |
| 5. | A scale | B escape | C escalate |
| 6. | A childishness | B childhood | C children |
| 7. | A grows up | B gets up | C sets up |
| 8. | A background | B scenic | C scenery |
| 9. | A intentional | B intent | C intended |
| 10. | A longest | B biggest | C smallest |
| 11. | A realism | B reality | C realty |
| 12. | A location | B locality | C local |

Comprehension check:

- How many prizes did Romesh win – 3, 4 or 5?
- What is the name of the collection of short stories?
- Which character in one of his stories appears to be lost?
- What is Triton's occupation as an adult?
- What do readers gain if a) they are familiar with the background to Sri Lanka and b) they are not familiar with the background to Sri Lanka



For more information on Romesh Gunasekera and his work, go to
<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/download/britlit/romesh/romesh.shtml>