

LITERATURE 4A

TEACHER'S NOTES

AUTHOR:	Katherine Mansfield
TITLE:	<i>The Voyage</i> (short story in 'The Garden Party and other stories')
THEMES:	Transport and travel (unit 12)
WRITING:	Symbolism
THINK STYLE:	Short stories

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) was born in Wellington, New Zealand. Her works include *A Birthday* (1911), *Miss Brill* (1929) and *The Canary* (1923).

Her early childhood was spent in New Zealand, which was a British colony until 1907. She moved to London in 1903 and spent a lot of time travelling around Europe. She published her first collection of short stories in 1920. In 1923 at the age of 34 she became seriously ill and died of tuberculosis.

Katherine Mansfield is a Modernist writer and she experimented with different writing styles. In her short stories, she writes about ordinary people and uses detailed observations of people and their behaviour to create an impression of their characters. Her childhood in New Zealand influenced her greatly; she wrote about the inequality between the European settlers in New Zealand and the Maoris, one of the original people of New Zealand who arrived from Polynesia over 1,000 years before the Europeans.

The beginning of the 20th Century, when most of her works were written, was characterised by great social change. She, along with other writers and artists, lived a carefree life before the war. This is reflected in the number of works she published – only one poem and one story in 1908. When war came to Europe in 1914, she was living in Paris. Her brother, who was a soldier, died in Paris in 1915, an event which affected her greatly.

Although she died young, she was well respected. Virginia Woolf said that Mansfield's writing was 'the only writing I have ever been jealous of'. A major prize in the New Zealand short story competition was named after her.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students if they have heard of Katherine Mansfield or *The Voyage*. Write any ideas on the board in note form. Use the information in the *About the author* box to provide an introduction. Ask students what a short story is and if they know any famous ones. Ask if they've ever been to New Zealand or if they know anything about it. Some students may have some ideas if they've seen *The Lord of the Rings* as it was filmed there. Ask if students know any of the short stories mentioned. Depending on the class, it may be appropriate to use L1 at this stage.

START THINKING ...

1 Draw students' attention to the film still at the top right of the worksheet. Elicit responses to the questions: *What can you see in the first picture?* (a boat) *Where is it and what does it look like?* (It's in a port or harbour. It is very big and white.) *What time of day is it?* (nighttime)

Organise the class into pairs or small groups. Set a time limit of a few minutes for students to discuss the questions. Then ask students for their opinions. Encourage them to back up their answers with examples. For example, 'I think long journeys are boring if you only use one method of transport.' 'I think the best way to travel is by plane because it's quick.'

2 Draw students' attention to the text above the film still which 'sets the scene' and clarify understanding. Play the audio. When students have read and listened to the text once, allow time to check unfamiliar words in the glossary.

Optional extension

Ask some comprehension questions to check general understanding of the text: *Who is Fenella?* (a young girl) *Who is she with?* (her grandmother and father) *Where are they going?* (to Picton) *How does she feel?* (sad)

3 Students read through the questions. Check for understanding and remind them to refer closely to the text to find the answers.

Answers

1 They couldn't see the Picton boat clearly because it was nighttime and very dark. 2 They stood under the stairs to stay out of the way of other passengers and so they could say goodbye to each other. 3 Fenella's father wanted his mother to check that she had the tickets. 4 Fenella's father has a message for his father, Fenella's grandfather. 5 He took off his hat and gave Grandma a hug. 6 She thought that a shilling was a lot of money and asked if she was going away for a long time.

4 Students read the text again. Discuss the questions and answers with the class.

Suggested answers

1 Fenella thinks that her father and grandmother saying goodbye is awful and she cannot watch. She's probably never seen them like this before. 2 Her father might not know how long she is going to be away, or doesn't want to tell her if it's going to be a long time. 3 Fenella's father left the boat because the boat was about to leave and he wasn't going with them.

VOCABULARY

- 5 Read through the sentences one at a time to check comprehension of any unknown vocabulary. If necessary, refer to the information in the *About the author* box for more detail about life in the early 20th Century. Working individually, students complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the glossary. Ask individual students for answers.

Answers

1 decks 2 shilling 3 luggage 4 whistle 5 stary
6 hug

Optional extension

Ask students which facts they find interesting or surprising and why. Point out that these facts all relate to travel in the early 1900s. Ask them what they know about the *Titanic* disaster in 1912.

Optional extension

Ask students to read the text again and to underline five more words that are new to them. Ask them to write the words in sentences. They then read their sentences in pairs and correct each other's mistakes.

ROLE PLAY

- 6 Organise the class into pairs. Read the instruction and check that students understand what they are going to do. Ask two students to read the first part of the conversation. Brainstorm sympathetic language phrases and write the ideas on the board. (Poor you., That's a shame., I'm sorry to hear that., You poor thing.) Set a time limit of 5–10 minutes and then when they have finished, ask a pair of students to perform their role play to the class.

LISTENING

- 7 Before listening, explain that students are going to hear what happened when Fenella and her grandma boarded the ship. Ask them: *What do you think they do first when they board the ship? Where do you think they sleep? How do you think Fenella feels?* (Accept any sensible answers.) Play the recording twice. The first time, encourage students to listen without taking notes. The second time, they complete the sentences.

Answers

1 two pence 2 well 3 (so) generous 4 (some) biscuits
5 small 6 the sea

Optional extension

In pairs, students retell the listening extract in their own words one sentence at a time. Student A says one sentence, then student B says the next sentence, etc. They can use their answers to Exercise 7 as prompts.

AUDIOSCRIPT

Fenella and Grandma went down the steps and Grandma stopped at the bottom to get out the room tickets. They were near the lobby. The lights were very bright and it was extremely hot. Fenella wanted to go and find their room, but Grandma wasn't in a hurry. She saw a big basket of ham sandwiches and she went over to them and touched the top one delicately with her finger.

'How much are the sandwiches?' she asked.

'Two pence each!' shouted the waiter.

Grandma could hardly believe it.

'Two pence each?' she asked.

'That's right,' said the waiter.

Grandma made a small astonished face. Then she said to Fenella, 'What a price! I'm not paying that much money for one sandwich!' And they walked out of the door and along a corridor with rooms on both sides. A very nice steward came to meet them. She seemed to know Grandma well.

'Well, Mrs Crane,' she said. 'It's nice to see you back. You don't often have a room.'

'No,' said Grandma. 'But this time my dear son was so generous ...'

'I hope ...' began the steward. The she turned and looked at Grandma's black clothes and at Fenella's black skirt and coat, black blouse and hat. 'I'm so sorry,' she said. 'Now, can I bring you a cup of tea?'

Grandma replied, 'No, thank you. We've got some biscuits and Fenella has a very nice banana.'

'Then I'll come back in a minute, when you are ready,' said the steward.

What a small room it was! They took off their coats and got ready for bed. Grandma was ready before Fenella. 'I shall sleep on the top bed because I'm an experienced traveller,' said Grandma.

'But, Grandma, how will you get up there?' It only took three little steps and Grandma was in the top bed, smiling down at Fenella. 'You didn't think your grandma could do that, did you?' she said. As she lay down, Fenella heard her laugh.

A long time passed before the steward came back. 'It's a fine night and the sea's quite calm, so goodnight. Have a good journey.'

WRITING: SYMBOLISM

- 8 Read the instruction. Ask students to explain what they think *symbolism* is (the use of symbols to represent ideas). Then read through the *Writing* skills box. Look at the first bullet point with the class and ask them to underline the key information in the text. Then move on to the second bullet point and ask individual students for their ideas. Elicit that the boat is being compared to a spaceship. Students can write the short essay in class or for homework. Students then swap their essay with a partner. They read each other's work and highlight any mistakes. They then return the essay to the original student who looks at the highlighted mistakes and corrects them. Ask some students to read their essays out loud to the class.



CRITICAL THINKING

Ask the students the question: *How do the themes of light and dark in The Voyage reflect the characters' moods?* Ask them to think about how the 'beautiful, starry' night and lanterns would affect people boarding a boat for a journey. Why might they feel optimistic, happy, etc.? Then ask them to think about 'the blackness' and how this can affect peoples' moods. Students could expand to talk about the dark clothes that Fenella and her grandma are wearing. Ask them to work in small groups to discuss their ideas. You can then bring their ideas together on the board and discuss them as a class.

THINK SHORT STORIES

9 Before reading the introduction, ask students how short a short story should be. Elicit a range of ideas. Then read through the introduction and discuss the students' answers. Students then match the story titles with the descriptions. Ask individual students for answers to the questions. Ask students if they know any of these stories and which one sounds the most interesting.

Answers

1 b 2 c 3 a

Optional extension

Students could research one of the short stories in Exercise 10 and give a presentation in the next class.

Additional reading or internet research topics

- Katherine Mansfield's life
- *The Voyage* themes
- Travel in the 1920s