

LITERATURE – 4A

The Time Traveller told his dinner guests that he could travel through time. He then showed them a small time machine which he made disappear. The following week, the same guests meet again. The Time Traveller enters looking dirty. He says he will now tell them what has happened if they agree not to interrupt.

START THINKING ...

1 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- What's the scariest experience you've ever had?
- Would you like to travel in time? Why (not)?
- If you had a time machine, what time period would you most like to visit?

THE TIME MACHINE (1895) H. G. Wells

'I am afraid I cannot convey the **peculiar** sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback – of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible **anticipation**, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of **scaffolding**, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling **succession** of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darkneses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining **velocity**, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous colour like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter **fluctuating** band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

'The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hill-side upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me grey and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of **vapour**, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changed – melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the **dials** that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.

'The unpleasant sensations of the start were less **poignant** now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked indeed a clumsy swaying of the machine, for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me, I flung myself into futurity. At first I scarce thought of stopping, scarce thought of anything but these new sensations. But presently a fresh series of impressions grew up in my mind – a certain curiosity and therewith a certain dread – until at last they took complete possession of me. What strange developments of humanity, what wonderful **advances** upon our rudimentary civilization, I thought, might not appear when I came to look nearly into the dim elusive world that raced and fluctuated before my eyes! I saw great and splendid architecture rising about me, more massive than any buildings of our own time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist. I saw a richer green flow up the hill-side, and remain there, without any wintry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed very fair. And so my mind came round to the business of stopping.

Glossary

- _____ a structure of metal poles and wooden boards put against a building on which workers stand to reach the higher parts of the building
- _____ causing or having a very sharp feeling of sadness
- _____ a feeling of excitement about something that is going to happen in the near future
- _____ the speed of something in a particular direction
- _____ a part of a machine or device that shows you a measurement such as speed or time
- _____ unusual and strange, sometimes in an unpleasant way
- _____ a gas or extremely small drops of liquid that result from the heating of a liquid or solid
- _____ an improvement or development in something
- _____ a number of similar events or people that happen, exist, etc. after each other
- _____ when prices, levels of water or interest rates go up and down

- 2 **▶▶4A.1** Read the text and listen.
- 3 Match the words in bold to the definitions to form a glossary.
- 4 Read the text again. Find and correct the mistakes in each sentence.
- The Time Traveller talks about a slow bird to describe the speed.
 - The sun is compared to the moon.
 - He can't say what speed he was travelling at because the dreams were moving too fast.
 - He thinks people in the future will be the same as those in his own time.
 - The buildings of the future are tiny.
- 5 **READ BETWEEN THE LINES** Answer the questions. Give reasons and examples from the text.
- When the Time Traveller says, 'I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling,' what senses do you think were affected and how?
 - How does the Time Traveller use weather to explain the speed he's moving at?
 - How do you think the Time Traveller feels when the machine stops?
- 6 **VOCABULARY** Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words from the glossary.
- More and more skyscrapers are being built in Beijing. There's _____ everywhere.
 - When a big news story breaks, a _____ of updates appear on webpages.
 - The terminal _____ of a skydiver is about 200 mph, the same as a bullet.
 - In the 1989 film *Back to the Future II*, the _____ of the time machine is set to 2015.
 - The photo of Nelson Mandela walking free is a _____ image.
 - _____ in special effects have made films more and more realistic.
- 7 **ROLE PLAY** Work in pairs. Student A is a guest at the dinner party and is trying to get more information from the Time Traveller (Student B) about his journey. Read the conversation and then continue it with your own ideas.

GUEST I don't believe you! Tell me how you were able to travel to a different time.

- 8 **LISTENING ▶▶4A.2** It is 802,701 AD and the Time Traveller's machine has disappeared. He has been staying with the passive, human-like creatures called the Eloi, but now he meets a different type of creature – a Morlock. Listen and put the events in order.

- A He was scared when he saw some eyes.
- B The Time Traveller sought shelter in the ruins.
- C The Time Traveller tried to find the creature in the ruins.
- D A creature ran and hid in the shadows.
- E The creature disappeared into a hole.

- 9 **LISTENING ▶▶4A.2** Listen again. Complete the sentences with one word.

- The Time Traveller compares the creature to a 'little _____-like figure'.
- It's white with large greyish-_____ eyes.
- The Time Traveller doesn't know if it used its arms and _____ to run.
- It moved like a mix of a human and a _____.
- The Time Traveller believes that the Morlocks and the Eloi are _____ species.

WRITING A pros and cons essay

- 10 **WRITING** Should people be able to travel in time? Write an essay with your arguments in 140–190 words.

- Paragraph 1 (Introduction): Say what the quotation means to you. Explain the key words. End the paragraph with your initial opinion.
- Paragraph 2: Give arguments that support your opinion. Give clear examples and evidence.
- Paragraph 3: Think about the opposite opinion. Give examples, but say why the argument is weak.
- Paragraph 4 (Conclusion): Summarise your essay and restate your opinion in your first paragraph.

THINK STYLE

The narrator

The Time Machine features two narrators: the narrator, who sets the scene and returns at the end, and the Time Traveller, who describes his adventure. Examples of similar narrators include Dr Watson in *Sherlock Holmes* and Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*.

- 11 What are the benefits of having a story told by just one narrator instead of a lot of different characters? What are the disadvantages? Think about other books you've read to use as examples.