

ENGLISH  
ENGLISH  
ENGLISH  
ENGLISH  
ENGLISH  
For Today

**Book Six: LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**The National Council of Teachers of English**

**Second Edition**

# TEACHER'S MANUAL

Second Edition

## English for Today

Book Six: Literature in English

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

*Project Director*

**WILLIAM R. SLAGER**

Department of English, University of Utah

*Senior Consultant*

**Albert H. Marckwardt**

Princeton University

### **McGraw-Hill Book Company**

New York	St. Louis	San Francisco	Auckland	Beirut	Bogotá	Düsseldorf
Johannesburg	Kuala Lumpur	London	Madrid	Mexico	Montreal	
New Delhi	Panama	Paris	San Juan	São Paulo	Singapore	Sydney
Tokyo	Toronto					

**NCTE Advisory Committee for *English for Today***

**HAROLD B. ALLEN, University of Minnesota, Chairman**

**ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT, Princeton University**

**WILLIAM R. SLAGER, University of Utah**

**ROBERT F. HOGAN, *ex officio*, Executive Secretary, NCTE**

The biographical sketches on Walt Whitman, William Saroyan, Willa Cather, and Emily Dickinson are adapted from the *English Teaching Forum*, volume XI, nos. 1 and 4 (January-February and July-August 1973).

**ENGLISH FOR TODAY**

**Book Six: Literature in English**

**Second Edition**

Copyright © 1975 by the National Council of Teachers of English.  
All Rights Reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No  
part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval  
system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic,  
mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the  
prior written permission of the publisher.

**ISBN 0-07-045818-9**

## INTRODUCTION

In compiling *Literature in English*, the sixth and last volume of the *English for Today* series, the editors have shared certain assumptions about the content, methodology, and purpose of an introductory literature course designed to meet the needs of students whose first language is not English. To begin with, we believe that the teaching of imaginative literature should not be thought of primarily as a device to develop skill in reading. Nonliterary prose is generally better suited to that purpose. But to say that imaginative literature should be used sparingly as exercise material for reading comprehension is not to deny the importance of meaning. It is in fact all-important, an essential first step. For that reason we have devised a set of comprehension questions for every selection. If students are reading a narrative, they must know what is happening; if they are reading a lyric poem, they must know what feeling is being expressed; if they are reading a play, they must understand the importance of a line of dialogue or a gesture or action. Without this kind of understanding, students will not be equipped to move on to the more complex tasks of interpretation and evaluation.

Of course, the problem of determining meaning, even on the level of vocabulary, is not a simple one. Students everywhere tend to assume that the most obvious way of getting at word meaning is by the use of a bilingual dictionary. But experienced teachers are well aware of the limitations of such an approach. For one thing, the more the student uses a bilingual dictionary, the more he or she comes to rely upon it. For another, any bilingual dictionary that is not too costly to put into the hands of the students will contain one or at most two equivalents for any one word in English. Unfortunately, lexical correspondences between any two languages are seldom that simple, and numerous misinterpretations, often amusing, are likely to result. A sign found on an elevator in an apartment house is a case in point:

The elevator is under repair for the next two weeks. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.

Whenever a dictionary must be used, it should not be a bilingual dictionary but one written entirely in English and extensive enough so that the words are defined with some degree of fullness. But even an adequate monolingual dictionary should be used with caution: There is nothing that can kill the job of reading more effectively than the necessity of constantly having to use a glossary or a dictionary.

Another solution to determining word meaning is equally unprofitable. It is the memorization of long lists of new words along with their native-language equivalents. In any given text it has been found that approximately half of the words will occur just once, and another quarter of them will occur twice. These two items taken together account for seventy-five percent of the vocabulary of the selection. Viewed in this perspective, memorization of long word lists seems particularly futile: It may be a long time before the student will encounter many of the words again.

What, then, is to be done about the vexing problem of vocabulary? One obvious possibility is to develop the student's ability to determine the meaning of a word from its context. Two instances from Hemingway's "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," the third selection in this volume, will serve as illustration. Toward the end

of the story, a waiter, homeward bound from the café where he is employed, stops at a bar which has a coffee machine and asks for "a little cup." After the waiter finishes it, the barman asks, "You want another *copita*?" Note that the word "another" gives the telling contextual clue. Obviously, *copita* means "little cup." This word happens to be Spanish, but that is immaterial. It illustrates the principle of inferring meaning from context. At another point in the story the older waiter says to the younger, "And you? You have no fear of going home before your usual hour?" The younger waiter's response is: "No . . . I have confidence. I am all confidence." Again in the next quoted passage, the older waiter says, "You have youth, confidence, and a job. You have everything." Note that the first time the word "confidence" occurs, it is equated with the absence of fear. In the second instance it is coupled with being young and having employment. Judging on the basis of the first occurrence alone, the reader might be led to interpret "confidence" as an equivalent of "courage," and of course the two words are not wholly synonymous. But the second occurrence adds to and clarifies the meaning: The possession of youth and a job suggests trust or security as one of the elements entering into the total meaning of "confidence." If the student will keep these uses of the word in mind, he or she can put them to good purpose when, in Barrie's play *The Will*, he or she encounters the sentence: "I must tell you at once, Mr. Ross, that unless a client gives us his fullest confidence, we cannot undertake a case of this kind."

Judging on the basis of contextual clues will not of course give the student the entire meaning of a word. But native speakers do not know the total meaning of every word in their vocabulary. In fact, they are constantly learning new meanings, just as they are learning new words. And they are learning new meanings and new words in exactly the way that has been suggested here—from the clues furnished by the contexts in which they encounter the words. Developing the student's ability to use contextual clues in a foreign language builds independence and self-confidence.

Another way of helping students cope with new vocabulary is to sharpen their awareness of word-building devices such as prefixes and suffixes. Once students understand the use of a particular prefix or suffix, they can and should apply this knowledge to all their future reading. For example, in "Over a Cup of Coffee" by Narayan, the following words ending in *-ation* are to be found: "civilisation," "conversation," "implication," "condemnation," "reputation," and "imitation." The point that they are all nouns, and with one exception ("reputation"), all formed from verbs, is easily grasped. That they are somewhat abstract, indicating the action of, or the result of the action of, is again reasonably clear. Once the student is aware of the use of *-ation*, he should be able to understand such words as "alteration," "gratification," "limitation," "compensation," and "agitation"—all of which occur in the selection that follows Narayan.

Although knowledge of vocabulary is basic to the understanding of what is read, full comprehension of a literary selection goes far beyond mere knowledge of the meaning of individual words. Very often much more is implied than is said directly. J. M. Barrie's *The Will* aptly illustrates the need to go beyond surface meaning. In this play Barrie portrays the increasing worldliness and selfishness of a husband and wife as they acquire more wealth and social recognition, with

the result that they ruin not only their own lives but those of their children as well. In reading the play, careful attention must be paid to Barrie's comments on the characters, which are to be found in the stage directions. When Mrs. Ross makes her second entrance, for example, Barrie recalls that her earlier entrance, some twenty years ago, was "shrinking"; now, he says, she "sails in." She is, in short, no longer cowering and shy; she is fully confident, even domineering. And the playwright's description of Mrs. Ross as "not so much dressed as richly upholstered" is also revealing, for the verb "upholster" is usually applied to a piece of furniture, not to a person. Yet he goes on to say that "she is not a different woman from the Emily we remember; the *pity* of it is that somehow this is the same woman." Obviously the change has not been a change for the better. A few lines on, in the parenthetical comment that she is "still a good-natured woman if you attempt no nonsense with her," the word *still* and the conditional clause at the end of the sentence hint at much more than they say overtly. As your students gain skill in reading literature, they will learn to catch these overtones; but at first you will need to call attention to passages like these and encourage your students to look for the deeper meaning.

If students are to read with full understanding, they must also learn to recognize the symbolic significance of certain elements in the literary selection. They must learn to see, for example, that the mountains in John Steinbeck's story are not simply mountains—that they stand for the mystical, exciting, unknown world beyond the ranch that Jody would like to explore and understand. And the reader must learn to consider such matters as the importance of the Highlands in Saroyan's play: For Saroyan, the Highlands become a symbol of each person's search for a remote and unattainable home, the idealized home that his characters will always long for and will never find.

The second set of questions following each selection (labeled Toward Interpretation) is designed in part to direct the student's attention to the need for going beyond surface meaning. But there are many more verbal nuances and symbolic meanings than any set of questions can possibly deal with. This is why you should regard these questions as models only—as examples of the kinds of questions you will need to ask to heighten and deepen the student's appreciation of a work of literature. The answers, as given in this manual, are for the teacher's convenience and attempt to give all of the information relevant to both sets of questions. It is, of course, not expected that the student will respond as fully as these answers, nor in these exact words.

So far we have been considering literature primarily as communication—communication in depth, to be sure—but this by no means exhausts the potential wealth of a literary selection. The extra dimension is what may be called the literary experience, the capacity for entering into the state of mind of the poet as he or she expresses an emotion, the recognition and sharing of human relationships as they are portrayed in the characters of a short story or a play—in short, the capacity for being moved. Of course, literature has its lighter moments as well. Such moments are to be found in the preposterous inventions of the niece in "The Open Window," who no sooner finishes one complete fabrication than she begins on a second, leading to the author's wry comment about "romance at short notice." Equally



amusing is J. B. Priestley's exploration of the quirks in his own character and the inconsistencies of life about him. Selections like these should be read for pure joy and entertainment.

Unfortunately, the ability to appreciate humor in another language is not easy to acquire. Of all the attributes of a culture, humor is perhaps the most difficult for anyone from another culture to appreciate; and almost every nation has its own set of conventions that determine what is to be regarded as amusing or funny. Cultural differences, of course, can often form the basis of humor, as in Narayan's account of his misadventures in a New York cafeteria, where his desire for leisurely talk is totally thwarted by the brisk pace of a cafeteria line. Here a situation that could cause frustration and despair is treated with wry humor and admirable detachment.

Still another value in the study of literature is the insight it provides into different cultures. While all truly great literature deals with universals of human experience, the particular events and emotions it depicts are often very strongly tied to the culture of the writer and to specific details of setting and action. A skillful teacher must always be aware of cultural differences that can result in misinterpretation. For example, a domestic scene portraying a young American couple doing the household chores together with newly married affection might not excite the admiration its author intended: In any number of cultures, a husband helping in the kitchen would be considered an affront to manhood rather than a token of generous love.

If a teacher shares the author's culture, he or she must be especially careful not to overlook cultural differences. It is conceivable, for instance, that an American teacher might accept without question the idea in the first line of "Mending Wall": "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." What might not be realized is that in certain cultures the concept of unmarked property boundaries would be completely unthinkable and would strike the foreign teacher of English as well as the student in precisely the same manner. Cultural elements also cause difficulties when there is no equivalent in the student's own country. For example, many students might not be familiar with the Christmas legend which forms the basis for Thomas Hardy's "The Oxen." In such cases the teacher must supply in advance the background necessary to interpretation.

The most serious difficulties arise when similar objects, actions, or points of view have one set of values in the student's culture and quite a different one for the English-speaking reader. In "The Sculptor's Funeral," for example, the behavior of the mother as the coffin containing her son's body is carried into the house would be both natural and expected in many cultures, but Miss Cather intended her readers to be repelled by it. The same is true of the living room decor in the Merrick home: While intended by the author as a horrible example of bad taste, there is no assurance that it would be so interpreted in many countries.

It is not always easy to determine the implicit attitudes and values of your students. This is why you will need to ask such questions as: "Would you expect to find something like this here?" or "Would someone do this in your country?" These questions not only encourage the students to extend their vocabularies in expressing ideas that are familiar to them; they also make it possible to determine

whether the students understand the values and assumptions of the author's intended audience. To teach literature is, in effect, to teach that part of the culture upon which the writing is based. While insight into culture is a by-product rather than the principal purpose of teaching literature, it nevertheless has a vital role to play.

The cultural content of the selections in this volume poses a considerable challenge to any teacher because the selections illustrate not one national culture but many. Although the representation is chiefly American and English, we have included Irish, Scottish, Canadian, and Australian writers as well. There is a selection by Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian; and there are three selections by well-known writers from India. While this sampling will merely serve to suggest the range and variety of contemporary literature in English, we hope that it will be adequate to show that literary interest and excellence transcend national boundaries.

The selections have been grouped into literary types or genres, and within each genre some attempt has been made to order the selections from simple to difficult. The genres need not be taught in the order they have been arranged in the book. For a country such as France, where the craftsmanship of the short story has reached a high point, this may be the most effective place to begin. For a country like Japan, noted for its exquisitely worked short poems, some of the one and two stanza lyrics of Emily Dickinson might furnish a convenient starting point. Certainly the literary experiences the students have had in their own languages should be taken into account in planning their exposure to a new literature.

Before you begin to teach *Literature in English*, we would like to suggest a few general principles that should be kept in mind at all times. Your students will not learn to read literature by translating sentence-by-sentence and line-by-line. Translation is an art, not a classroom exercise. The short time that the student can spend in the classroom is too precious to waste. At this level of instruction, the class hour offers an incomparable opportunity to enter another world, with another culture and another mode of expression. It is our hope that you will make the most of this opportunity to help your students understand that world and to gain the skill, insight, and sensitivity that will prepare them to explore independently the rich, exciting, and diverse literature written in English.



# Section One

## Fiction

### The Open Window

by Saki (H. H. Munro)

#### Biography

The high-spirited and humorous man who took the pen name Saki was born Hector Hugh Munro (1870–1916), the son of an inspector general of the Burma police. His mother died when he was only two, after which his father sent him back to England to be raised by his aunts. He later rejoined his father and they traveled together for a time before his father got him a position with the Burma police. Munro was not well, however, and he had to give up the position after a year. He returned to England, this time to London, and began his career as a satirist, writing for such papers as the *Westminster Gazette*. His first political sketches were collected in book form in 1902 under the title *Alice in Westminster*. That same year Munro began writing for the Tory *Morning Post*, serving as foreign correspondent in Russia, Paris, and the Balkans. In the next few years his satires of society appeared not only in the *Morning Post* and *Westminster Gazette* but in other leading newspapers of the day. His first collection of short stories, *Reginald*, was published in 1904. *Reginald in Russia* followed in 1910, and in 1915 *Beasts and Super-Beasts* was published along with *When William Came*.

With the onset of World War I, Munro enlisted as a private, refusing offers of a commission. In 1915 he was sent to France as a corporal and a year later left his unit to recover from a bout of malaria. Shortly after he rejoined his unit, he was killed in battle. "The empty glass we turn down for him," wrote Christopher Morley, "is the fragile, hollow-stemmed goblet meant for dryest champagne; it is of the finest."

#### Before Reading the Selection

1. Prepare for the plot. This story is simple to read, but the pleasure to be derived from it depends on how carefully the reader follows the clues which lead to a surprise ending.

Call attention to the fact that the plot hinges on the imagination of the young lady. Your students should, therefore, "listen" closely to all Vera says to Mr. Nuttel

in order to appreciate the force of the last line in the story: "Romance at short notice was her specialty."

2. Introduce the key words. Before asking students to read the story make sure they understand to what these phrases refer.

*nerve cure:* Mr. Nuttel was undergoing treatment for his nerves. This fact is important to the plot that develops.

*letters of introduction:* Mr. Nuttel's sister gave him letters of introduction to make sure that he would not "bury himself" in his "rural retreat." One of them produces the mix-up in the story.

*self-possessed:* Vera is self-possessed. This trait made it possible for her to play a practical joke on Mr. Nuttel.

### **Answers: Comprehension**

1. Her niece (Vera) is fifteen years old.
2. He doesn't know her at all. He has never met her.
3. He was undergoing a "nerve cure." He is obviously an excitable, nervous person.
4. His sister gave him the letters. She wanted to be sure that he wouldn't "bury himself" and "not speak to a living soul."
5. No, Mr. Nuttel is obviously shy and uneasy when meeting new people. His uneasiness is made evident in these two sentences:
  - (1) "Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing."
  - (2) "He made the last statement [that his sister had given him letters of introduction] in a tone of distinct regret."
6. It happened "three years ago to the day." Today, then, is the "tragic anniversary" of the loss of her husband.
7. Vera says that her aunt keeps thinking the hunters will return and "walk in that window just as they used to do."
8. He believed Vera's story that the husband and brothers had died, and he was afraid that Mrs. Sappleton had lost her mind.
9. He began to talk about his health. He believed (as many do) that "total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments."
10. He ran out of the house "in headlong retreat."
11. She said he acted as if he'd seen a ghost.
12. She made up a story about Mr. Nuttel's having had a horrible experience with dogs. She said he told her that "he had a horror of dogs."

### **Answers: Toward Interpretation**

1. His sister had given him a letter of introduction, thinking that making a few acquaintances in the town to which he had come for a complete rest and "nerve

cure" would be good for him. Thus he knew nothing at all about the Sappletons, and Vera was free to tell any tales she pleased without his suspecting their accuracy.

2. Vera's "dazed horror," on seeing the hunters return, was part of the plot to confuse Mr. Nuttel. It was pretended.

3. Vera's explanation of Mr. Nuttel's headlong retreat—that he had a horror of dogs—was another wild tale she invented for the occasion. Thus, her aunt as well as Mr. Nuttel had been deceived.

### **After Reading the Selection**

1. Discuss the plot. Vera's explanation of Mr. Nuttel's sudden departure gives the reader the final clue to the situation. Ask students to look back at what Vera said to Mr. Nuttel early in their conversation: "Do you know many of the people round here? . . . Then you know practically nothing about my aunt."

It is amusing to recall these sentences or to note them on second reading. They are part of the skillfully built-up plot.

2. Discuss the irony. Your students will enjoy discussing the irony of the story. Point out to them the double meaning in the following sentences. There is one meaning for the character in the story, another for the reader.

a. Mrs. Sappleton says to Mr. Nuttel: "I hope you don't mind the open window." Make sure that students appreciate why these words strike Mr. Nuttel with horror. They suggest, of course, that Mrs. Sappleton is a bit out of her mind.

b. Notice how Mr. Nuttel tries to meet the situation by calling attention to his own illness, only to be completely misunderstood by Mrs. Sappleton in this line: "A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel . . . could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived."

c. Be sure your students savor this final remark by Mrs. Sappleton: "One would think he had seen a ghost." What does the reader know that Mrs. Sappleton doesn't know?

### **Composition Assignment**

1. What did Vera tell Mr. Nuttel about Mrs. Sappleton's husband and two brothers? Incorporate the following phrases in your answer:

Vera told Mr. Nuttel that . . .

- a. went off
- b. never came back
- c. treacherous piece of bog
- d. without warning
- e. never recovered

2. Imagine what Mr. Nuttel would tell his sister about his visit to the Sappletons. Include the following phrases and sentences:

- a. great tragedy
- b. three years ago
- c. open window
- d. tragic anniversary

- e. "Here they are at last!"
- f. walking across the lawn
- g. stick and hat
- h. hall-door

3. Suppose that you had been in Mr. Nuttel's shoes. Retell the ending of the story from "Here they are at last." What would you have said to Vera? To Mrs. Sappleton?

# Why Tortoise's Shell Is Not Smooth

## by Chinua Achebe

### Biography

Chinua Achebe was born in 1930 in a village near the Niger River. A member of the Ibo tribal group, Achebe was well acquainted with the traditional culture of his people, and he often writes about the conflicts between that culture and the changes forced upon it by Christian missionaries and European colonization. After graduating from the University of Ibadan, Achebe worked with the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation from 1954 to 1966, at which time he abandoned his career in radio in order to concentrate his energies on writing. He is best known for four novels—*Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), and *A Man of the People* (1966). Achebe has lectured on West African literature in both England and the United States.

Achebe's mastery of the English language is widely acknowledged, and he apparently feels no hesitation in using a second language as literary medium. As he once said, "I have been given this language and I intend to use it."

### Before Reading the Selection

1. Introduce the central figure. You might point out to your students that the central figure in African folklore is frequently an animal trickster that has the characteristics of a human. Among the Ibo tribesmen, about whom Achebe writes, this figure is Tortoise. In other parts of Africa, Anansi the Spider is the popular trickster. This use of an animal trickster is not confined to African folklore, of course. For example, among the Navajo Indians of the southwestern United States the trickster is Coyote. If your students have folktales of this type in their own cultures, you might encourage a brief discussion about the animal trickster and its qualities.

2. Discuss the setting of the story. The story is told at night, a night that is "impenetrably dark," in the compound of Okonkwo, a leader in his Ibo village. The compound has four huts, one for Okonkwo and one for each of his three wives. It is after dinner, and the women and children are telling folk stories.

### Answers: Comprehension

1. The moon was seen only at dawn. The nights were completely dark. Achebe says the darkness was impenetrable, "as black as charcoal."
2. Ezinma and her mother had yam foo-foo and bitter-leaf soup for supper.
3. Palm-oil lamps were used for light.
4. There were four huts in the compound—one for Okonkwo and one for each of his three wives.

5. He leaned back against the wall to rest and took out his snuff-bottle.
6. The low voices and singing came from the three huts occupied by Okonkwo's wives and children. They were telling folk stories.
7. It was Ekwefi's turn to tell a story. She was the mother of Ezinma.
8. The birds were invited to a feast in the sky.
9. It had been two moons (that is, two months) since Tortoise had eaten a good meal.
10. The birds did not want Tortoise to go at first: They knew he was "full of cunning," and they feared he might cause trouble. They changed their minds after Tortoise insisted that he was a changed man. He said he had learned that a man who makes trouble for others also makes trouble for himself. He had a "sweet tongue," and within a short time managed to convince the birds that he had changed.
11. Each of the birds gave Tortoise a feather. He used these feathers to make two wings for himself.
12. He was chosen to speak for the group because the birds thought he was a good speaker, a "great orator."
13. Tortoise took the name *All of you*.
14. The man replied: "For all of you."
15. Tortoise said the custom was to serve the spokesman (in this case, Tortoise himself) first.
16. Tortoise ate most of the food that had been prepared for the feast.
17. Some of the birds were too angry to eat.
18. Tortoise asked if someone would take a message to his wife.
19. Parrot was the angriest of all, but he suddenly changed his mind and agreed to deliver the message.
20. Tortoise asked Parrot to tell his wife to cover the ground with soft things so that he could jump from the sky without being hurt.
21. Parrot changed an important word in the message: He changed the word "soft" to the word "hard."
22. His wife covered the compound with hoes, machetes, spears, guns, and a cannon.
23. When Tortoise hit the ground, his shell broke into pieces.
24. A medicine man gathered all the bits and pieces of the shell and stuck them together.

### **Answers: Toward Interpretation**

1. One possible moral is that people should not trust a smooth talker. Even though the birds were suspicious of Tortoise, they allowed themselves to be talked into taking him with them to the feast. Another possible moral is that people rarely change their character suddenly: Tortoise was sly and cunning, and he stayed that way. Still a third moral is that people who cheat others eventually get punished: Tortoise paid an expensive price for his feast in the sky.

### **After Reading the Selection**

1. Folktales are often developed to "explain" natural phenomena. Here the appearance of a tortoise's shell is explained. But folktales also explain the origin of volcanoes, of mountains, of lakes and rivers. Ask your students if they know of any folktales that account for the appearance of certain animals (for example, the stripes of a skunk) or for the existence of things in nature—an island, an ocean, etc.

### **Composition Assignment**

1. Describe the scene in which Tortoise convinces the birds that he should attend the feast in the sky. Begin with this sentence: Once upon a time, all the birds were invited to a feast in the sky.

Include the following phrases and sentences:

- a. very happy
- b. began to prepare themselves
- c. Tortoise found out about the feast.
- d. had not eaten a good meal for two moons
- e. asked to go
- f. full of cunning
- g. a changed man
- h. had a sweet tongue
- i. each gave him a feather



# A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

by Ernest Hemingway

## Biography

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) spent his boyhood boxing and playing football in the public schools of Oak Park, Illinois. During the summers he went with his father on frequent hunting and fishing trips to nearby Michigan. Following his high school graduation, he took a position with the *Kansas City Star*, a leading newspaper of the day. Restless and eager for broader experiences, Hemingway joined the army at the outbreak of World War I and served as an ambulance driver. These years provided the background for his first significant novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929).

Following the war, Hemingway settled in Paris and devoted his full time to writing. In 1925, a number of his stories were collected in a volume called *In Our Time*. The spare style for which he was to become famous is apparent in this work, but it wasn't until he published *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) that Hemingway's reputation was made.

Hemingway's life was colorful and exciting. Identifying himself with bullfights, safaris, and wars as much as with novels and short stories, he moved about between Cuba, Spain, Africa, Florida, and Sun Valley, Idaho. His flamboyant life notwithstanding, Hemingway was a deeply serious artist. Among his best-known novels are *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), the last of which was instrumental in his winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. Even more important, perhaps, than his novels are his short stories. Noted for their tightness, objectivity, and vigor, they have left a lasting mark upon that literary form.

## Before Reading the Selection

1. Prepare for the plot and the theme. Students should be prepared for the quiet, restrained pace of this story. Very little seems to happen, yet the impact of the scene upon the reader is intense.

One way to prepare students for this kind of story might be to ask them to recall moments in their own lives when they caught a glimpse through a window or overheard a conversation that seemed charged with suppressed emotion. Afterwards they thought about the scene and wondered about its meaning.

The Hemingway story is just such a glimpse of life, set in sharp focus by a skillful storyteller who trusts the facts to speak for themselves. And they do. Here the reader is not told about loneliness: He confronts it.

After reading the story once, the class should discuss in full the implications of the title, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." Have your students pick out sentences that bear upon this theme.

2. Introduce the key words. The story is written in very simple language.

There are not many difficult words and phrases to be discussed in class. Attention should be called to the parodies of the Lord's Prayer and the prayer to the Virgin Mary. The students should be given these prayers in English, and they should also be given the meaning of the Spanish word *nada* (nothing). Do your students know what a *parody* is? You should discuss with them some of the reasons for making a parody.

### Answers: Comprehension

1. Yes. The old man was a "good client."
2. The waiters "knew that if he became too drunk he would leave without paying."
3. He tried to commit suicide because "he was in despair."
4. He tried to hang himself with a rope. His niece cut him down.
5. The older waiter says the old man stays up late "because he likes it." The younger waiter says the old man stays up late because he is lonely.
6. The younger waiter was in a hurry to go home. The older waiter, the "unhurried" one, asked: "Why didn't you let him stay and drink?"
7. He has no one to go home to. His work is his life.
8. He says that you cannot "stand before a bar with dignity."
9. On the way home the older waiter stopped at a bar for a drink.
10. The older waiter thinks he will not be able to go to sleep until daylight. He says the reason for his not being able to sleep is "probably only insomnia."

### Answers: Toward Interpretation

1. The waiter who served the old man was callous and indifferent to the old man's plight. He was impatient because the old man wouldn't go home and allow them to close the café, and he refused to serve another drink. He was incapable of putting himself in the old man's place. To him the old man was merely an obstruction to his own pleasure—getting home to his wife.

The other waiter, on the other hand, felt sorry for the old man, recognized the tragedy of his loneliness, and would have let him stay longer in the "clean, well-lighted place." He is called "the unhurried one" and the "older waiter," and we learn further that he lived alone without a wife.

2. The waiter who speaks first is relatively young and happily married. He has "youth, confidence, and a job"—which to the older waiter seem "everything." The other waiter has nothing but a job. He has lost the confidence of youth, he lives alone in a room, and he feels the emptiness of his life.

3. To the younger man the café is only a place of work. To the older man it is a respite from the emptiness of life—it is a light in the darkness, a haven for the lonely and depressed. The older waiter reveals this attitude both by his sympathy for the old man and by these words: "Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be someone who needs the café."

4. By substituting the Spanish word *nada* (nothing) for key words in the Lord's Prayer, Hemingway is emphasizing the emptiness and meaninglessness of the old