



FLORIDA

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS

Literary Analysis

Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.2 Analyze and compare a variety of traditional, classical, and contemporary literary works....

Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.7 Analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author's use of descriptive language....

NOTABLE QUOTE

"The eyes of others our prisons; their thoughts our cages."

FYI

Did you know that Virginia Woolf ...

- wrote a comic biography of a cocker spaniel?
- was nicknamed "Goat" by her family?
- was an outspoken pacifist during World War II?

Author Online

For more on Virginia Woolf, visit the Literature Center at ClassZone.com.

The Duchess and the Jeweller

Short Story by Virginia Woolf



Virginia Woolf

1882–1941

Virginia Woolf was fascinated by the inner life: the interplay of memories, emotions, and sensations that occurs within each individual. To capture the fluid, random quality of human thoughts, Woolf began to experiment with stream of consciousness and other narrative techniques. Her groundbreaking novels, including *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927), are considered masterpieces of modernist literature.

Early Influences Born Adeline Virginia Stephen, Woolf was raised in a cultured, upper-middle-class family whose friends included leading artists and thinkers of the day. Her vivacious mother died when Virginia was only 13, leaving her in the care of her remote, tyrannical father. Her mother's death, which Woolf called "the greatest disaster that could happen," also triggered the first of Woolf's several mental breakdowns.

Although Woolf's father encouraged her literary pursuits, he refused to send her to school. In keeping with Victorian custom, her brothers were sent to private schools and college, while Woolf and her sister were educated at home. Although she resented this injustice, she benefitted from exposure to her father's vast library, brilliant mind, and cultured friends. Later, she would credit him with teaching her how to write "in the fewest possible words, as clearly as possible, exactly what one meant."

The Bloomsbury Group After her father's death in 1904, Woolf and her siblings moved to the Bloomsbury district of London. There, they began to associate with a circle of artists and thinkers that became known as the Bloomsbury group. Gathering at Woolf's home, members debated current artistic, literary, and social issues and expressed their ardent support for artistic experimentation. Stimulated by the company of these free-thinking individuals, Woolf began work on her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1912).

Pioneer of Modernism In 1912, Woolf married Bloomsbury member Leonard Woolf. In 1917, the couple established the Hogarth Press, which was dedicated to publishing groundbreaking literature. For the next 24 years, Woolf divided her time between running the press and writing a series of well-regarded novels. At the start of World War II, her despair over the bombing of her London home worsened her already deteriorating mental health. In 1941, deeply depressed and fearful that she was going insane, Woolf drowned herself in the river Ouse at the age of 59.

● LITERARY ANALYSIS: PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION

An offshoot of realism, **psychological fiction** largely ignores dramatic action to focus on the inner life of its characters. Psychological fiction emphasizes

- characters' thoughts, feelings, and impressions
- the hidden **motivations** for characters' actions
- the presence of **internal conflict**

A technique closely associated with this kind of fiction is **stream of consciousness**, which presents the random flow of thoughts and sensations in a character's mind. As you read this story, notice how Woolf uses these elements to portray the main character.

● READING SKILL: ANALYZE DICTION

When you describe the language used in a work as formal or conversational, you are referring to the writer's **diction**, which includes word choice and syntax, or arrangement of words. Woolf chooses words that convey vivid impressions or strong sensations. She often uses complex sentences that cluster several strong words together in a series of short phrases, as in this example:

Then she loomed up, filling the door, filling the room with the aroma, the prestige, the arrogance, the pomp, the pride of all the Dukes and Duchesses swollen in one wave.

As you read, note when Woolf alters her sentence structure to heighten the impact of her carefully chosen words.

▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Woolf used these boldfaced words to portray one man's quest for social status. Use context clues to determine the meaning of each word.

1. **dismantle** the tent to put it away
2. bowed in **homage** to the queen
3. the glow of **burnished** steel
4. groveled **obsequiously**
5. moved with **lissome** grace
6. a ceremony full of **pomp**

*What does it mean
to have CLASS?*

KEY IDEA Some people think being rich is the key to having **class**. Others insist that class is an instinctive personal grace that can neither be bought nor taught. What are the essential qualities that determine whether a person truly has class?

DISCUSS Working with a partner, choose a fictional character or a real person whom you consider a model of class. Identify specific qualities and behaviors that make this person "classy." Based on the traits you identified, what relationship do you see between money and class? Explain your answer.

Person or Character

Qualities and Behaviors

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Conclusion about Money
and Class

The Duchess *and the* JEWELLER

Virginia Woolf

Oliver Bacon lived at the top of a house overlooking the Green Park.¹ He had a flat;² chairs jutted out at the right angles—chairs covered in hide. Sofas filled the bays³ of the windows—sofas covered in tapestry. The windows, the three long windows, had the proper allowance of discreet net and figured satin.⁴ The mahogany sideboard bulged discreetly with the right brandies, whiskeys and liqueurs. And from the middle window he looked down upon the glossy roofs of fashionable cars packed in the narrow straits of Piccadilly. A more central position could not be imagined. And at eight in the morning he would have his breakfast brought in on a tray by a manservant; the manservant would unfold his crimson
10 dressing gown; he would rip his letters open with his long pointed nails and would extract thick white cards of invitation upon which the engraving stood up roughly from duchesses, countesses, viscountesses⁵ and Honorable Ladies. Then he would wash; then he would eat his toast; then he would read his paper by the bright burning fire of electric coals. **A**

ANALYZE VISUALS

What can you **infer** about the shop portrayed by this image?

A DICTION

Reread the description of Oliver's home in lines 1–7. Which of Woolf's **word choices** suggest Oliver is preoccupied with how others see him?

1. **Green Park:** a large park in London's fashionable West End, extending from just north of the royal residence of Buckingham Palace to Piccadilly (pɪkˈdɪlɪ), a main London street.
2. **flat:** apartment.
3. **bays:** sections of wall that jut out from a building in which elegant windows are often placed.
4. **discreet . . . satin:** curtains made of lace that is not showy and satin with a woven design.
5. **viscountesses** (vɪˈkɒnˈtɪs-ɪs): noblewomen ranking below duchesses and countesses but above baronesses.

“Behold Oliver,” he would say, addressing himself. “You who began life in a filthy little alley, you who . . .” and he would look down at his legs, so shapely in their perfect trousers; at his boots; at his spats. They were all shapely, shining; cut from the best cloth by the best scissors in Savile Row.⁶ But he **dismantled** himself often and became again a little boy in a dark alley. He had once thought
 20 that⁷ the height of his ambition—selling stolen dogs to fashionable women in Whitechapel.⁸ And once he had been done.⁹ “Oh, Oliver,” his mother had wailed. “Oh, Oliver! When will you have sense, my son?” . . . Then he had gone behind a counter; had sold cheap watches; then he had taken a wallet to Amsterdam.¹⁰ . . . At that memory he would chuckle—the old Oliver remembering the young. Yes, he had done well with the three diamonds; also there was the commission on the emerald. After that he went into the private room behind the shop in Hatton Garden;¹¹ the room with the scales, the safe, the thick magnifying glasses. And then . . . and then . . . He chuckled. When he passed through the knots of
 30 jewellers in the hot evening who were discussing prices, gold mines, diamonds, reports from South Africa, one of them would lay a finger to the side of his nose and murmur, “Hum–m–m,” as he passed. It was no more than a murmur; no more than a nudge on the shoulder, a finger on the nose, a buzz that ran through the cluster of jewellers in Hatton Garden on a hot afternoon—oh, many years ago now! But still Oliver felt it purring down his spine, the nudge, the murmur that meant, “Look at him—young Oliver, the young jeweller—there he goes.” Young he was then. And he dressed better and better; and had, first a hansom cab;¹² then a car; and first he went up to the dress circle, then down into the stalls.¹³ And he had a villa at Richmond, overlooking the river, with trellises of red roses; and Mademoiselle used to pick one every morning and stick it in his buttonhole. **B**
 40 “So,” said Oliver Bacon, rising and stretching his legs. “So . . .”

And he stood beneath the picture of an old lady on the mantelpiece and raised his hands. “I have kept my word,” he said, laying his hands together, palm to palm, as if he were doing **homage** to her. “I have won my bet.” That was so; he was the richest jeweller in England; but his nose, which was long and flexible, like an elephant’s trunk, seemed to say by its curious quiver at the nostrils (but it seemed as if the whole nose quivered, not only the nostrils) that he was not satisfied yet; still smelt something under the ground a little further off. Imagine

dismantle (dɪs-məntl)
 v. to take apart; to disassemble

B PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION

Reread lines 15–24. Describe the differences between Oliver and his younger self. What is Oliver’s attitude toward his past?

homage (hŏm’ij) *n.* an act showing great respect; tribute

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6. **spats . . . Savile** (səv’ēl) **Row**: cloth coverings for the top of the shoe and the ankle, worn by men as formal attire. Savile Row is a London street known for its exclusive men’s clothing shops.
 7. **that**: The word is used as a pronoun here, referring to the selling of stolen dogs mentioned later in the sentence.
 8. **Whitechapel**: a working-class, inner-city neighborhood in London’s East End, once notorious for its high crime rates and the poverty of its residents.
 9. **done**: British slang for “arrested and charged with a crime.”
 10. **had taken a wallet to Amsterdam**: brought a package of uncut gems to the Dutch city of Amsterdam, a center of the diamond trade.
 11. **Hatton Garden**: the center of London’s jewelry trade.
 12. **hansom cab**: a two-wheeled horse-drawn carriage.
 13. **dress circle . . . stalls**: In British theaters or concert halls, the dress circle is the first balcony of seats, expensive but available to all. The stalls are seats near the stage, usually reserved for those of high rank.



a giant hog in a pasture rich with truffles;¹⁴ after unearthing this truffle and that, still it smells a bigger, a blacker truffle under the ground further off. So Oliver
50 snuffed always in the rich earth of Mayfair¹⁵ another truffle, a blacker, a bigger further off.

Now then he straightened the pearl in his tie, cased himself in his smart blue overcoat; took his yellow gloves and his cane; and swayed as he descended the stairs and half snuffed, half sighed through his long sharp nose as he passed out into Piccadilly. For was he not still a sad man, a dissatisfied man, a man who seeks something that is hidden, though he had won his bet?

He swayed slightly as he walked, as the camel at the zoo sways from side to side when it walks along the asphalt paths laden with grocers and their wives eating from paper bags and throwing little bits of silver paper crumpled up on to
60 the path. The camel despises the grocers; the camel is dissatisfied with its lot; the camel sees the blue lake and the fringe of palm trees in front of it. So the great jeweller, the greatest jeweller in the whole world, swung down Piccadilly, perfectly dressed, with his gloves, with his cane; but dissatisfied still, till he reached the dark little shop, that was famous in France, in Germany, in Austria, in Italy, and all over America—the dark little shop in the street off Bond Street.¹⁶

As usual he strode through the shop without speaking, though the four men, the two old men, Marshall and Spencer, and the two young men, Hammond and

14. **truffles:** edible fungi that grow underground, considered a rare delicacy. Hogs are often used to sniff them out.

15. **Mayfair:** a fashionable, mostly residential section of London's West End.

16. **Bond Street:** a main business street in Mayfair, known for its fashionable shops.

Wicks, stood straight behind the counter as he passed and looked at him, envying him. It was only with one finger of the amber-colored glove, wagging, that he
70 acknowledged their presence. And he went in and shut the door of his private room behind him.

Then he unlocked the grating that barred the window. The cries of Bond Street came in; the purr of the distant traffic. The light from reflectors at the back of the shop struck upwards. One tree waved six green leaves, for it was June. But Mademoiselle had married Mr. Pedder of the local brewery—no one stuck roses in his buttonhole now. ©

“So,” he half sighed, half snorted, “so . . .”

Then he touched a spring in the wall and slowly the paneling slid open, and behind it were the steel safes, five, no, six of them, all of **burnished** steel. He
80 twisted a key; unlocked one; then another. Each was lined with a pad of deep crimson velvet; in each lay jewels—bracelets, necklaces, rings, tiaras, ducal coronets;¹⁷ loose stones in glass shells; rubies, emeralds, pearls, diamonds. All safe, shining, cool, yet burning, eternally, with their own compressed light.

“Tears!” said Oliver, looking at the pearls.

“Heart’s blood!” he said, looking at the rubies.

“Gunpowder!” he continued, rattling the diamonds so that they flashed and blazed.

“Gunpowder enough to blow up Mayfair—sky high, high, high!” He threw his head back and made a sound like a horse neighing as he said it.

90 The telephone buzzed **obsequiously** in a low muted voice on his table. He shut the safe.

“In ten minutes,” he said. “Not before.” And he sat down at his desk and looked at the heads of the Roman emperors that were graved¹⁸ on his sleeve links. And again he dismantled himself and became once more the little boy playing marbles in the alley where they sell stolen dogs on Sunday. He became that wily astute little boy, with lips like wet cherries. He dabbled his fingers in ropes of tripe;¹⁹ he dipped them in pans of frying fish; he dodged in and out among the crowds. He was slim, **lissome**, with eyes like licked stones. And now—now—the hands of the clock ticked on. One, two, three, four . . . The
100 Duchess of Lambourne waited his pleasure; the Duchess of Lambourne, daughter of a hundred Earls. She would wait for ten minutes on a chair at the counter. She would wait his pleasure. She would wait till he was ready to see her. He watched the clock in its shagreen²⁰ case. The hand moved on. With each tick the clock handed him—so it seemed—pâté de foie gras;²¹ a glass of champagne; another of fine brandy; a cigar costing one guinea.²² The clock laid them on the table beside

© PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION

How would you explain the reference to Mademoiselle in lines 74–76? Based on this reference, what might be the cause of Oliver’s dissatisfaction?

burnished (būr’nīsh) *adj.* polished until shiny
burnish *v.*

obsequiously (ōb-sē’kwē-əs-lē) *adv.* in an eagerly submissive way

lissome (līs’əm) *adj.* moving with graceful ease; limber

17. **ducal** (dōō’kəl) **coronets**: small crowns worn by dukes and duchesses.

18. **graved**: engraved.

19. **tripe**: the stomach lining of a cow or calf, used as food.

20. **shagreen** (shə-grēn’): untanned leather, often dyed green.

21. **pâté de foie gras** (pā-tā’ də fwā grā’): a rich paste made from goose liver.

22. **guinea** (gīn’ē): a unit of British money equal to one pound and one shilling, used mainly for pricing luxury items.

him, as the ten minutes passed. Then he heard soft slow footsteps approaching; a rustle in the corridor. The door opened. Mr. Hammond flattened himself against the wall. **D**

“Her Grace!”²³ he announced.

110 And he waited there, flattened against the wall.

And Oliver, rising, could hear the rustle of the dress of the Duchess as she came down the passage. Then she loomed up, filling the door, filling the room with the aroma, the prestige, the arrogance, the **pomp**, the pride of all the Dukes and Duchesses swollen in one wave. And as a wave breaks, she broke, as she sat down, spreading and splashing and falling over Oliver Bacon the great jeweller, covering him with sparkling bright colors, green, rose, violet; and odors; and iridescences; and rays shooting from fingers, nodding from plumes, flashing from silk; for she was very large, very fat, tightly girt²⁴ in pink taffeta, and past her prime. As a parasol with many flounces,²⁵ as a peacock with many feathers, shuts
120 its flounces, folds its feathers, so she subsided and shut herself as she sank down
– in the leather armchair. **E**

“Good morning, Mr. Bacon,” said the Duchess. And she held out her hand which came through the slit of her white glove. And Oliver bent low as he shook it. And as their hands touched the link was forged between them once more. They were friends, yet enemies; he was master, she was mistress; each cheated the other, each needed the other, each feared the other, each felt this and knew this every time they touched hands thus in the little back room with the white light outside, and the tree with its six leaves, and the sound of the street in the distance and behind them the safes. **F**

130 “And today, Duchess—what can I do for you today?” said Oliver, very softly.

The Duchess opened; her heart, her private heart, gaped wide. And with a sigh, but no words, she took from her bag a long wash-leather pouch—it looked like a lean yellow ferret.²⁶ And from a slit in the ferret’s belly she dropped pearls—ten pearls. They rolled from the slit in the ferret’s belly—one, two, three, four—like the eggs of some heavenly bird.

“All that’s left me, dear Mr. Bacon,” she moaned. Five, six, seven—down they rolled, down the slopes of the vast mountainsides that fell between her knees into one narrow valley—the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth. There they lay in the glow of the peach-blossom taffeta. Ten pearls.

140 “From the Appleby cincture,”²⁷ she mourned. “The last . . . the last of them all.”

Oliver stretched out and took one of the pearls between finger and thumb. It was round, it was lustrous. But real was it, or false? Was she lying again? Did she dare?

D PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION

Reread lines 96–108. Note how Woolf uses **stream of consciousness** to convey Oliver’s thoughts. What does this technique reveal about his motivation for making the Duchess wait?

pomp (pŏmp) *n.* vain display

E DICTION

What is unusual about the arrangement of phrases in lines 119–121?

F GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Note how Woolf uses long sentences layered with several phrases to imitate the flow of Oliver’s thoughts.

23. **Her Grace**: the appropriate way of referring to or directly addressing a duchess. A lower-ranking noblewoman (such as a countess or a baroness) would be referred to as *her ladyship* and directly addressed as *my lady*.

24. **girt**: wrapped; encircled.

25. **parasol** (pär’ə-sŏl’) . . . **flounces**: a light umbrella with many ruffles.

26. **ferret**: a small animal similar to a weasel.

27. **cincture** (sĭngk’chər): an ornamental belt.

She laid her plump padded finger across her lips. "If the Duke knew . . ." she whispered. "Dear Mr. Bacon, a bit of bad luck . . ."

Been gambling again, had she?

"That villain! That sharper!"²⁸ she hissed.

The man with the chipped cheek bone? A bad 'un. And the Duke was straight as a poker; with side whiskers; would cut her off, shut her up down there if he
150 knew—what I know, thought Oliver, and glanced at the safe.

"Araminta, Daphne, Diana," she moaned. "It's for *them*."

The Ladies Araminta, Daphne, Diana—her daughters. He knew them; adored them. But it was Diana he loved.

"You have all my secrets," she leered. Tears slid; tears fell; tears, like diamonds, collecting powder in the ruts of her cherry-blossom cheeks.

"Old friend," she murmured, "old friend."

"Old friend," he repeated, "old friend," as if he licked the words.

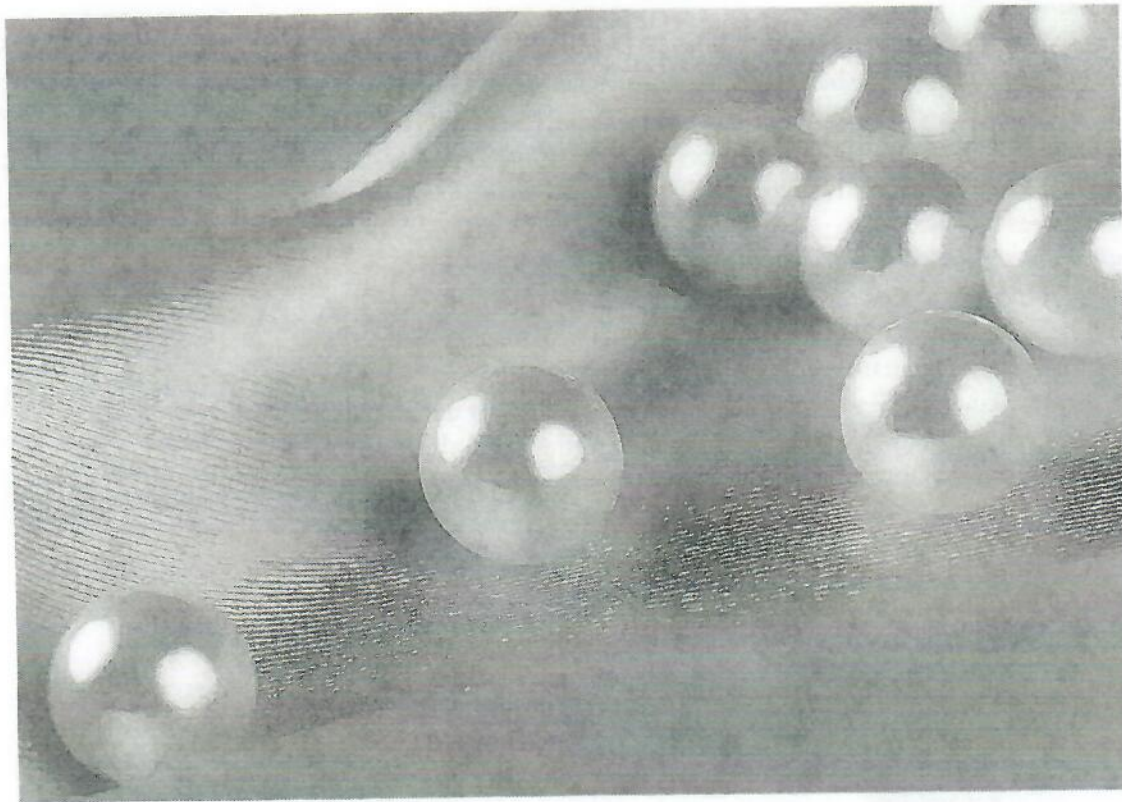
"How much?" he queried.

She covered the pearls with her hand.

160 "Twenty thousand," she whispered.

But was it real or false, the one he held in his hand? The Appleby cincture—hadn't she sold it already? He would ring for Spencer or Hammond. "Take it and test it," he would say. He stretched to the bell.

28. sharper: a gambler who cheats.



"You will come down tomorrow?" she urged, she interrupted. "The Prime Minister—His Royal Highness . . ." She stopped. "And Diana," she added.

Oliver took his hand off the bell.

He looked past her, at the backs of the houses in Bond Street. But he saw, not the houses in Bond Street, but a dimpling river; and trout rising and salmon; and the Prime Minister; and himself too; in white waistcoats; and then, Diana. He
170 looked down at the pearl in his hand. But how could he test it, in the light of the river, in the light of the eyes of Diana? But the eyes of the Duchess were on him. ©

"Twenty thousand," she moaned. "My honor!"

The honor of the mother of Diana! He drew his checkbook towards him; he took out his pen.

"Twenty," he wrote. Then he stopped writing. The eyes of the old woman in the picture were on him—of the old woman, his mother.

"Oliver!" she warned him. "Have sense! Don't be a fool!"

"Oliver!" the Duchess entreated—it was "Oliver" now, not "Mr. Bacon."

"You'll come for a long weekend?"

180 Alone in the woods with Diana! Riding alone in the woods with Diana!

"Thousand," he wrote, and signed it.

"Here you are," he said.

* And there opened all the flounces of the parasol, all the plumes of the peacock, the radiance of the wave, the swords and spears of Agincourt,²⁹ as she rose from her chair. And the two old men and the two young men, Spencer and Marshall, Wicks and Hammond, flattened themselves behind the counter envying him as he led her through the shop to the door. And he wagged his yellow glove in their faces, and she held her honor—a check for twenty thousand pounds with his signature—quite firmly in her hands.

190 "Are they false or are they real?" asked Oliver, shutting his private door. There they were, ten pearls on the blotting paper on the table. He took them to the window. He held them under his lens to the light. . . . This, then, was the truffle he had routed out of the earth! Rotten at the center—rotten at the core!

"Forgive me, oh my mother!" he sighed, raising his hands as if he asked pardon of the old woman in the picture. And again he was a little boy in the alley where they sold dogs on Sunday.

"For," he murmured, laying the palms of his hands together, "it is to be a long weekend." ☞

© PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION

Reread lines 166–171. What was Oliver about to do? What **internal conflict** causes him to hesitate?

29. **Agincourt** (äj'ŷn-kôrt'): a French village where, in 1415, Henry V's English forces defeated a much larger French army in what is considered one of England's most glorious victories.

Reading for Information

LITERARY CRITICISM E. M. Forster was, like Virginia Woolf, a member of the Bloomsbury group. He built his fame as a novelist and a writer of literary criticism. Shortly after Woolf died, Forster wrote a critical review of her work. In this excerpt he describes her process of writing.

from

Virginia Woolf



by E. M. Forster

She liked receiving sensations—sights, sounds, tastes—passing them through her mind, where they encountered theories and memories, and then bringing them out again, through a pen, on to a bit of paper. Now began the higher delights of authorship. For these pen-marks on paper were only the prelude to writing, little more than marks on a wall. They had to be combined, arranged, emphasized here, eliminated there, new relationships had to be generated, new pen-marks born, until out of the interactions, something, one thing, one, arose. This one thing, whether it was a novel or an essay or a short story or a biography or a private paper to be read to her friends, was, if it was successful, itself analogous to a sensation. Although it was so

complex and intellectual, although it might be large and heavy with facts, it was akin to the very simple things which had started it off, to the sights, sounds, tastes. It could be best described as we describe them. For it was not about something. It was something. . . .

She liked writing with an intensity which few writers have attained, or even desired. Most of them write with half an eye on their royalties, half an eye on their critics, and a third half eye on improving the world, which leaves them with only half an eye for the task on which she concentrated her entire vision. She would not look elsewhere, and her circumstances combined with her temperament to focus her. Money she had not to consider, because she possessed a private income, and though financial independence is not always a safeguard against commercialism, it was in her case. Critics she never considered while she was writing, although she could be attentive to them and even humble afterwards. Improving the world she would not consider, on the ground that the world is man-made, and that she, a woman, had no responsibility for the mess. . . . Neither the desire for money nor the desire for reputation nor philanthropy could influence her. She had a singleness of purpose which will not recur in this country for many years, and writers who have liked writing as she liked it have not indeed been common in any age.

Reading-Writing Connection

WRITING PROMPT

WRITE A NARRATIVE What might have happened when Oliver visited the Duchess and her daughter Diana in the country? Use what you know about the personalities of Oliver and the Duchess to write a **three-to-five-paragraph descriptive narrative**.

SELF-CHECK

An effective narrative will . . .

- vividly describe the setting
- show Oliver's emotional response to being with Diana
- be consistent with the characterizations in Woolf's story

GRAMMAR AND STYLE

CRAFT EFFECTIVE SENTENCES Review the **Grammar and Style** note on page 1121. In this story, Woolf imitates the flow of thoughts by using long sentences made up of several phrases and clauses. Instead of smooth transitions, she links seemingly unrelated phrases with commas and semicolons, as in this example:

But he saw, not the houses in Bond Street, but a dimpling river; and trout rising and salmon; and the Prime Minister; and himself too; in white waistcoats; and then, Diana. (lines 167–169)

Notice how the layering of details in this sentence helps to evoke the random movements of Oliver's mind.

PRACTICE Using the following quotation as a model, write your own paragraph in the style of Woolf. Be sure your paragraph includes examples of Woolf's distinctive sentence structure.

And he dressed better and better; and had, first a hansom cab; then a car; and first he went up to the dress circle, then down into the stalls. And he had a villa at Richmond, overlooking the river, with trellises of red roses; and Mademoiselle used to pick one every morning and stick it in his buttonhole.



SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD Writing Process

Benchmark LA.1112.3.2.3 Analyzing language techniques of professional authors (e.g., figurative language, denotation, connotation) to establish a personal style, demonstrating a command of language with conviction of expression.



For prewriting, revision, and editing tools, visit the **Writing Center** at ClassZone.com.

Comprehension

1. **Recall** What was Oliver's childhood like?
2. **Clarify** Who is the old woman in the picture?
3. **Clarify** Why does Oliver buy the pearls without having them tested?
4. **Recall** What does he discover about the pearls?

Literary Analysis

5. **Examine Character** In what ways does Oliver's past life influence his present self? Identify specific experiences or memories that affect his behavior in the story.
6. **Analyze Poetic Language** Although Woolf wrote prose, she often chose words to create poetic effects. Reread the description of the Duchess in lines 112–121. Identify at least two examples of each of the following poetic devices from this description:
 - simile
 - alliteration
 - repetition
 - consonance
7. **Analyze Diction** Restate each of the following passages using a more conventional sentence structure. What impressions or feelings are emphasized by Woolf's unique diction?
 - "He had a flat . . . in tapestry." (lines 1–3)
 - "And now—now . . . Earls." (lines 98–101)
 - "And from a slit . . . bird." (lines 133–135)
 - "And there opened . . . her chair." (lines 183–185)
8. **Draw Conclusions** Reread the description of Oliver's relationship with the Duchess in lines 124–129. Explain why the two characters need each other. What does their relationship suggest about the hypocrisy of class distinctions?
9. **Evaluate Psychological Fiction** In your opinion, does Woolf effectively capture the quality of a person's inner thoughts? What are some disadvantages of Woolf's experimental style? Support your answer with details from the story.

Literary Criticism

10. **Social Context** Consider whether wealth and social status are as important now as they were in the Britain of Woolf's time. What observations from Woolf's story, if any, still seem relevant today? Explain your answer.



SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD

Literary Analysis

Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.7 Analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author's use of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, pun, alliteration, onomatopoeia, allusion), figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), common idioms, and mythological and literary allusions, and explain how they impact meaning in a variety of texts with an emphasis on how they evoke reader's emotions.