

A Tale of Two Cities (Dr Manette in the garret) – Lesson plan

Level: Strong Intermediate plus (B1/B2+): suitable for adults/older teens who enjoy creative writing and an element of competition.

Time: 90 minutes.

Main Aim(s): To encourage students to engage with and speculate about a literary text, and to turn that speculation into accurate writing.

Subsidiary Aim(s): For students to practise reading for gist and detail.

Suggested timetable fit: As part of a series of lessons looking at literary texts to encourage extensive reading for pleasure.

Materials: 2 worksheets per student.

Provided text for final stage (single copy).

(Optional) Computers, printer.

Procedure:

Stage and stage aim(s)	Timing	Interaction	Procedure
Lead in (to focus on topic)	10	t – st st – st t - st	Ask the students if they like mystery books or films, or thrillers, or anything when it is not clear who all the characters are, or what they are doing, or why they are doing it. Students discuss examples they have enjoyed in groups of 3 or 4. Conduct class feedback.
Gist reading (to develop the skill of skimming for main ideas)	10	st st - st t - st	Hand out worksheet 1 . Focus students on the questions in Exercise 1. Tell them they have 5 minutes to find the answers. Stress that there are some words even an educated native speaker will find difficult, but that doesn't stop the meaning from coming through. Pairs or groups discuss their answers.

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interest, and to give a conclusion to the lesson)		t -st	Students go around room reading the stories. Each group discusses the stories, and decides which to vote for. Class feedback. Groups vote. Focus on winning selection and (assuming it is not selected) the 'real' version.
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Text for including alongside sts' work for 'reading colleagues' work' stage:

The shoemaker is Dr Manette, who has spent many years in a famous French prison called the Bastille. So long, in fact, that he can't remember anything. Shoemaking, which started as a hobby, has become the only thing he understands. He has been released and is staying with his old servant, Defarge. Mr Lorry is an English lawyer who has brought Dr Manette's daughter, Lucie, to meet him. She had thought he died when she was very young.

They return to England and Dr Manette recovers his mind, nursed by Lucie. Lucie marries, but when the French revolution starts with the fall of the Bastille, Defarge finds a paper hidden in the prison written by Dr Manette putting a curse on a certain family. Lucie's husband is from this family, so he is sentenced to the guillotine by a court. But another man, who also loves Lucie, and who looks like her husband, takes his place and has his head cut off instead.