

RESURSĂ EDUCATIONALĂ DESCHISĂ

Denumire: Short Story Activities in EFL Classroom

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Disciplina: limba engleză

Clasa: a VII-a

Scopul materialului propus: de documentare pentru cadrele didactice

Short Story Activities in EFL Classroom

Oscar Wilde – The Selfish Giant

I commence with a series of quick role-plays: one of giving and/or receiving a present that somebody might desire (a bar of chocolate, perhaps) and another of giving and/or receiving a present they would not desire (for example a single glove). Then we discuss if words could be ‘presents’, how they could be good or bad presents, and how we need to think about the presents that are made by words and whether we want to receive them or not. After that we read the story of The Selfish Giant together.

Afterwards, I place a ‘present box’ on the front table and ask students what ‘presents’ the story might have given us. For example, it might have made us think about not being selfish. All students’ answers can be written on cards and placed in the present box.

After the preparation stage I proceed with discussing some important issues regarding the story itself:

- Protagonists: Who are the protagonists? Who is your favourite and your least favourite protagonist, and why?
- Narrative: What problems do the characters overcome in the story? How do they face them?
- Setting: What is the location of the story?
- Genre (fantasy): Does this story resemble to any other stories you’ve heard? What similarities or differences are there?
- Symbolism: The wall symbolizes the giant’s attitude related to other people. What do you think it was ‘pointing’ to the children in the story? Also pay attention to the fact that the changing seasons don’t change inside the garden, when the wall is built.

The following step towards a better understanding of the text is to sum up the most important points of the narrative as bullet points. I devise the class into five groups and give them time to think and solve this requirement.

Then I ask the students to list some adjectives describing the giant both before, and after he meets the little child and to imagine the children's inner thoughts before and after the wall was built. Then they have to write these down in some "thought bubbles" around the table.

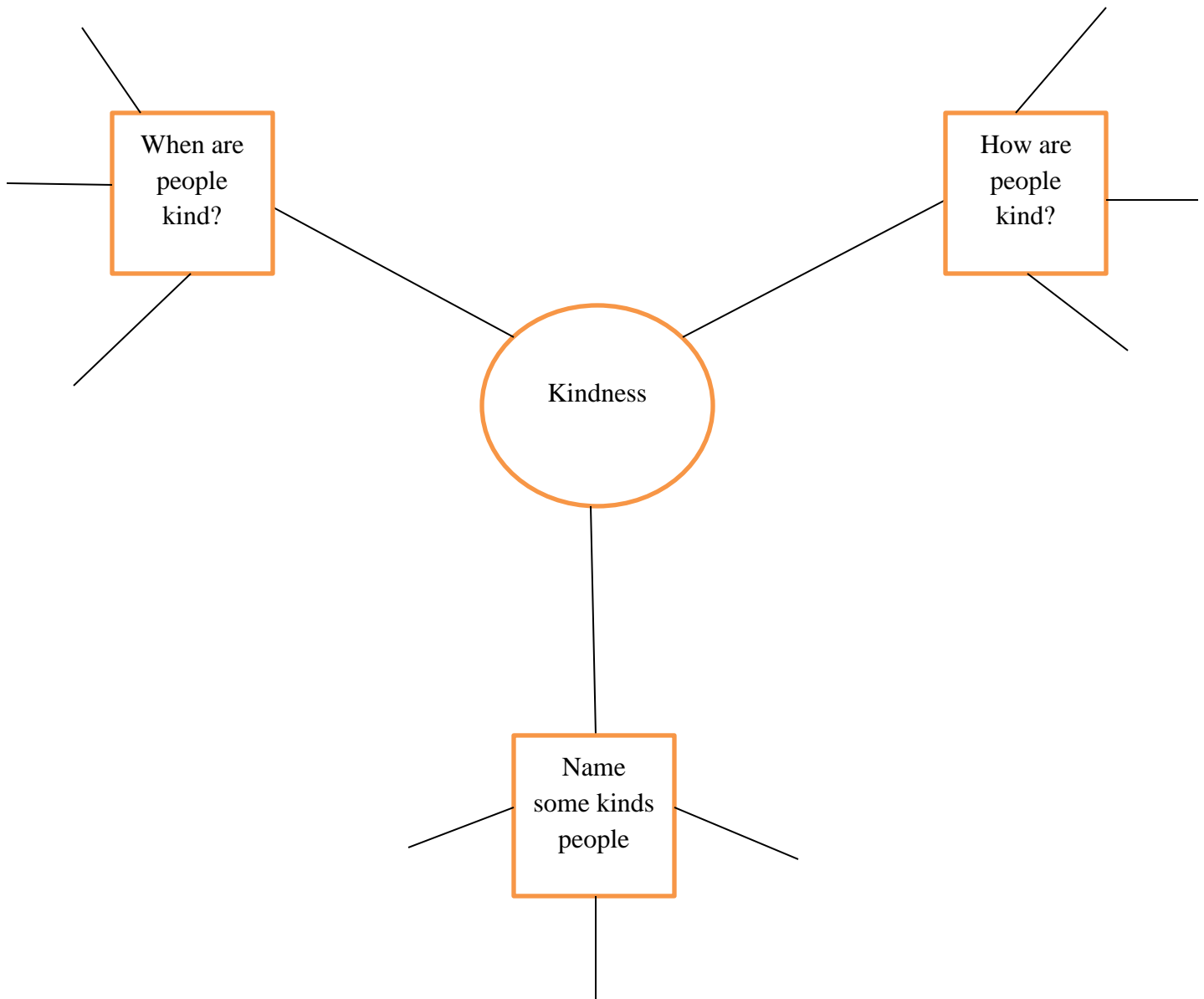


"Before" adjectives	"After" adjectives



Oscar Wilde – The Happy Prince

As a pre-reading activity, together with the students I create a concept map for the idea of kindness. The students will come to the board and fill in the empty spaces with their own ideas.



I introduce some new vocabulary **Pedestal, Annoyed, Mesmerized, Pry, Leaden** and, after a quick discussion regarding the meaning of the words, I divide the class into groups of three and have them complete a vocabulary worksheet for one of the words, sharing when then finish.

	Draw a picture in which you illustrate the word meaning
Give a synonym and an antonym for the word	Write a complete sentence using the word

While reading the story, I use a *Think, Pair, Share* strategy as the students come to each of the following sentences. The task is to decide what the bolded word means by analyzing the context of the word in the passage. Students have to write a one-word synonym describing the meaning of the word and share with a partner. Then each partner will share with the class and give the final definition.

1. "He flew for many hours, and decided to stop overnight in the Great City to rest. Swallow circled high about the dreary-looking city, keeping an eye out for a suitable place to **roost** for the night. "

2. "The swallow **plucked** the ruby from the center of the Prince's crown. He flew across the city over rooftops and along narrow streets. He found the shabby gray house and flew in through the kitchen window. He placed the jewel on the wooden table."

3." But the Prince looked rather **pitiful** with a big hole in his crown where the ruby used to be, and the bird felt bad for him."

4." I am covered in gold. Peel it off leaf by leaf and **distribute** it among the bridge people. With it, they will be able to buy food for the winter. "

5. "But the good deeds of the little swallow and the Happy Prince had not gone unnoticed. The bird and the broken lead heart were tenderly lifted out of the junk pile, and given a place of **honor**."

After discussing the story, students will think about the Happy Prince's point of view and choose one thing that is the most important to them, writing about its importance, why there is a possibility for them to give it away, and how that would make them feel.

I advise students to refocus on the "bridge people". After having examined the pictures, the groups of students will create a tableau that conveys the bridge people before receiving the gold leaf and several days after the presents from the Happy Prince.

Next I hand in some worksheets in which they have to complete the missing sections of a table with Cause (an action) and Effect (can lead to something else):

Cause	Effect
Chris mowed the lawn the entire summer.	He has enough money to buy a skateboard.
While it was flying to join its	

flock, a Swallow felt tired and needed to take a rest.	
	The eyes of the statue portraying the Happy Prince were filled with tears.
	The woman, who lived in the little grey house, kisses and hugged her children with joy.
The Swallow picked gold leaves covering the statue with its beak and spread them over the people on the bridge.	
The Happy Prince told the Swallow about a school where there were no books, notebooks, pencils or crayons.	
	The Prince's leaden heart broke into pieces making an awful sound that scared even the squirrels sleeping nearby.
The good deeds of the Swallow and the Happy Prince were noticed by the crowd.	

Starting from Aesop's quote "No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted", I tell students some beliefs of Benjamin Franklin regarding the fact that being morally good should be a lifelong endeavor. He listed thirteen virtues he wanted to improve and worked every week to develop one characteristic.

I will list Benjamin Franklin's traits on the board: Temperance, Silence, Frugality, Sincerity, Justice, Industry, Order, Cleanliness, Chastity, Resolution, Moderation, Tranquility,

and Humility. The students discuss about each of the above mentioned traits and reach the conclusion that kindness is related to the “Justice” virtue.

After that, I Tell students thirteen weeks later, Franklin repeated his list and wrote his successes and failures in a journal. When Franklin was 78 he said this process had made him a merrier person.

As a homework assignment I Have students create a “Character Journal” in which they list one trait needed to be improved and, for one week, I ask them to think of ways to demonstrate that trait in their life. Students should also record something they did each day to demonstrate that trait.

Journal questions they should consider:

- Was it hard to find ways to incorporate the trait into your day? Explain.
- How did working on this specific trait make you feel?
- How did people around you react to your efforts?
- Did you see others have the same characteristic?