

**WEEK: 10**

**Week Beginning: (Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020)**

**Subject: ENGLISH**

**Year: 7**

### **Lesson Objective:**

- Analyse the language used at the beginning of stories to grab reader's attention
- Analyse how language is used in to set tone and mood

### **Keywords/ Concepts**

- Tone
- Mood

### **Class Worksheets**

- For class work and example analysis:  
All worksheets and questions are based on the extract called "Do Not Say We Have Nothing"

### **Homework Worksheets**

- extract from "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" with a table to analyse the metaphors used.

### **Additional Notes**

## Do Not Say We Have Nothing



This is the opening chapter to the novel. In this section the narrator, Marie, tells us about her father and his death. Although written in 2016, the novel begins in 1989 – the same year in which hundreds of Chinese citizens were killed for protesting in Tiananmen Square, Beijing.

In a single year, my father left us twice. The first time, to end his marriage, and the second, when he took his own life. That year, 1989, my mother flew to Hong Kong and laid my father to rest in a cemetery near the Chinese border. Afterwards, distraught, she rushed home to Vancouver where I had been alone. I was ten years old. 5

Here is what I remember:

My father has a handsome, ageless face; he is a kind but melancholy man. He wears glasses that have no frames and the lenses give the impression of hovering just before him, the thinnest of curtains. His eyes, dark brown, are guarded and unsure; he is only 39 years old. My father's name was Jiang Kai and he was born in a small village outside of Changsha. Later on, when I learned my father had been a renowned concert pianist in China, I thought of the way his fingers tapped the kitchen table, how they pattered across countertops and along my mother's soft arms all the way to her fingertips, driving her crazy and me into fits of glee. He gave me my Chinese name, Jiang Li-ling, and my English one, Marie Jiang. When he died, I was only a child, and the few memories I possessed, however fractional, however inaccurate, were all I had of him. I've never let them go. 10 15

In my twenties, in the difficult years after both my parents had passed away, I gave my life wholeheartedly to numbers – observation, conjecture, logic and proof, the tools we mathematicians have not only to interpret, but simply to describe the world. For the last decade I have been a professor at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Numbers have allowed me to move between the unimaginably large and the magnificently small; to live an existence away from my parents, their affairs and unrequited dreams and, I used to think, my own. 20 25

Some years ago, in 2010, while walking in Vancouver's Chinatown, I passed a store selling DVDs. I remember that it was pouring rain and the

Do Not Say We Have Nothing by Madeleine Thien

sidewalks were empty. Concert music rang from two enormous speakers outside the shop. I knew the music, Bach's Sonata for Piano and Violin No. 4, and I was drawn towards it as keenly as if someone were pulling me by the hand.

Dizzy, I leaned against the glass.

And suddenly I was in the car with my father. I heard rain splashing up over the tires and my father, humming. He was so alive, so beloved, that the incomprehensibility of his suicide grieved me all over again. By then, my father had been dead for two decades, and such a pure memory of him had never come back to me. I was thirty-one years old.

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## Activities

The novel begins with the following sentence:

**In a single year, my father left us twice.**

- Do you think this is a powerful opening sentence? Why, or why not?
- How do you think the narrator feels about her father leaving? Try to support your answers with references to the extract.

Here is the first paragraph:

**In a single year, my father left us twice. The first time, to end his marriage, and the second, when he took his own life. That year, 1989, my mother flew to Hong Kong and laid my father to rest in a cemetery near the Chinese border. Afterwards, distraught, she rushed home to Vancouver where I had been alone. I was ten.**

**In the second sentence**, ‘The first time, to end his marriage, and the second, when he took his own life.’, the writer uses a list format to tell the reader about two increasingly traumatic events. ***What effect does the use of the list have? How does it make the narrator seem?***

Here is the next part of the extract:

Here is what I remember:

**My father has a handsome, ageless face; he is a kind but melancholy man. He wears glasses that have no frames and the lenses give the impression of hovering just before him, the thinnest of curtains. His eyes, dark brown, are guarded and unsure; he is only 39 years old. My father’s name was Jiang Kai and he was born in a small village outside of Changsha. Later on, when I learned my father had been a renowned concert pianist in China, I thought of the way his fingers tapped the kitchen table, how they pattered across countertops and along my mother’s soft arms all the way to her fingertips, driving her crazy and me into fits of glee. He gave me my Chinese name, Jiang Li-ling, and my English one, Marie Jiang. When he died, I was only a child, and the few memories I possessed, however fractional, however inaccurate, were all I had of him. I have never let them go.**

List four things you learn about the narrator's father in this extract:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Now read the extract again and **answer the questions around it**. These will help you to think about the writer's use of language, and the effects this has on our understanding of this character:

Here is what I remember:

My father has a handsome, ageless face; he is a kind but melancholy man. He wears glasses that have no frames and the lenses give the impression of hovering just before him, the thinnest of curtains.

1. What does this phrase make you think about the narrator's memories?

2. What does this metaphor suggest about the narrator's father?

His eyes, dark brown, are guarded and unsure; he is only 39 years old. My father's name was Jiang Kai and he was born in a small village outside of Changsha. Later on, when I learned my father had been a renowned concert pianist in China, I thought of the way his fingers tapped the kitchen table, how they pattered across countertops and along my mother's soft arms all the way to her fingertips, driving her crazy and me into fits of glee. He gave me my Chinese name, Jiang Li-ling, and my English one, Marie Jiang. When he died, I was only a child, and the few memories I possessed, however fractional, however inaccurate, were all I had of him. I've never let them go.

3. What do these adjective choices suggest about the narrator's father?

4. What does this part of the description suggest about the narrator's father? Does this surprise you? Why?

**Challenge question:**  
What could this symbolise?

Question- Look again at the final part of this paragraph, '**... the few memories I possessed, however fractional, however inaccurate, were all I had of him. I've never let them go.**' Based on these sentences, how would you describe the narrator's feelings towards her father? Explain your answer, with reference to the extract.

In this paragraph, the writer moves between past and present tense.

Give two examples of present tense verbs and two examples of past tense verbs from the paragraph:

**Past**

**Present**

- Why do you think the writer chooses to mix the tenses here? What effect does this have?

Here is the next part of the extract:

**In my twenties, in the difficult years after both my parents had passed away, I gave my life wholeheartedly to numbers – observation, conjecture, logic and proof, the tools we mathematicians have not only to interpret, but simply to describe the world. For the last decade I have been a professor at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Numbers have allowed me to move between the unimaginably large and the magnificently small; to live an existence away from my parents, their affairs, and unrequited dreams and, I used to think, my own.**

Earlier parts of the extract have moved backwards and forwards in time, but this section is chronological (meaning that events are described in the order they happened). What effect does this have? What does it make you think about the narrator?

**Then look at the final part of the extract.**

1. Which phrase in the extract above shows that the narrator's feeling of 'being in the car with my father' is a memory?
2. What is the effect of this sudden movement from the present reality into memory?

3. The writer uses a cyclical structure here, linking the end of the extract to the beginning by referring again to her father's suicide, and to her age. What effect does this have

Then answer this exam styled questions. **This has to be at least 2 paragraphs:**

“Explain how the writer uses personal experiences to engage the reader.” You may refer to the use of past and present. You **must** refer to relevant quotation.

**Extension:**

A student, having read this section of the text, said: “The writer describes the narrator and her grief very vividly. It makes you sympathise with the narrator.”

**To what extent do you agree?**

**In your response, you could:**

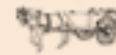
- write about your own impressions of the narrator
- evaluate how the writer creates these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text

Then...

| Effect of using past and present in the extract. | Effect of using the narrators own memories. Why is it significant? |
|--|--|
|  |  |



## Tess of the d'Urbervilles



This extract is from the opening of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, a novel by Thomas Hardy. It was published in 1891. In the extract, Tess and her younger brother are taking a wagon full of beehives to the market, because their father was too drunk to make the journey himself. The journey is long, and at the start of this extract, Tess and her brother have both fallen asleep.

A sudden jerk shook her in her seat, and Tess awoke from the sleep into which she, too, had fallen.

They were a long way further on than when she had lost consciousness, and the wagon had stopped. A hollow groan, unlike anything she had ever heard in her life, came from the front, followed by a shout of "Hoi there!" 5

The lantern hanging at her wagon had gone out, but another was shining in her face—much brighter than her own had been. Something terrible had happened. The harness was entangled with an object which blocked the way.

In consternation Tess jumped down, and discovered the dreadful truth. 10  
The groan had proceeded from her father's poor horse Prince. The morning mail-cart, with its two noiseless wheels, speeding along these lanes like an arrow, as it always did, had driven into her slow and unlighted equipage. The pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a sword, and from the wound his life's blood was spouting in a stream, and falling with a hiss into the road. 15

In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops. Then she stood helplessly looking on. Prince also stood firm and motionless as long as he could; till he suddenly sank down in a heap. 20

By this time the mail-cart man had joined her, and began dragging and unharnessing the hot form of Prince. But he was already dead, and, seeing that nothing more could be done immediately, the mail-cart man returned to his own animal, which was uninjured. 25

"You was on the wrong side," he said. "I am bound to go on with the

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy

mail-bags, so that the best thing for you to do is bide here with your load. I'll send somebody to help you as soon as I can. It is getting daylight, and you have nothing to fear."

He mounted and sped on his way; while Tess stood and waited. The atmosphere turned pale, the birds shook themselves in the hedges, arose, and twittered; the lane showed all its white features, and Tess showed hers, still whiter. The huge pool of blood in front of her was already assuming the iridescence of coagulation; and when the sun rose a hundred prismatic hues were reflected from it. Prince lay alongside still and stark; his eyes half open, the hole in his chest looking scarcely large enough to have let out all that had animated him. 30 35

"'Tis all my doing—all mine!" the girl cried, gazing at the spectacle. "No excuse for me—none. What will mother and father live on now? Aby, Aby!" She shook the child, who had slept soundly through the whole disaster. "We can't go on with our load—Prince is killed!" 40

| Example   | Technique<br>(Metaphor / simile / onomatopoeia) | Effect |
|---|---|--------|
| 'The pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a sword ...' | Simile  |        |
| '... from the wound his life's blood was spouting in a stream ...'                            |   |        |
| 'and falling with a hiss into the road.'  |   |        |