

Week 19: Skimming and Scanning

Task 1

Skim-read the following news report from January 2016 and write down the main points of the article.

A rare handwritten letter from Robert Burns to a married woman goes on show in Edinburgh on Monday.

Visitors to the National Library of Scotland will be able to see the document containing his famous love song Ae Fond Kiss.

Burns wrote the letter in 1791, in farewell to Nancy McLehose, as she was departing for Jamaica to attempt a reconciliation with her husband.

The song expresses Burns's despair at the end of their relationship.

Burns met Nancy four years earlier in Edinburgh, when he was unmarried.

The couple exchanged a series of love letters using the pen-names Sylvander and Clarinda. It was a delicate situation because Nancy was a married woman and the relationship remained platonic.

Written by Burns in Dumfries, the letter told Nancy that he was sending her some recently composed songs.

He then presented a song that has become famous around the world with its familiar opening lines: Ae fond kiss, and then we sever; Ae fareweel, and then forever!

"Burns is widely celebrated on 25 January and we are pleased to be able to offer the opportunity to show this letter and song," said Kenneth Dunn from the National Library of Scotland.

The letter will be on display in the library's boardroom at George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, from 12:30 until 14:00 on Monday. Entry is free.

Task 2

Scan the above article to find the following information:

- The year the letter was written
- Where the letter can be seen
- Nancy's surname
- Burns and Nancy's pen-names
- The name of the song that Burns sent Nancy

Poem of the Week

On January 14, 1892, Pastor Martin Niemoller was born. Niemoller is now most famous about the following poem about the importance of speaking out against injustice.

First they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out –
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the Communists
and I did not speak out –
because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out –
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me –

and there was no one left
to speak out for me.

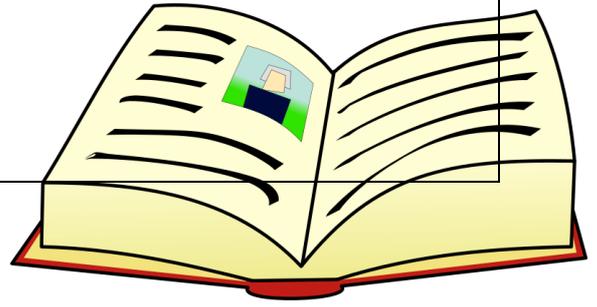
Week 20: Personal Reading

Book 6

Title:
Author:

Short summary of plot:

Discuss one setting in the novel and explain how the writer describes that setting (i.e. what sort of place is it?).



Poem of the Week

One of America's most famous poets died on January 29th 1963. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is one of his best-known poems.

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Week 21: Scots Language

Task 1

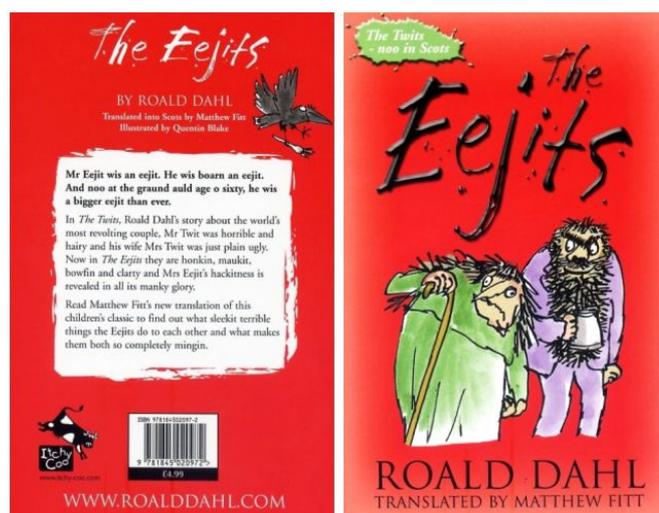
Read the following extract from the Scots translation of Roald Dahl's novel *The Twits*.

Write down all the Scots words you don't know and find out what they mean.

These on-line dictionaries can be used to help you:

<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>

<http://www.scots-online.org/dictionary/index.asp>



Mr Eejit

Mr Eejit wis yin o thae hairy-bairdie men. The haill o his face (forby his forehead, his een and his neb) wis smooried wi thick hair. The stuff even sprouted in mingin tummocks oot o his neb-holes and his lug-holes, tae.

Mr Eejit thocht aw this hairy-bairdiness made him look awfie wise and graund. But tae tell ye the truth he wis nane o thae things. Mr Eejit wis an eejit. He wis born an eejit. And noo at the age o sixty he wis a bigger eejit than ever.

The hair on Mr Eejit's face didna grow sleekit and fankled the wey it does on maist hairy-bairdie faces. It grew in jags that stucht strecht oot like the broostles o a nailbrush.

And hoo aften did Mr Eejit wash this broostlie nailbrushie coupon o his?

The answer is NEVER, no even on Sundays.

He hadnae washed it in years.

Task 2

Read the following poem by Hugh MacDiarmid and the poet's own translation that follows.

1. Write down any unfamiliar Scots words you come across.
2. Explain which of the two versions you prefer. Give a reason for your answer.
3. Practice saying the Scots version of the poem aloud.

The Watergaw

Ae weet forenicht i' the yow-trummle
I saw yon antrin thing,
A watergaw wi' its chitterin' licht
Ayont the on-ding;

An' I thocht o' the last wild look ye gied
Afore ye deed!

There was nae reek i' the laverock's hoose
That nicht - an' nane i' mine;
But I hae thocht o' that foolish licht
Ever sin' syne;
An' I think that mebbe at last I ken
What your look meant then.

The Watergaw (broken rainbow)

One wet, early evening in the sheep-shearing season
I saw that occasional, rare thing -
A broken shaft of a rainbow with its trembling light
Beyond the downpour of the rain
And I thought of the last, wild look you gave
Before you died.

The skylark's nest was dark and desolate,
My heart was too
But I have thought of that foolish light
Ever since then
And I think that perhaps at last I know
What your look meant then.

Poem of the Week

In this week in 1759 on January 25th Robert Burns was born. The following poem by Matthew Fitt ('Rose') is a response to Burns's poem 'A Red, Red Rose'.

Ye hink ah'm like a reid, reid whit?

You dinna hae a scoob!

And whit dae you ken aboot melodie?
Dae ye hink ah'm a tube?

And whit's aw this aboot seas gaun dry
When we're hauf droont in your slavers?
It's your brain must be meltit, pal,
Comin oot wi aw this havers.

And sauns o life? It's ower the tap.
Ye'll dae yirsel a mischief.
Ten thousand mile? Aye, on ye go.
Fare thee weel... rich tower the first cliff.

Ye're aff? Hing on, ah'll chum ye doon
This road a bit, see jist whaur it goes.
Naw, wait the noo, ma glaikit doo –
Did ye no ken ye had me at 'rose'?

Week 22: Robert Burns

Task 1

Read the following extract from “The Wind that Shakes the Barley”, a fictionalised account of Robert Burns written by James Barke. Answer the questions that follow.

Agnes began to labour with her first child on the 24th of the second January of her marriage and the twenty-seventh year of her age. William was anxious: maybe for the first time in his life he experienced a tremor of fear; but the only outward manifestation he showed was in his quickened speech and movement. He called for his neighbours, Mrs. Tennant and Mrs Young. But Jean Young, who had known many sore and difficult labours herself, had no stomach left for midwifery. She would come if Mr Burns couldn't get anyone else; but, well, let him try Aggie MacLure – Mrs. Tennant – who had a steady nerve and a deft hand.

By morning the worst was over and a male child was born to Agnes and William. William was relieved and happy beyond the reach of prayer. Having seen that Agnes was comfortable, he remembered his duty to God and his newly-born son and heir. He saddled the pony and splashing through dub and mire battered his way into Ayr

town to the manse of his parish minister, William Dalrymple, and brought the good-natured man cantering through the dubs, with a good wind in his broad back, to christen the child Robert after his own father at Clochnahill.

Task 2

Read the extract from “The Wind that Shakes the Barley” again. Choose one of the following situations and write the dialogue for it.

- the conversation between William Burns and Jean Young
- the conversation between William Burns and the minister

You can either set your ideas out like a play or like a story.

Poem of the Week

On February 10th 1616, William Shakespeare’s younger daughter was married. The following poem (Sonnet

116) is one of Shakespeare's most celebrated poems and is about marriage.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Week 23: Robert Burns

Task 1

Read the first two verses of Robert Burns's poem "Address to the Toothache" and complete the tasks that follow.

My curse upon your venom'd stang.
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang,
An thro my lug gies monie a twang
Wi gnawing vengeance,
Tearing my nerves wi bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

A' down my beard the slavers trickle,
I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle.
While round the fire the giglets keckle,
To see me loup.
An raving mad, I wish a heckle
Were i' their doup!

1. Write a sentence or two describing the most pain you've ever experienced.
2. Burns liked to write poems that spoke directly to animal, objects, conditions and things. He sometimes did this to praise them and sometimes to criticise. What animal or thing would you like to address and what would you say to it? Write at least three sentences.

Task 2

Write the first 100 – 200 words of a story about someone suffering from toothache. The following are suggestions only:

- Someone with toothache on the day of an important exam
- Someone with toothache who is scared of going to the dentist

- Someone with toothache on their wedding day

Poem of the Week

February 14th is Valentine's Day. The following is a poem called "Limited" written by Sophie Hannah after being commissioned by O2 to write a Valentine text-message poem of no more than 160 characters

Blank spaces count as characters. It's true.

I wasn't sure. And then I thought of you.

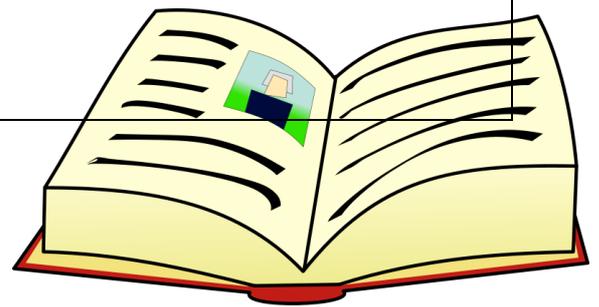
Week 24: Personal Reading

Book 7

Title:
Author:

Short summary of plot:

Identify one main theme that the writer explores and explain how this theme is explored in at least two scenes or chapters.



Poem of the Week

On the 25th February 1982, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that beating schoolchildren against their parents' wishes is a violation of the Human Rights Convention. The poem “The Lesson” by Roger McGough makes fun of those who believe that hitting children teaches them to be good.

Chaos ruled OK in the classroom
as bravely the teacher walked in
the nooligans ignored him
his voice was lost in the din

'The theme for today is violence
and homework will be set
I'm going to teach you a lesson
one that you'll never forget'

He picked on a boy who was shouting
and throttled him then and there
then garrotted the girl behind him
(the one with grotty hair)

Then sword in hand he hacked his way
between the chattering rows
'First come, first severed' he declared
'fingers, feet or toes'

He threw the sword at a latecomer
it struck with deadly aim
then pulling out a shotgun
he continued with his game

The first blast cleared the backrow
(where those who skive hang out)
they collapsed like rubber dinghies
when the plug's pulled out

'Please may I leave the room sir? '
a trembling vandal enquired
'Of course you may' said teacher
put the gun to his temple and fired

The Head popped a head round the doorway
to see why a din was being made
noded understandingly
then tossed in a grenade

And when the ammo was well spent
with blood on every chair
Silence shuffled forward

with its hands up in the air

The teacher surveyed the carnage
the dying and the dead
He wagged a finger severely
'Now let that be a lesson' he said

Week 25: Novel Study

Task 1

Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow.

The council said we'd have to leave the house. People had been complaining about the noises and the buggies in the garden and Steve's van and the greyhounds. Steve says he'll win a fortune one of these days betting on the dogs, but it hasn't happened yet.

The men who own the greyhounds only want the ones who win the races. The rest get put down or given away. Steve can never say no to a nice dog – that's why we've ended up with seven.

Steve isn't my dad. He moved in after my Dad moved out ten years ago, but he and Mum get on fine. She doesn't mind the dogs. When you've got eight kids, I suppose you don't notice a few greyhounds.

I'm Ross, I'm the eldest. Then there's Kate, who's 13. After that, there's Tim and the twins, Jinty and Callum, and the little ones, Patsy, Paul and wee Eric. And at the time when the council threw us out, Mum was going to have another one.

They offered us this flat in a tower block. We left the dogs at home and went to look at it, but we all hated it. Steve said his van would get nicked down there where he couldn't watch it, but that was just an excuse. You'd have to be mad to nick Steve's van.

From *Second Chance* by Alison Prince

1. Beside the following statements write either true or false.
 - a. Ross's family have one greyhound
 - b. Ross has seven brothers and sisters
 - c. Ross's mum was pregnant when the council threw them out their house
 - d. Ross's dad is called Steve
 - e. The Council offer Ross's family a flat in a tower block
2. Write down one thing that shows Ross's family were not good neighbours.
3. Circle the sentence that shows that Steve's van is not worth stealing.
 - a. People had been complaining about the noises and the buggies in the garden and Steve's van and the greyhounds.
 - b. You'd have to be mad to nick Steve's van.
 - c. Steve said his van would get nicked down there where he couldn't watch it, but that was just an excuse.
4. Explain what you personally liked or didn't like about the extract. You can think about the language, the characters, the storyline, the themes, the setting or any other feature you feel is important.

Task 2

Read the following extract from *Humbug* by Nina Bawden and answer the questions on character that follow.

“I won't,” said Cora. “I won't. I WON'T, I WON'T.”

But even Cora knew there was no point in shouting. Grandpa had gone to the hospital and only William and Alice could hear her. So she said in a lower voice, grumpily, “Grandpa

doesn't have to look after me. I can take care of myself just like you."

"We know that," William said. "They don't, that's the trouble. Grown-ups don't. They think you're too young for an old man to look after."

William and Alice were washing up the breakfast dishes that Grandpa had left in the sink. They had had to throw away a carton of sour milk and a cabbage that had gone slimy inside. The whole kitchen smelled musty.

"I'll tell Mum and Dad when they ring," Cora said. "They're sure to ring from the airport to see if we got here all right. So I'll tell them what happened, and they can tell Grandpa that it's all right for me to stay here with you."

"They've already rung." Alice looked very carefully at the dish she was drying instead of looking at Cora. She said, "You were upstairs in the lavatory. There was no time to call you because their flight was just boarding. William said you were fine. He said we all were."

Turning from the sink, looking over his shoulder, William saw Cora's eyes, black with anger. He said, "It's what Granny and Grandpa wanted. And even if I'd told Mum and Dad what had happened, they'd still have gone, wouldn't they? Only difference is, they'd have gone feeling miserable."

"I'm miserable now," Cora said crossly. "I suppose that doesn't matter."

"Mum and Dad are going to Japan," Alice said. "You're only going next door. You can see William and me whenever you want."

1. What sort of mood is Cora in at the start of the story? Explain how you know this.
2. Write down three facts we learn about Cora's grandfather.
3. Why do you think Alice looks at the dish instead of Cora when speaking to her?

Poem of the Week

On 4th March 1756, Henry Raeburn the Scottish painter was born. Raeburn's most famous painting is described in the following poem by Edwin Morgan

Sir Henry Raeburn: Portrait of Rev. Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch

The skating minister is well balanced
And knows it. Something distinctly smug
Keeps those arms in place. Wouldn't it be good
If the god of thaws pulled that icy rug
From under him, to remind his next sermon
What it is that goeth before a fall.
He shivers before the fire
Hunched in his wife's mocking shawl –
Not the thing at all!



Week 26: Novel Study

Task 1

Read the following extract from *The Breath of Demons* by Stephanie Baudet and answer the questions that follow.

“Your dad’ll never let you have thirty pounds.”

Mike slung his school bag over his shoulder. “How do you know?”

“I know,” said Richard. “He’ll more likely thump you.”

Mike didn’t answer. Richard was probably right. He scowled and walked towards the door. He’d won a place on the sponsored walk from school and he was going!

“Mike!”

He let the door swing shut again with a sigh and turned. Their form teacher, Mr Grant, was springing towards him. Springing was the only way to describe his walk and Mike wondered if he’d still be walking like that after thirty miles, when they got to London.

“Money in by next Friday, remember,” he said, then paused. “Look, why don’t you do the car wash or one of the other activities?”

Mike returned Mr Grant’s direct look. “I got a place on the London walk and I’ll get the money,” he said. “I’m going.”

Mr Grant shrugged. “I don’t want any trouble from you, boy, is that clear?”

Mike sighed, pushed open the door and went out, letting it swing shut behind him. Trouble. They didn’t know what trouble was.

Richard caught him up. “What was Grantie on about?”

“Nothing.”

There was silence for a moment or two, then Richard said, “It’ll be great walking to London, won’t it? Thirty miles! We ought to get into training.”

“I don’t need training. I walk everywhere now. Why don’t you forget the bus and walk home?”

Richard gave him a look as if he were mad and veered off towards the waiting bus.

“See ya!”

- 1. Which character do you find most interesting and why?**
- 2. What has the writer included to try to hook the reader?**
- 3. What conflict is present in the story?**

4. Does the extract remind you of any other stories you've read or films you've seen?

Task 2

Read the following extract from *Friend or Foe* by Michael Morpurgo and answer the questions that follow.

His mother woke him as usual that morning, shaking his shoulder and then kissing him gently as he rolled over. It was pitch black around him, but then he was used to that by now. For months they had slept down in the cellar on the bunks his father had made the last time he was home on leave.

“Here’s your apple, dear,” his mother said. “Sit up and have your apple now.” And she patted the pillow behind him as he pushed himself up on his elbows. He felt the saucer come into his hand. His early morning apple was the only thing that had not changed since the war started. Every morning as far back as he could remember his mother had woken him this way – with an apple peeled, cored and quartered lying opened up on a white saucer.

He felt his mother shifting off the bed and watched for the flare of yellow light as she struck the match for the oil lamp. The cellar walls flickered and then settled in the new light, and the boy saw his mother was dressed to go out. She had her coat on and her hat with the brown feather at the back. It was only then that he remembered. His stomach turned over inside him and tears choked at his throat. The morning he had thought would never come, had come. Every night since he’d first heard about it, he prayed it might not happen to him; and the night before, he had prayed he would die in his sleep rather than wake up and have to go.

“You were restless again last night, dear. Did you sleep?” He nodded, not trusting himself to speak. “Come on now. Eat

your apple and get dressed. Quick as you can, dear. It's six o'clock by the station, they said. It's a quarter-to, now. I left you as long as I could."

Fifteen minutes left. Fifteen minutes and he'd be gone. Thirty minutes and she'd be back in this house without him.

1. **What is the relationship between the boy and his mum like?**
2. **Why do you think the father is not at home?**
3. **How is the boy feeling when his mum comes to wake him up? Write down an expression that shows this.**
4. **Where do you think the boy is being sent? Write down a phrase that shows the boy is dreading going?**

Poem of the Week

On 16th March 1912 Captain Lawrence Oates, died on the eve of his 32nd birthday. Oates was part of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's expedition to the South Pole. The trip had not gone according to plan, and Oates was suffering badly. Scott wrote in his diary that Oates had left the tent never to return saying, 'I am just going outside and may be some time.'

Derek Mahon's villanelle* Antarctica describes the incident.

"I am just going outside and may be some time."
The others nod, pretending not to know.
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.

He leaves them reading and begins to climb,
Goading his ghost into the howling snow;
He is just going outside and may be some time.

The tent recedes beneath its crust of rime
And frostbite is replaced by vertigo:
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.

Need we consider it some sort of crime,
This numb self-sacrifice of the weakest? No,
He is just going outside and may be some time

In fact, for ever. Solitary enzyme,
Though the night yield no glimmer there will glow,
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.

He takes leave of the earthly pantomime
Quietly, knowing it is time to go.
"I am just going outside and may be some time."
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.

*(A villanelle is a 17-line poem that repeats the first and third lines at the end of subsequent verses and then together at the end.)

Week 27: Personal Reading

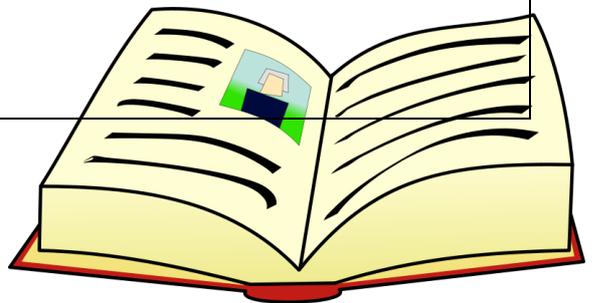
Book 8

Title:

Author:

Short summary of plot:

What did you think of the book's ending?



Poem of the Week

On March 30 1956 Edmund Clerihew Bentley died at the age of 80. Bentley was the inventor of a poetic form called a clerihew. You can read a few examples below.

Sir Henry Rider Haggard
Was completely staggered
When his bride-to-be
Announced, "I am She!

W.H. Auden

George the Third
Ought never to have occurred.
One can only wonder
At so grotesque a blunder.

Edmund Clerihew Bentley

Sir James Dewar
Is smarter than you are
None of you asses
Can liquify gases.

Anonymous

