

The White Lamb

By the end of the unit, the students will be able to:

- read a text to make connections between characters, events, motives and causes of conflicts in texts across cultures.
- analyze story elements: characters, events, setting, plot, theme, tone, point of view.
- recognize the author's purpose and point of view and their effects on the texts.
- analyze the conflict in a story or literary selection. Explore options to resolve the conflict. Propose another resolution.
- identify universal themes present in literature across all cultures.
- use special devices to support arguments e.g. appeal to logic through reasoning, appeal to emotion or ethical belief, relating a personal anecdote or analogy.
- demonstrate heightened awareness of conventions and dynamics of group discussion and interaction to:
 - present and explain ones point of view clearly
 - support or modify one's opinion with reasons
 - acknowledge other's contribution
 - share information and ideas
 - clarify, rephrase, explain, expand and restate information and ideas.
- illustrate use of transitive and intransitive verbs.
- illustrate appropriate vocabulary and spelling in their own writing.

The White Lamb

The old gardener, Navasard, went down to the spring that welled up under the nut tree to wash and to rest. No sooner had he bent down to let the cool water splash on his sunburned face than he heard the team leader calling him. "Hey, Navasard! Hurry! Your son Arshak is back!"

"What?" the old man said excitedly and then straightened up with difficulty, he rushed back up to where the man was standing with an agility surprising for his years. "What did you say? When did he come? Where is he?"

"He's in the village. I saw him myself. He's driving a blue sedan, riding through the village. Lucky you. Navasard! God has blessed you with a fine son!"

The sun began to shine ten times as brightly as before. Navasard felt he was walking on air. His heart pounded with excitement.

Navasard seemed to be pondering over something as he looked in the direction of the village. But then turned sharply and ran towards a spot in the orchard instead. He had not seen Arshak for ten years. Each year he would look at the road hopefully and wait. He had waited patiently. And now, at long last, he would see him. Arshak had come at a good time: fruit in orchards had ripened, and he was still hale and hearty.

Navasard had no living relatives left in the village. His had not been a happy life. He had never had any children of his own, and his wife had died many years before. His brother and sister-in-law had died of hunger during the war, leaving an only son, Arshak.

Then he recalled that the largest of the watermelons had ripened under the huge mulberry tree by the river bank. He cut its stem, wiped the silvery dust from



the melon with the hem of his long jacket and admired its shiny stripes.

"My Arshak loves watermelons," he mumbled. He got down on his knees, put his arms around the melon and squeezed hard, with his ear to the rind. He nodded approvingly at the sound. He then went over to the fig tree, climbed it with difficulty and began picking the honey-sweet fruit that had been pecked at here and there by the birds. He chose the figs and packed them gently into a bright woven basket.

Then Navasard set out along the bank to where a six-month-old white lamb was grazing. He was saving the lamb for a special occasion.

"Arshak has come home. I've finally lived to see the day." Navasard said to himself and untethered the lamb. It bleated loudly.

"Let's go, fellow." Navasard said. "Come on, Arshak's home."

He climbed the steep path to the village. The heavy basket pressed on his shoulders, while the meek and gentle lamb either ran on ahead or fell behind him.

"Where are you going so early in the day?" The people he met on the way asked.

"Arshak has come home for a visit," the old man would reply proudly.

On the way each tree and bush, each stone and spring reminded him of Arshak's childhood. Many were the times that he carried the child up the steep path on his back. He would sit down to rest on this stone. Navasard would give Arshak a pear and would wipe his nose with the hem of his long jacket. There was the spring which Arshak liked to drink from. Navasard would cup his hands and Arshak would drink from them. Here was the small orchard. The trees still bore fruit abundantly and stayed green far into the autumn. When Arshak was eleven, he fell from that cherry tree and broke his leg. Navasard carried him the many miles to the doctor in the distant settlement.

Then Navasard thought of all the things he had sold to outfit Arshak for the city life when he had sent the boy off to study. It had been a long stretch, but Arshak graduated from the university and had then gone on to study in Moscow. He had risen high in the world.

Navasard would often tell his fellow-villagers about the very

important work Arshak was doing in the capital, about his grand car and that he lived in the biggest house in Moscow.

The old man was in a hurry to reach the village, the meek and timid lamb followed on his heels.

He finally reached his house but did not see Arshak's car outside. "Why didn't he drive right up?" Navasard wondered.

"Ah, what am talking about. The gravel's too sharp here. He was probably afraid he'd ruin his tires. It's good he didn't drive up to the house."

His one-storey flat-roofed house with a terrace and an earthen floor was like an eagle's nest stuck onto the mountain slope, one among many others.

Navasard entered the yard, set the basket on the ground, tossed an armful of grass to the lamb, and looked about. For the first time in his life the house looked pitiful and decrepit to him.

"Well, it's Arshak's house, too. This is where he grew up. He won't be ashamed of his own house." He said to console himself and began clearing the yard.

"Congratulations, Navasard. Arshak's come back." It was the old neighbour woman, looking over the fence.

Navasard flushed with joy. "Thank you. And may your wanderer return as well."

"I saw Arshak."

"Was he here?"

"No, I went to the shop for a package of needles and saw him standing out in front of the farm office. What a fine boy he is. You'd never say he wasn't a shah's son. Just couldn't take my eyes off him. May the Lord bless you."

"Thank you," the old man said in a voice that was thick with emotions. He went about tidying up the yard with zeal.

First, he swept up the dirt: "I don't want my boy to dirty his shoes."

Then he hammered in a protruding nail with a rock: "Arshak might catch his sleeve on it and tear his jacket."

Navasard opened the door. A cot stood forlornly against the bare

wall. "I'll say, 'Remember how you slept on this bed, Arshak, and I slept here, on the floor?'" He was thinking as he smoothed the cover. "I'll say: 'This is your old bowl, the one you ate from. Look, Arshak, this is your wooden spoon. Remember the day I bought it from the wood-carver Manas, and you were angry, because there was no design on it? And then I took it to the artist and had it painted for you?' "

Conversing thus in thought with Arshak, he set out for the spring, brought some water and sprinkled the yard, the terrace and the floor inside. Then he began to sweep.

Once again, the old neighbour woman's head appeared over the fence.

"Navasard, do you know that Arshak has gone over to the chairman's"

"No. When did he go there?"

"Just before you got back."

"He must have seen there was no one at home and gone over there to rest up. He'll be along, he won't get lost."

"Of course."

Navasard brought some kindling wood and stacked it by the outdoor fireplace. Then he took his knife from his belt and went over to the lamb. At the last moment he changed his mind. "I'll wait till Arshak comes." He decided and looked in the direction of the chairman's two-storey house. "What's keeping him? It'll be dark soon. The figs will spoil, the cornel will lose its taste."

He took the fruit from the basket and laid it on the windowsill. Then he borrowed a new tablecloth from the neighbours, covered the table, shook out the rug, covered the couch and put a pillow on it.

Everything was now ready. Still Arshak had not come. "What's the matter? Why did he go to the chairman's house?" Navasard wondered irritably and a tremor passed through his hands. He hurried to console himself, however, saying, "Arshak is an important man. He had to drop by and ask the chairman about how things are in the village. And what's the rush, anyway? I'll have him all to myself for a couple of days. I won't let him out of my sight. We'll make up for the lost time."

The sun was setting. But still Arshak had not come home. The old man's anxiety mounted. There was a moment when he was about to set out for the chairman's house but then he changed his mind.

He went into the yard and called to his neighbour's grandson.

"Run over and see what Arshak is doing. Tell him I'm at home and waiting for him," he said.

The boy was back in no time.

"Well? Did you see Arshak?"

"What's he doing?"

"drinking tea."

"Did you tell him that I'm home."

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"He said, all right."

Navasard repeated the words to himself. "Well, then, that means he'll soon be home. I'll start the fire for the *shashlyk* meanwhile."

He had a good fire going in the fireplace. Then he set to cleaning the skewers. He went back into the house, wiped the dust off the lamp and sat down at the table to wait.

Time dragged on endlessly. The lights went on in the village, and the houses took on a cosy look. The street noises were dying down soon. The only sound was that of dogs barking mournfully in the distance.

Arshak had still not returned. The fire died down, leaving a mound of ashes in the fireplace, while the lamb lay on the grass, chewing its cud. Navasard was all ears as he peered into the darkness. His eyes became strained and started to tear, his head felt heavy. He rose, but his feet refused to budge. "Why should I go begging to him? I'm older than he is. He should come to me." He began to grumble, but then consoled himself once again by saying: "Well, he's an important man. Maybe he has some important business to discuss with the chairman. He'll come home in the morning."

But still, he waited. He waited far into the small hours. The autumn night was drawing to a close. The old man's eyes grew dim from peering

intently into the darkness. Slumber gradually lulled him to sleep at the table.

He did not know how long he had slept. He was awakened by the neighbour woman's voice calling from the yard. He opened his eyes and was surprised to see the first rays of the sun peeping into the window.

"Navasard! Hey, Navasard!" the neighbour called.

He rushed out of the house. His neighbour was looking over the fence. "How come you've slept so late today?"

"What is it? Is Arshak on his way here?"

"No," she said and shook her head. "Your Arshak is leaving. Look at the road."

Navasard felt as if the roof had come down on his head. He ran over to the low shed and climbed to the roof. Arshak's car was speeding along the road, glittering in the sun, quickly becoming smaller and smaller.

His unsteady gait was that of an old man. Navasard was making his way down the path to the orchards. His eyes that stared at the ground seemed to have become sunken, his back seemed more stooped than ever. The white Iamb gambolled after him.

(Translated by Fainna Glagollva)

About the Author:

The son of a peasant, Khanzadian was trained as an elementary school teacher and taught in mountain villages of Armenia until he was called to the service in 1941 (WWII). He was wounded in action several times and was decorated for valour. His first book, *The People of our Regiment* (1949), is about the courageous defenders of Leningrad. It won immediate acclaim. Since then, he has published several novels and short story collections.

Glossary

Words	Meaning
agility	ability to move quickly and easily.
anxiety(n)	a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.
bleated (v)	(of a sheep, goat, or calf) make a characteristic weak, wavering cry.
budged (v)	make or cause to make the slightest movement.
cornel	Inner portion of a fruit
cud (n)	partly digested food returned from the first stomach of ruminants to the mouth for further chewing.
decrepit (adj)	worn out or ruined because of age or neglect.
fence (n)	a barrier, railing, or other upright structure, typically of wood or wire, enclosing an area of ground to prevent or control access or escape.
forlornly (adj)	pitifully sad and abandoned or lonely.
gambol (v)	run or jump about playfully.
gravel	Shingle
hem (n)	the edge of a piece of cloth or clothing which has been turned under and sewn.
kindling	small sticks or twigs used for lighting fires.
meek (adj)	quiet, gentle, and easily imposed on; submissive.
mumbled (v)	say something indistinctly and quietly, making it difficult for others to hear.
outfit (n)	a set of clothes worn together, especially for a particular occasion or purpose.
pecked	(of a bird) strike or bite something with its beak.
pondering	think about (something) carefully, especially before making a decision or reaching a conclusion.
rind (n)	the tough outer skin of certain fruit, especially citrus fruit.
sedan	a car having a closed body and a closed boot separated from the part in which the driver and passengers sit; a saloon.
<i>shashlyk</i>	(in Asia and eastern Europe) a mutton kebab.
shed (n)	a simple roofed structure used for garden storage, to shelter

	animals, or as a workshop. "a bicycle shed"
skewers (n)	a long piece of wood or metal used for holding pieces of food, typically meat, together during cooking.
stooped (adj)	(of a person) having the head and shoulders habitually bent forwards.
timid (adj)	showing a lack of courage or confidence; easily frightened.
untethered (v)	release or free from a tether.

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. What arrangements were made by Navasard for the coming home of Arshak?
2. Why was Navasard so excited at the arrival of Arshak?
3. Describe the plight of Navasard after the departure of Arshak without meeting him.
4. What is the central idea of the story 'The White Lamb'. Is this theme relevant to our culture as well?
5. Write down the plot of the story 'The White Lamb'.
6. Is there any conflict in the story 'The White Lamb'? If yes, how is it resolved?
7. How would you resolve the conflict if you were the author of 'The White Lamb'.
8. Compare and contrast the character of Navasard and Arshak.
9. 'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have thankless child!' (Shakespeare). Critically evaluate this statement in the light of the text of lesson 'The White Lamb'.

Writing Suggestions

- (A) Draw the character of Arshak. Was he justified in leaving village without meeting Navasard?
- (B) Imagine Arshak has come along to Navasard's house. Now, taking cues from the text of the story 'the White Lamb', write their most likely conversation as one page dialogue.

Oral Communication

Ask the students to search the following terms on internet:

(a) social mobility (b) social class (c) social hierarchy (d) horizontal social mobility (e) vertical social mobility

Now arrange a group discussion, keeping in view its conventions and dynamics, and share this information with your group members and discuss the character and behaviour of Arshak in the light of these newly learnt terms.

Vocabulary and Grammar

Vocabulary

Use the words in parenthesis to form a new word to fill in the blanks.

According to experts, the way you spend your free time is vital to your general _____ (HAPPY), and _____ (GET) the right balance is very important. It goes without saying that physical _____ (FIT) is the key, so everyone's leisure time should include some form of exercise, _____ (IDEAL) something that you find _____ (ENJOY). Most people also gain _____ (SATISFY) from doing something _____ (CREATE), such as painting, cooking or gardening. However, not all your free time _____ (ACTIVE) should be solitary or you may end up feeling lonely. _____ (COMPANION) is also important to most people's sense of well-being. But you must find the right kind of social _____ (INTERACT). _____ (MEMBER) in some groups, such as _____ (POLITICS) parties can simply lead to stress and _____ (FRUSTRATE). Joining a _____ (SOCIETY) group like a blood donation society or yoga classes are likely to be much more _____ (BENEFIT).

Grammar

Transitive or Intransitive

A. Tell whether the verbs in colour are transitive or intransitive. Put a tick on the correct option.

She was **crying** all day long.

(Transitive/ Intransitive)

We **showed** her the photo album.

(Transitive/ Intransitive)

The doctor advised me to exercise regularly.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)
It was raining at that time.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)
She laughed at the joke.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)
She gave a cookie to the child.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)
They slept in the street.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)
I ate the cherries.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)
My father doesn't drink coffee.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)
He always keeps his money in a wallet.	(Transitive/ Intransitive)

B. Tell whether the verbs in the following sentences are transitive or intransitive then use these verbs in your own sentences.

1. Some ants fight fiercely.
2. The explosion sank the ship.
3. He spoke loudly.
4. Boil the water.
5. The horse kicked the boy.
6. The watchman blew his whistle.
7. He took shelter under a tree.
8. The birds sang sweetly.
9. The fire burns brightly.
10. Birds fly in the sky.
11. Time heals all wounds
12. You surprised me.
13. Do sit down.
14. I usually sleep well.
15. Let's eat something.

Teacher's Guideline:

Explain and revise with the students the use of transitive and intransitive verbs.