

His First Flight

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

- skim text to
 - have general idea of the text.
 - infer theme/ main idea.
- apply critical thinking to interact with text and use intensive reading strategies to :
 - scan to answer short questions.
 - make simple inferences using context of the text and prior knowledge.
- analyze paragraphs to identify sentences that support the main idea through cause and effect.
use critical thinking to respond orally and in writing to the text (post-reading) to
 - give a personal opinion and justify stance related to viewpoints/ ideas and issues in the text read
- relate what is read to his or her own feelings and experiences.
- recognize author purpose and point of view and their effect on the text.
- use summary skills to extract salient points and develop a mind map to summarize a text.
- write an extended narrative incident including action, spoken words, observation, thoughts and feelings.
- demonstrate use of collective, countable and uncountable material and abstract nouns.
- apply rules of change of numbers of noun.
- use various reference sources to refine vocabulary for interpersonal academic workplace situation including figurative, idiomatic and technical vocabulary.
- use in speech and writing all the appropriate transitional devices.
- recognize that transitional devices are used for cohesion and coherence at oral and written discourse.

His First Flight

The young seagull was alone on his ledge. His two brothers and his sister had already flown away the day before. He had been afraid to fly with them. Somehow when he had taken a little run forward to the brink of the ledge and attempted to flap his wings he became afraid. The great expanse of sea stretched down beneath, and it was such a long way down, miles down. He felt certain that his wings would never support him, so he bent his head and ran away back to the little hole under the ledge where he slept at night. Even when each of his brothers and his little sister, whose wings were far shorter than his own, ran to the brink, flapped their wings, and flew away, he failed to muster up courage to take that plunge which appeared to him so desperate. His father and mother had come around calling to him shrilly, upbraiding him, threatening to let him starve on his ledge unless he flew away. But for the life of him he could not move.

That was twenty-four hours ago. Since then nobody had come near him. The day before, all day long, he had watched his parents flying about with his brothers and sister, perfecting them in the art of flight, teaching them how to skim the waves and how to dive for fish. He had, in fact, seen his older brother catch his first herring and devour it, standing on a rock, while his parents circled around raising a proud cackle. And all morning, the whole family had walked about on the big plateau midway down the opposite cliff, taunting him for his cowardice.

The sun was now ascending the sky, blazing warmly on his ledge that faced the south. He felt the heat because he had not eaten since the previous nightfall. Then he had found a dried piece of mackerel's tail at the far end of his ledge. Now there was not a single scrap of food left. He had searched every inch, rooting among the rough, dirt-caked straw nest where he and his brothers and sister had been hatched. He even gnawed at the dried pieces of spotted



eggshell. It was like eating part of himself. He had then trotted back and forth from one end of the ledge to the other, his grey body the colour of the cliff, his long grey legs stepping daintily, trying to find some means of reaching his parents without having to fly. But on each side of him the ledge ended in a sheer fall of precipice, with the sea beneath. And between him and his parents there was a deep, wide chasm ... And above him he could see nothing. The precipice was sheer, and the top of it was perhaps farther away than the sea beneath him.

He stepped slowly out to the brink of the ledge, and, standing on one leg with the other leg hidden under his wing, he closed one eye, then the other, and pretended to be falling asleep. Still they took no notice of him. He saw his two brothers and his sister lying on the plateau dozing, with their heads sunk into their necks. His father was preening the feathers on his white back. Only his mother was looking at him. She was standing on a little high hump on the plateau, her white breast thrust forward. Now and again she tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet, and then scraped each side of her beak on the rock. The sight of the food maddened him. How he loved to tear food that way, scraping his beak now and again to whet it! He uttered a low cackle. His mother cackled too, and looked over at him.

"Ga, ga, ga," he cried, begging her to bring him over some food. "Gaw-ool-ah," she screamed back derisively. But he kept calling plaintively, and after a minute or so he uttered a joyful scream. His mother had picked up a piece of the fish, and was flying across to him with it. He leaned out eagerly, tapping the rock with his feet, trying to get nearer to her as she flew across. But when she was just opposite to him, abreast of the ledge, she halted, her legs hanging limp, her wings motionless, the piece of fish in her beak almost within reach of his beak. He waited a moment in surprise, wondering why she did not come nearer, and then, maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish. With a loud scream he fell outwards and downwards into space. His mother had swooped upwards. As he passed beneath her he heard the swish of her wings. Then a monstrous terror seized him and his heart stood still. He could hear nothing. But it only

lasted a moment. The next moment he felt his wings spread outwards. The wind rushed against his breast feathers, then under his stomach and against his wings. He could feel the tips of his wings cutting through the air. He was not falling headlong now. He was soaring gradually downwards and outwards. He was no longer afraid. He just felt a bit dizzy. Then he flapped his wings once and he soared upwards. He uttered a joyous scream and flapped them again. He soared higher. He raised his breast and banked against the wind. "Ga, ga, ga. Ga, ga, ga. Gaw-ool-ah." His mother swooped past him, her wings making a loud noise. He answered her with another scream. Then his father flew over him screaming. Then he saw his two brothers and his sister flying around him, curvetting and banking and soaring and diving.

Then he completely forgot that he had not always been able to fly, and commenced himself to dive and soar and curvet, shrieking shrilly.

He was near the sea now, flying straight over it, facing straight out over the ocean. He saw a vast green sea beneath him, with little ridges moving over it, and he turned his beak sideways and crowed amusedly. And around him his family was screaming, praising him, and their beaks were offering him scraps of dogfish.

He has made his first flight.

About the Author

Liam O'Flaherty (1896-1984), Irish novelist, was born in the Arran Islands, County Galway, and educated at University College, Dublin. He was a leading Irish novelist of the early 20th century. His works are characterized by stark Naturalism, psychological analysis, and powerful drama. Among his books are *Thy Neighbour's Wife* (1924), *The Informer* (1925; film, 1935), *Mr. Gilhooly* (1926), *Short Stories* (1937; revised 1956), *Land* (1946), *Two Lovely Beasts and Other Stories* (1950), *Insurrection* (1951), and *The Pedlar's Revenge and Other Stories* (1976). His autobiography *Shame the Devil* was published in 1934.

Glossary

Words	Meanings
abreast of (adj)	alongside each other; facing in the same direction(also up to date; fully conversant with)
amusedly (adv)	with amusement; entertainingly
beneath (adj.)	below esp. if covered, protected or obscured by; underneath
brink (n)	the edge, border or verge of a steep place, such as a precipice
cackle (n)	to squawk in shrill, broken notes (of a hen after laying an egg)
chasm (n)	a deep cleft in the ground; abyss, gorge, ravine
daintily (adv)	elegantly
derisively (adv)	mockingly, scornfully
desperate (adj.)	careless of danger (such as from despair); reckless
dirt-caked (adj)	covered with a hard layer of dirt; hardened with dirt
dizzy (adj)	affected with a whirling or reeling sensation; giddy
eagerly (adv)	impatiently, anxiously
expanse (n)	an uninterrupted area of something that spreads or extends over a wide area
for the life of him (idiom)	through trying desperately
headlong (adv), (adj)	with the head downward, foremost; headfirst
herring (n)	any marine soft-finned fish with an elongated body covered in silvery scales; an important food fish of the northern sea
hump (n)	a rounded projection of earth or sand; a bulge or mound
ledge (n)	a narrow shelf like rock projection on a cliff or mountain
limp (adj.)	not firm; not stiff; weak; loose; feeble; slack
mackerel (n)	a spiny-finned food fish
monstrous (adj)	enormous, great, immense
plaintively (adv)	expressing sadness, melancholy; mournfully
plateau (n)	a wide mainly levelled area of an elevated land
plunge (n) (v)	to throw or thrust; to leap or dive into
precipice (n)	the cliff or crag

scrap (n)	a small piece of something; fragment
seagull (n)	a sea bird with long pointed wings, short legs and white plumage
sheer (adj)	perpendicular, very steep
shrilly (adv.)	of sounds/voice – in a sharp and high-pitched manner
swish (n)	a hissing or rustling sound of movement in air
to ascend (v)	to go or move up (a ladder, hill, slope); to climb up, to mound
to bank against (v)	to take support of
to blaze (v)	a strong fire or flame; glare
to commence (v)	to begin; to start
to curvet (v)	to leap, move about, in a playful, joyful manner
to devour (v)	to swallow or eat up greedily or voraciously
to doze (v)	to sleep lightly or intermittently
to flap (v)	to move (wings or arms) up and down in or as if in flying
to gnaw (v)	to bite at or chew upon so as to wear away little by little
to hatch (v)	to cause (the young birds) to emerge from the egg
to lean out (v)	to extend forward as if to reach out to something
to muster up (v)	to summon, gather, assemble or call up
to preen (v)	(of birds) to maintain feathers in healthy condition by arranging, cleaning with the bill (beak)
to root (v)	to burrow, to rummage for something such as food
to seize (v)	to take hold of quickly, to grab
to skim (v)	to glide smoothly or lightly over a surface
to soar (v)	to rise or fly upward in the air
to stretch (v)	to draw out or extend, such as a limb of the body
To swoop upwards (v)	swift ascent; swift upward movement
to taunt (v)	to provoke or deride with mockery, contempt or criticism
to trot (v)	to move at a trot
to upbraid (v)	to scold or rebuke angrily; to take to task
whet	to sharpen

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. Why did the young Seagull have to join the company of his family?
2. Why don't his parents, his brothers and sister give him food?
3. What was the attitude of the family towards the young Seagull? Was it agreeable to you or not? Explain
4. Describe in your own words the feelings, actions and thoughts of the young Seagull soon after his fall.
5. What could be the author's purpose behind writing the story 'His First Flight'?
6. Compare and contrast the attitude of the family members before and after the flight of the young sea gull in 'His First Flight'.
7. Identify the sentence in the first paragraph of 'His First Flight' which shows cause and effect.
8. Read any paragraph from the text to identify the main idea and the sentences that support main idea.
9. Read the second paragraph of the text to identify transitional devices and state their functions.

Writing Suggestions

- A. Write down your own narrative using human characters by including their actions, spoken words, observations, thoughts and feelings.
- B. Write the summary of the story 'His First Flight'.

Oral Communication

Work in pairs, present and explain your point of view to your partner about your early challenges (First Flight) in the grade XI.

Vocabulary and Grammar

Vocabulary

- A. Use dictionary to identify the pronunciation of the following words with pronunciation key and then use in sentences.

gnaw, monstrous, derisively, plateau, devour

B. Write the words related to cooking in front of their meanings.

fry	bake	grate	boil	slice
dice	simmer	chop	sieve	mix
score	roast	peel	knead	

1. mark with knife without cutting _____
2. take skin off fruit/vegetable _____
3. cut into cubes _____
4. shake powder through a fine mesh/net _____
5. massage with hands _____
6. cook in hot water _____
7. turn heat down to heat slowly _____
8. use implement to cut food into shreds _____
9. cook using hot oil in a pan _____
10. cut very roughly _____
11. stir ingredients together _____
12. cut into thin slices like paper _____
13. cook in oven without oil _____
14. cook in oven with oil _____

GRAMMAR

A. Write the correct collective noun in front of its meaning and then make sentences.

deck , suite , set , shoal , bundle , congregation , fleet , swarm

1. many insects _____
2. many people _____
3. many fish _____
4. many ships _____
5. many papers _____
6. many rooms _____
7. many cards _____
8. many knives _____

B. Choose the correct verb. Mind the noun (singular or plural).

1. Ladies and gentlemen. Here **is/ are** the news.
2. Where **is/ are** my shoes.
3. Further information **is/ are** available in the office.
4. The stairs **is/ are** over there, Sir.
5. The furniture in our classroom **is/ are** uncomfortable.
6. Pakistan **is/ are** a very nice country.
7. Your sunglasses **is/ are** on the table.
8. Homework **is/ are** boring.
9. The scissors on the table **is/ are** mine.
10. Physics **is/ are** not easy.

C. Use the following words in sentences. Once as a singular nouns and then as a plural nouns.

ox	roof	potato	party	deer
chief	photo	series	wife	brother-in-law
life	family	boy	house	city
man	child	sandwich	nurse	shelf

D. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the given verb in parenthesis. Think about whether the noun is singular or plural.

1. This pair of sunglasses _____ (be) really expensive. I'm not paying that much!
2. These scissors _____ (be) blunt. Get me another pair.
3. That jacket you're wearing is really nice but those green jeans _____ (be) horrible.
4. Physics _____ (be) the study of the natural world.
5. A lot of the news we hear on the TV _____ (be) bad. It's so depressing.
6. The police _____ (investigate) a break-in at the National Bank last night.
7. People _____ (be) always likely to tell lies to protect themselves.
8. Think carefully before you spend that amount of money. A thousand pounds _____ (be) a lot!

9. You should try walking so far just to find an open supermarket! Three miles _____ (tire) you out so quickly, I'm telling you!
10. They have exaggerated a little with that new swimming pool. Did you see the temperature of the water? Forty one degrees _____ (be) too high!

Transitional Devices

Transition words are used to link ideas within sentences, and sentences within paragraphs. Used correctly, transition words make writing easier to understand and more mature. Try to identify transition words when you are reading, and when you have an opportunity, use these words yourself.

A. Read each sentence carefully and choose the most appropriate transition to fill in the blanks in the sentences. Capitalize when necessary.

1. You can use things you already have around the house for doll furniture. _____, a spool of thread can be used as a stool.
2. I love pizza; _____, most days I eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner!
3. The day seemed endless while we were working on our project, but _____ the time came for us to set it aside for the day and go home.
4. Khan is very educated. He matriculated from high school and then earned a bachelor's degree from the local college. A few years later he earned a master's degree. _____, he is about to get his PhD in physics.
5. Gul Meena and I look forward to being able to see each other again next summer, _____, we will write letters to each other.
6. I would really like to see you again, _____ will you join me one afternoon for lunch?
7. I wanted to go to the movies, _____ the tickets were already sold out.
8. We need to go to the store, _____ we will stop at Rehan's house and pick up the hat I left there yesterday.

9. Dogs are not allowed in the mall. _____ the lady that works in the bookstore there brings her dog to work with her every day.
10. I studied very hard for the English test but I barely passed it; _____ my studying efforts were unrewarded in math class. I wonder if I am not studying correctly.

B. Create an original sentence or pair of sentences using the transitions indicated.

1. meanwhile: _____
2. for example: _____
3. consequently: _____
4. without a doubt: _____
5. therefore: _____

C. TIME ORDER/PROCESS TRANSITION WORDS

First, second, later, next, as soon as, during, when, after, then, finally, meanwhile, last, by the time, over time.

Activity:

Make a Paper Airplane

Below, in order, are the steps to making a paper airplane.

Read the steps. Then rewrite them as a paragraph, choosing appropriate transitions from the list above. Don't forget to give your paragraph a title and a good topic sentence.

Get a sheet of paper.

Fold it in half lengthwise.

Fold the top corners into the center.

Fold the angled edge into the center.

Fold along the center line. This fold should hide all the other folds inside.

Fold down the wings.

Fly your plane!

Teacher's Guideline:

Help students to generate questions to understand the text.