

Paulina
Korzeniewska-Nowakowska

TEXT TALK:

Fiction and non-fiction inspired class discussions and speaking activities

Skrypt dydaktyczny
do zajęć PNJA Mówienie
dla poziomu B2/C1





To Leon who contributed precisely nothing to this course book, but the idea that he might (text) talk sense one day fills me up with joy.

Paulina
Korzeniewska-Nowakowska



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Think before you speak. Read before you think.

Fran Lebovitz



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Od Autorki

Do rąk czytelnika, studenta, amatora nauki języka angielskiego trafia nowatorski skrypt w formie e-booka pomocny w udoskonaleniu umiejętności konwersacji dla uczących się na poziomie B2/C1.

Publikacja podzielona jest na pięć części; każda zawiera trzy rozdziały z materiałami praktycznymi do zajęć z mówienia. Bazą części pierwszej są nagrania z serwisu YouTube oraz wybrane podcasty. Motywem przewodnim części drugiej są teksty non-fiction, część trzecia została oparta na filmach dokumentalnych i serialu, część czwarta na opowiadaniach, a kanwą konwersacji w części piątej stanowi poezja. Cele dydaktyczne skryptu są wielowymiarowe. Po pierwsze, ćwiczenia oraz wszelkie proponowane aktywności czerpią z zasobów kultury anglojęzycznej, takiej jak artykuły publicystyczne, przemówienia, wiersze, seriale, filmy dokumentalne itp., a zatem zaznajamiają studenta z kontekstem kulturowym, w tym z wydarzeniami najnowszymi. Po drugie, wszystkie pytania i przyczynki do dyskusji nad wyżej wspomnianymi wytworami kultury mają charakter analityczny, a zatem zachęcają studenta do formułowania samodzielnych, pogłębionych wypowiedzi, a także wymagają osadzenia konwersacji w szeregu kontekstów. Po trzecie, proponowane aktywności kładą szczególny nacisk na poznanie i udoskonalanie umiejętności debaty, wymiany merytorycznych argumentów, prowadzenia ożywionej dyskusji bazującej na faktach, danych i rzeczowych przemyśleniach, z poszanowaniem opinii interlokutorów – elementach jakże istotnych w debacie akademickiej i nie tylko. Wiele ćwiczeń wymaga od studenta wykazania się umiejętnościami poszukiwania informacji w różnorodnych źródłach, przede wszystkim cyfrowych, aby w rzetelny sposób mogli przygotować się do zaplanowanych konwersacji. Wybrane materiały pozwalają także uwrażliwić studentów na niuanse kulturowe i społeczne, a forma ćwiczeń wzmacnia ich potencjał swobodnej, merytorycznej i pewnej wypowiedzi. Skrypt w formie e-booka odpowiada potrzebom współczesnego uczącego się, wykorzystując zasoby świata wirtualnego. Dostępny na każdym urządzeniu elektronicznym pozwala na wygodne i wszechstronne użycie. Rozdziały zawierają bezpośrednio odnośniki do ogólnodostępnych nagrań i plików video; teksty wykorzystane jako kanwa do ćwiczeń są łatwo dostępne.

Skrypt ma formę narzędziownika; jest to z założenia dokument, który podlegać będzie edycjom i aktualizacjom. Umożliwia poszerzanie i uzupełnianie treści, ale przede wszystkim wspiera kreatywny i aktywny udział studenta w zajęciach.

YouTube videos and podcasts

Steve Jobs' Commencement Address at Stanford University

1. Warm-up activity

With a partner, discuss everything you know about Steve Jobs. Maybe you have seen one of the biopics devoted to his life and work? Do you associate him with Apple products or do you recognize him more as a charismatic leader that he was?

2. Video

Watch Steve Jobs' commencement speech he delivered at Stanford University in 2005.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF8uR6Z6KLc>

3. Comprehension

In pairs, discuss whether these statements about the speech are true or false. Correct the false ones.

- Jobs' adoptive parents were college graduates.
- He decided to take a course in calligraphy in college to learn how to design typography.
- Jobs founded Apple with a friend.
- He was fired from Apple by the manager he had himself employed.
- Jobs was diagnosed with a terminal liver cancer.
- The Whole Earth Catalog began in the mid-1970s.

4. Analysis

In small groups, discuss the following questions.

- Why do you think Jobs decided to share such personal details from his life in a commencement address?
- Do you find his speech motivational, cliché or game-changing?

- The speech is known for its coaching style and motivational value. What do you reckon about the motivation culture and coaching business? Would you agree anyone can achieve considerable success if they are perseverant and dedicated enough?
- Do you associate coaching with genuine personal development or corporate gobbledegook?
- What qualities do you look for in a leader?
- Interpret Jobs' famous quote and motto he explains in the speech: "Stay hungry, stay foolish".
- In your opinion, what is the best advice that can be given to new graduates?

5. #thinksomemore

You are going to prepare a motivational speech. Record it via a dictaphone app or make a video. Prepare a 6-7 minute presentation **proposing your own topic**. It needs to be inspirational and easy to identify with. Remember that a good motivational speaker must be flexible, energetic and enthusiastic. You may approach your topic any way you feel suitable. See here for inspiration: <https://addicted2success.com/motivation/5-of-the-best-motivational-speeches-of-all-time/>

Useful language

Public speaking

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd like to begin by pointing out... • I am led to make one remark. • I am not ashamed to acknowledge... • I am astounded at... • I am of the opinion that... • A question arises... • It is suffice to say that... • There are abundant instances of... • As I rise to respond to the sentiment... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd be glad to answer any questions you may have. • I'd like to leave you with the following food for thought. • That brings me to the end of my presentation. |
|---|--|

Study tip



Storytelling

A story well told may be a hypnotic, educational and emotional experience all at the same time. Use story-telling in your public speaking endeavors!

- Trigger your audience to rely on their own experience.
- Make your audience identify with your story.
- Know your audience and establish a connection with your listeners.
- Avoid inconsequential details.
- Emphasize verbs and adjectives as they add dynamics to your story.
- As you prepare your speech, work carefully on your body language.

**“STAY HUNGRY,
STAY FOOLISH.”**

Steve Jobs



NOTES

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“The Dropout” – ABC News podcast

1. Warm-up activity

With a partner brainstorm the term *Silicon Valley*. What do you know about it? What associations does it bring to mind?

2. Video

Watch the four-part ABC News podcast about Elizabeth Holmes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG_F118ruOM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjWS8hQk188>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpBELR366c4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uHPrnRiX_A

3. Comprehension

In small groups, discuss the following questions.

- What did you learn about Elizabeth’s childhood and upbringing?
- What do the Stanford professors say about Elizabeth?
- Describe the arcana of a brilliant business idea she had.
- What were the first red flags that Elizabeth’s colleagues noticed?
- How would you describe the atmosphere and work culture that Elizabeth created in her company?

4. Analysis

- In your opinion, why did Elizabeth Holmes become so successful and convincing?
- Elizabeth Holmes was often referred to as the “female Steve Jobs”. Can you notice any similarities between the two? Elaborate on the position of women in business nowadays.
- Where you shocked by the Theranos story?
- Silicon Valley often celebrates a flare and fail pathway to success. Can you see any dangers behind that attitude? Do you think health start-ups should be held to a higher standard than start-ups from other sectors?
- While the focus has mainly been on Elizabeth, who also bears responsibility for the fraud?
- Do you agree with Elizabeth Holmes’ opinion?
- Are there any lessons that one may learn from this story if it comes to ambition, self-development and perseverance in achieving one’s goals?

“Dr Ruja” – BBC podcast

1. Warm-up activity

Can you explain the term “cryptocurrency” and the mechanisms behind it in just five sentences? Do a quick research and practice delivering your speech in a group setting. Make sure your answer is succinct and to-the-point.

2. Listening

You are going to listen to the first episode of the nine-part BBC podcast “Dr Ruja”. It tells a mysterious story of Ruja Ignatova, a founder of the OnceCoin Ponzi scheme*.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p07npg7p>

3. Comprehension

In small groups, discuss the following questions.

- Who is Dr Ruja Ignatova? What was her image? What impression did she make?
- Describe the beginnings of Bitcoin.
- How did Ruja Ignatova get to know the world of cryptocurrencies? What was her idea to develop this concept?
- What did OneCoin webinars look like? What were the audience reactions to the webinars?
- What happened in October 2017?

4. Analysis

- Think of possible scenarios of what might have happened to Ruja Ignatova.
- In your opinion, why are people attracted to volatile and high-risk investments?
- What do you think the future of cryptocurrencies is?
- Are there any dangers related to trading cryptocurrencies?
- Do you think cryptocurrencies will eventually replace national currencies?
- Would you say investment skills should be a part of school education? Do you feel confident with managing your money? Are you a saver, spender or an investor?
- Do you think there is any difference in how society impacts the attitudes of men and women toward finances? If so, can you explain why?

* Ponzi scheme is a form of fraud that attracts investors and pays profits to earlier investors with funds from recent ones. Its victims believe that profits come from legitimate business activity and they remain unaware that other investors are the source of funds.

5. #thinksomemore

SRI investment project – CASE STUDY

You work in a consulting company which offers environmental, social and governance (ESG) research and ratings to investors who incorporate ESG and corporate governance insights into their investment processes. In general, socially responsible investors encourage corporate practices that they believe promote environmental stewardship, consumer protection, human rights, labor rights and racial or gender diversity. Make sure you're familiar with the following terms; ask your friends whether they have heard about them. Look them up together if necessary.

Sustainable investing

ESG risks

Corporate governance

Social justice

Environmental stewardship

6. Task

Work in small groups. Discuss why it would be valuable for Polish companies to engage more in socially responsible investing. Present clear arguments, exact measures that could be taken, and possible obstacles.

Study tip



Internet is full of fake news and misinformation, right? Yet it still serves as a basis for finding information.

- Don't get all your information on social media! Check trustworthy news or government websites.
- Cross-check your findings! Look for one or two more sources that can confirm the credibility of your information.
- Study reports, research data and academic journals, and draw your own conclusions! A bit more time-consuming than sharing a Facebook post, but worth the effort.

Non-fiction writing

David Foster Wallace – “This is Water” (2005)

1. Warm-up activity

Read the following excerpt from David Foster Wallace’s speech you are about to work with. Do you agree with the statements the author makes? What do you think will be the main theme of that talk? Discuss it with a partner.

“If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It’s the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. [...] Worship power, you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.”

2. Listening

Listen to David Foster Wallace’s “This is Water”. Use a written version of the speech if this is more suitable to you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CrOL-ydFMI>

3. Comprehension and analysis

In small groups, discuss the following questions.

- What is the rhetorical value of telling a joke at the beginning of a speech?
- Wallace extensively uses the metaphor of water. How do you understand it?
- What are our “default settings” Wallace refers to?
- Explain what the author means when he states that “there is no such thing as atheism; we all worship.”
- Wallace offers an example of a day-to-day routine which seems to wear people out and kill their joy for life. Do you agree or disagree with this portrait of a regular

adult? Have you reconsidered the value of your routines, e.g. in the face of the global pandemic?

- According to the author, what is the role of education? Do you share his view?
- Can education help us change the assumption that we are the center of the universe?

Has your schooling helped you with that issue? How does that correspond with embracing one's individualism?

- Wallace discusses the American education system. Is it similar to or different from the system in your country?

4. Vocabulary

The words enlisted below were used in the speech. Did you understand them correctly in that particular context? With a partner provide their definitions.

deploy
despise
lame
idle
insidious
myriad

white-collar
niceties
petty
infused
dogma
deluded

5. #thinksomemore

Conference panel

In a group, host a conference panel on education entitled “Does school education provide students with critical thinking tools? Theory, practice and areas for improvement”. Assign the roles of a host, panel experts, etc. Prepare questions, outline of the meeting and discussion points you wish to bring up. Make sure you address as many viewpoints as possible. Offer specific solutions, provide examples of probable curricula, etc.

Susan Orlean – “The American Man at Age Ten” (1992)

1. Warm-up activity

Think of the time when you were 10 years old. What do you remember most from that period of your life? How would you describe yourself in a couple of sentences? Is there anything you would like to tell your 10-year-old self? Discuss it with a partner.

2. Reading

Read Susan Orlean’s “The American Man at Age Ten”

3. Comprehension and analysis

In small groups, discuss the following questions.

- Present Colin in three sentences.
- How does Colin imagine his work for the FBI?
- What does Colin’s father say about living with his son?
- Who is a *kid-up*?
- How did Colin and Japeth react to the encounter with a couple of mean boys at Danny’s Pizza?
- What does Colin think about girls in his class?
- According to psychologists, why is the age of ten crucial for future development of relationship commitment and intimacy for men?
- What are Colin’s expectations about sex education at school?
- What do you think is the author’s general attitude towards Colin?
- The author wrote this profile in the 1990s. Would you say contemporary children are different from those brought up thirty years ago? Why/why not? Try to sketch a profile of a child/adolescent who lives in your country in your contemporaries. What are they like? What are they into? What are their main characteristics and phenomena that shape them?

4. Vocabulary assignment

Find the following words/phrases in the text and work out their meanings from the context. Then match them with the definitions/synonyms listed below.

slingshot
bosky
wifty
cinch
humdrum

brawl
clamor
thumbtack up
hyper
indiscriminately
presage

1. overexcited
2. to attach with a pin
3. covered with bushes and trees
4. lacking in care and selectivity
5. boring
6. a Y-shaped stick with an elastic strip between the prongs for shooting stones and other small missiles
7. to make a prediction
8. something sure or easy
9. a noisy quarrel or fight
10. carefree, ditzy
11. to utter nosily

5. #thinksomemore

Summarize the article in ten sentences. Take a few minutes to take notes, but do not write down a ready-made text. Practice delivering your summary in a group setting.

Study tip



Delivering oral summaries

- Make an outline of the general content of the material you wish to summarize with the annotated ideas, highlighting which are primary and secondary.
- Link sentences in a coherent manner, so that your audience can easily navigate your speech.
- “Globalize” information. Do not provide too many details, names, dates, etc.
- Omit information that is not really central to the text.
- Avoid including your personal opinions and digressions.

Michelle Ruiz – “AOC’s Next Four Years” (Vanity Fair, December 2020 issue)

1. Warm-up activity

With a partner discuss the following statements.

- Politics is not a very attractive career path for twenty-somethings.
- A good politician needs lots of life and professional experience.
- Young people nowadays are less and less interested in social activism.

Read Michelle Ruiz’s piece on Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the youngest American congresswoman in history, serving as the U.S. Representative for New York’s 14th congressional district.

<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/10/becoming-aoc-cover-story-2020>

In small groups discuss the following questions in depth.

2. Comprehension

- Summarize the incident between AOC and Ted Yoho. In your opinion, what was the reason of that aggressive outburst?
- Discuss AOC’s background, experience and education. What were the triggers for her to get involved in politics?
- What are the struggles she now faces as a congresswoman?
- What are the main social goals she has on her agenda as a congresswoman?

3. Analysis

- What stands behind AOC’s success? What makes her different from other politicians?
- Some commentators see AOC as the future candidate for the office of the president of the US. Would you say she has the potential to hold this position?

4. #thinksomemore

Assignment Part 1

Do the Research!

Do a thorough research and reading on the figure you are going to present. Devote the whole class to students’ presentations and Q&A sessions.

You may choose a figure from the list below or propose your own choice. The people enlisted below are somehow related to American culture, business, politics, and history. Make sure you explore their biographies, read as much as you can and present them in a way which will be interesting for your audience. Do not focus on dates or raw facts; try to elicit the most fascinating information.

The form of your presentation is up to you.

Howard Hughes

Jesse Owens

Malcolm X

Sarah Palin

John Dillinger

Jean-Michel Basquiat

John D. Rockefeller

Amelia Earhart

Anna Wintour

Neri Oxman

Assignment Part 2

- a) Watch the Netflix documentary *Knock Down the House* (2019) which tells the story of congressional primary campaigns of four female candidates, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.
- b) In small groups gather information about female local politicians from your region. Get to know their backgrounds, achievements, the struggles they face doing what they do. Present your findings to the rest of the class.

In class start a discussion with the following question. **Is politics a hostile or a welcoming environment for women?** Offer arguments on both sides of that dilemma.

Documentaries and TV shows

The Social Dilemma (2020), dir. Jeff Orlowski

1. Warm-up activity

With your partner analyze what you have been doing online today. Is your smartphone always in your pocket? Do you use it for work or entertainment? Can you imagine your life without it?

2. Film

Watch the Netflix docudrama *The Social Dilemma* (2020)

3. Comprehension

In small groups discuss the following questions in depth.

- How do you understand the opening quote? “Nothing vast enters the lives of mortals without a curse”.
- The interviewees seem to have a problem answering the basic question: What is the problem? What’s your analysis on that?
- “If you’re not paying for the product, you are the product”. How do you understand that statement?
- Discuss what design techniques are used in the Silicon Valley to modify human behavior.
- How would you comment on Jonathan Haidt’s analysis of the Gen Z (people born after 1996) and their behavioral patterns?

4. Analysis

- How much time do you spend glued to your smartphone daily?
- How do you verify the information you get online? How serious do you think the problem of fake news is?
- How do conspiracy theories spread by means of social media and their algorithms?

- Can you think of any strategies of how to talk to conspiracy theories believers or science deniers?
- What's in store for humanity then?
- Has the film in any way affected your tech addiction and social media use?

5. #thinksomemore

Podcast episode

Have you ever thought of a career on YouTube or Spotify? Try it!

Prepare a ten-minute podcast episode in which you will report on your day without social media. You may record a video or an audio file. Brainstorm the topic, take notes, plan your narrative and produce quality material. Your language can be informal, colloquial, honest, and colorful. Share your work with other students and engage them into discussion on their experience with cutting on social media use.

Study tip



Podcast recording

Engaging podcast content takes time and work, but it's worth the hassle. It may immensely improve your fluency in discussing things casually and effortlessly.

- Talk about things you feel passionate about.
- Make sure your speech doesn't stray off topic.
- Make sure your pronunciation is correct, watch your breath and don't rush too much.
- Have fun with it! Enthusiasm always makes you a better speaker.

Pretend It's a City (2021), dir. Martin Scorsese

1. Warm-up activity

In small groups, brainstorm what associations come to mind when you think about New York. Do you link the Big Apple with people, places or stories? Have you ever visited New York City?

2. Series

Watch Martin Scorsese's documentary series *Pretend It's a City* (Netflix 2021), in which he interviews his long-time friend, a writer and speaker, Fran Leibowitz.

3. Comprehension

Discuss whether these statements about Fran Leibowitz are true or false. Correct the false ones.

- Fran was not born in New York City.
- She met Martin Scorsese as she had been cast in one his movies.
- She owns a substantial collection of Andy Warhol's works.
- She never throws parties.
- She considers herself exceedingly lucky in terms of real estate opportunities.
- She does not use any electronic devices.
- She is an avid sports fan.
- She was a close friend and confidante of Sylvia Plath.

4. Analysis

In small groups discuss the following questions in depth.

- What is the portrait on the New York of the 1970s that emerges from Fran's narrative? How is it different from today's version of the city?
- How would you comment on the city artistic bohemia Fran was part of? How did it shape New York's cultural landscape?
- Think of other depictions of New York in films, books, TV shows. What is the role of the city, e.g. in Woody Allen's movies or *Sex and the City* series?

- How does Fran comment on the role and nature of tourism in places like New York? What do you think of the idea of implementing strict rules for visitors (limiting the number of tourists, etc.) to popular destinations in order to balance tourists' needs with those of residents?
- Look at the characteristics and expressions below. Discuss their meaning with a partner if some of them are not clear to you. Which best describe Fran's character and personality? What other features would you add to the list?

raconteur
contrarian
loner
rebel
satirist
socialite
charismatic

neurotic
insufferable
petty
cranky
charming
opinionated
acerbic

5. #thinksomemore

Assignment Part 1

Work in pairs. Interview each other about your passions, dreams you pursue, future professional plans, a voluntary project you initiated or took part in, etc. Together with your interviewee, feel free to propose the topic of your interview. Each student should conduct an approximately 10-question interview with their partner. Interview sessions take place in class. Take time to research the topic, prepare questions and conduct the interview. The form of the interview is up to you. Your language may be informal, but it should be varied and insightful. Do not write down ready-made answers, let your conversation be as natural as possible.

Assignment Part 2

Interview a person who lives in a different city, preferably a city you do not know. What would you be interested in in such a conversation? Would you ask more about their lifestyle or would you focus on the details of the city's infrastructure or how it is managed?

Fargo, season 3 (2017), dir. Noah Hawley

1. Warm-up activity

In small groups, discuss the following statements. Do you agree or disagree with them?

- In the past few years TV shows have been much more popular and better produced than movies.
- Streaming services providers, such as Netflix and HBO Go, have dominated the entertainment business.
- Easy access to films and TV shows may have a negative impact on people's lifestyles.

2. Series

Watch the first episode of the third season of *Fargo*, an American anthology dark comedy–crime drama television series (dir. Noah Hawley, 2017).

3. Comprehension and analysis

In class, discuss the following questions.

- What is your first impression after watching the episode? How would you describe it in just one word?
- Had you had any expectations about the series? Had you heard about it before? Did it meet your expectations or did it subvert them?
- Discuss the importance of the following elements in the episode:
 - screenplay
 - direction
 - acting
 - editing
 - soundtrack
- What is the general plot of the episode (in summary)? What turning points (cliff-hangers) were used to catch your attention?
- What are the key themes? How do these themes develop?
- Have you noticed anything peculiar about the language of the series? Were you able to recognize the accent the characters speak with?
- Are you interested enough to watch the remaining episodes of the show?

4. #thinksomemore

Assignment Part 1

Write a review of the *Fargo* episode you have watched. Record it using a dictaphone app and share it with the rest of the group. As you work on your recording, focus on such elements as clear pronunciation, sentence stress and the tone of your voice.

Assignment Part 2

In small groups, organize a radio program/podcast in which you will host an expert discussion on a chosen film/trend in the film industry/movie awards, etc. Choose the topic of your discussion, do a thorough research and sketch the outline of your talk. Each member of the discussion should share their expertise, opinions and analyses. Record your discussion using a dictaphone app and share it with the rest of the class.

Useful language

Giving comments about films

a must-see
an audience pleaser
action-packed
unexpected plot twists
multi-dimensional characters
lacks originality

I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it.
The film brought tears to my eyes.
spiced with plenty of humor
unpretentious
cliché-ridden
suspenseful

Short stories

Margaret Atwood – “Death by landscape”

1. Warm-up activity

In small groups, brainstorm the topic of climate change. Do you feel well informed about the issue or are you overwhelmed by the immensity of theories around it? Are you seriously concerned about global warming and water shortage? Do you think these problems may feasibly impact your life?

2. Do some reading

Read Margaret Atwood’s short story “Death by landscape” (1990).

3. Comprehension

In class, discuss the following questions.

- Why is Lois isolated from the outside world? Why does she surround herself with landscape paintings?
- What imagery does the author use to portray the wilderness the protagonist experienced as a child?
- How does the protagonist remember the camp life?

4. Analysis

- Which is more important in the story: the physical environment or the social environment? Both? Explain.
- How does Atwood create the atmosphere of mystery in the story?
- What is the role of nature in the story?
- Analyze the figure of Lucy. Do you consider her to be an antagonist?
- Margaret Atwood is well-known for her engagement in ecological and feminist issues. Are you familiar with her other work?

5. #thinksomemore

Paris-style debate with a twist

The class is to be devoted to a debate on veganism and vegetarianism.

The main question to be answered is: **Are veganism and vegetarianism a necessary future of human nutrition?**

You will be working in two groups. Group 1 is supposed to prepare a list of three basic arguments in favor of such a solution; Group 2 will present three counterarguments. Each group will respond to their opponents' reasoning. Focus on the quality of your arguments, the strength of the rhetoric, the ability to think on one's feet, and teamwork.

Consider ethical, social and environmental aspects of the dilemma.

You will find some useful sources below, but they're just a starting point for your own, detailed research. Your preparation before the debate is crucial!

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/apr/01/vegans-are-coming-millennials-health-climate-change-animal-welfare>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/17/climate/meat-industry-climate-impact.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_impact_of_meat_production

<https://www.newmarkettoday.ca/local-news/ask-the-nutritionist-heres-why-vegans-have-one-of-the-most-unhealthy-diets-1559005>

Useful language

Discussions and debates

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All things considered, I must say that...• One needs to acknowledge that...• Studies clearly show that...• I can see your point, but...• I thoroughly agree with this statement, however... | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I didn't quite follow you. Could you explain...• Coming back to what Anna said...• I wouldn't hinge on the idea...• Thank you for your thoughtful input.• You've made some very interesting observations. |
|---|---|

Truman Capote – “Miriam”

1. Warm-up activity

With a partner, discuss the list of words below and possible contexts they might be used in. They will appear in a short story you are about to read. Judging on the vocabulary provided below, can you predict what kind of story you will be dealing with? Fantasy, horror, a novel of manners? What makes you think that?

Inconspicuous

Immaculate

Oblivious

Elusively

Hassock

Grotesquely

Peevishly

Consoled

2. Do some reading

Read Truman Capote’s short story “Miriam” (1945)

3. Comprehension

In class discuss the following questions.

- How would you describe Mrs. Miller’s attitude towards Miriam? What is unusual about the girl?
- In what ways does Mrs. Miller give in to Miriam’s requests?
- How does the setting contribute to the action, theme, and tone of the story?
- Do the people who live in Mrs. Miller’s building see Miriam?
- What does Mrs. Miller dream about?

4. Analysis

- Colors seem to have a special role in the story? How do you read their symbolism?
- In Hebrew the name Miriam means a “wished-for child”. How does it translate into your perception of both Miriam and Mrs. Miller? Why do these two characters share a name?
- What social and personal fears does the story explore? Do you find them universal?

- Is Miriam real or is she a projection of Mrs. Miller’s imagination? Discuss both interpretations.
- What effect does the open-ended format have on the story? Think of possible continuations. Try to stay faithful to Capote’s style and vision.

5. #thinksomemore

Assignment Part 1

You are going to work in groups of 3-4. Each group is to choose a novel from the <http://www.openculture.com/freeaudiobooks>. Feel free to propose your own title (consult it with the teacher). Your task will be to listen to it throughout the whole semester, take notes, keep a reading journal, etc.

At the end of the semester organize a class devoted to the audiobook club discussions in which you will share your opinions about the book with your friends. To do so, each group must prepare a list of 15 discussion points/triggers which will serve as a basis for your deliberations. Do not focus on discussing the plot; try to approach this task a bit more analytically. Make sure that each group member has a chance to air their opinion and propose a discussion point. It is absolutely vital that each student completes listening to the audiobook.

Assignment Part 2

Keep an electronic reader’s journal of a selected novel in English. Respond intellectually, emotionally, morally, and spiritually—not necessarily in that order or in all ways—to your reading. What do you really think and feel about the book? Do you like/hate/could care less about it? Why? Do not elaborate on the plot and characters. What larger issues in our culture/society do these works address or cause you to reflect on? There are no “wrong” entries.

With a partner exchange your experiences and talk about the process of keeping a reading journal. Interview each other; use the questions below as a starting point of your conversation.

- To whom would you recommend the book?
- Can you think of any other book that is similar in style, themes?
- What is something that you will remember most from the book?
- Is there anything that shocked you about the book?
- How would you recommend it to me in one sentence?
- What are you going to read next and why?

George Orwell – “Shooting an elephant”

1. Warm-up activity

Do a quick research on the life and work of George Orwell. Have you read any of his seminal novels? With a partner discuss the following statements.

- Authors’ biographies are crucial to fully grasping the meaning of their works.
- Readers should be familiar with the historical circumstances of the novel they wish to read.
- The writer is often identified with the narrator of a given story.

2. Do some reading

Read George Orwell’s short story “Shooting an elephant” (1936)

3. Comprehension

In small groups, discuss the following questions.

- Where and when does the story take place? What is the political and social situation of the region in that particular time?
- How does the narrator portray the local people? Where does this attitude come from?
- Why is he so ambivalent towards the act of shooting the elephant?
- Why is Orwell’s description of the shooting of the animal detailed and emphasized, and the actual death of the elephant is paved over? Does it have any significance to the story?

4. Analysis

- Elaborate on the inner conflict the narrator struggles with. Would you say he feels guilty/empowered/stuck?
- How is the main incident of the story representative of the problems of colonialism, imperialism and tyranny? Note what was happening in Europe in the 1930s.
- How does the story tackle the theme of personal freedom?
- Is the protagonist an invader, a law enforcement representative or a victim of the role that was imposed on him?
- Is it significant in any way that Orwell himself served as a colonial policeman?

5. #thinksomemore

Do a thorough research on the phenomenon of neocolonialism. Identify the timeline, historical context, geo-political significance and implications of this period.

In small groups, prepare 15-minute presentations in which you will cover specific instances of territorial acquisitions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Organize a short Q&A session after each presentation. You may approach your topic any way you feel suitable.

You may use a Power Point presentation, prepare handouts, make a video, etc. The form of your presentation is up to you. Please make sure it is interesting for your audience. Do not focus on dates, names and detailed statistics – instead try to present ideas, analyze trends and interpret case studies. Use relevant examples to strengthen your arguments.

Useful language

Delivering presentations

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In this talk I would like to concentrate on...• My presentation may be particularly relevant to those of you who...• I'd like to give you an overview of...• By the end of my talk, you will have a clear idea of...• I thought it would be efficient to divide my presentation into three parts/sections.• This talk will cover two main ideas/topics/issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My first point concerns...• I'll begin by filling you in on the background to...• I'd like to address the problem of...• I will try to put the situation into some kind of perspective of...• Don't worry about taking notes. I've put all the important data on a handout.• Let me elaborate on this point.• I'm afraid I'm not in a position to answer that question at the moment.• That goes beyond the scope of my presentation.• Well, that's about it for now.• We've covered... |
|---|--|



Poetry

Amanda Gorman – “The Hill We Climb”

1. Warm-up activity

With a partner, discuss the following questions.

- Could poetry be a powerful tool to comment on social and political issues?
- Does socially-engaged poetry play an important role in contemporary literature? Is it a trigger for intellectuals as it was in the past?
- Have you ever been to a poetry slam? What is the aim of such performative events?

2. Video

Watch Amanda Gorman’s reciting her poem “The Hill We Climb” during Joe Biden’s presidential inauguration on January 20th, 2021. She is the nation’s first-ever youth poet laureate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp9pyMqnBzk>

3. Comprehension and analysis

In small groups discuss the following questions.

- In what atmosphere was Joe Biden taking over the White House at the beginning of 2021? What was happening in the United States at that time?
- In your opinion, why was Amanda Gorman invited to recite her poem? Why was an artist present at a political event?
- Why do you think this particular poem was chosen for the inauguration?
- What are the social themes and cultural dilemmas Amanda Gorman touches upon in her poem?
- What is the meaning of the poem given the current hardships the US is struggling with?
- How would you comment on Gorman’s performance? Does it impact your understanding of the poem in any way?

Anne Sexton – “Briar Rose”

1. Warm-up activity

With a partner, discuss the following statements. Would you say they are true or false?

- Fairy tales shape children’s understanding about reality.
- They present a distorted image of the world.
- Fairy tales and cartoons may be harmful to a young psyche.

2. Do some reading

Transformations is a 1971 poetry volume by Anne Sexton. It is based on the Brother Grimm’s well-known fairy tales. The author retells these stories by injecting the world of her contemporaries into those canonical pieces, but does so by inserting mundane references and personal traumas. Read one of the poems from the collection, “Briar Rose”.

3. Comprehension

In small groups discuss the following questions.

- Who is Briar Rose that Sexton made a protagonist of her text? What does she struggle with?
- Is the prince a significant persona in that narrative poem?
- Describe the relationship Briar Rose has with her father. Does the poem address any serious social and/or familial problem?
- How would you characterize the atmosphere of the poem?

4. Analysis

- Think of canonical tales you read as a child. Can you see any patterns in how they are constructed? What role models are presented in these tales?
- What are the differences between the source text and Sexton’s revision? What is their purpose?
- How are female and male characters portrayed in Sexton’s poems? What behavioral expectations are imposed on the characters? What effect do these expectations have?
- How does Sexton “comment” on the patriarchal model in culture? What is her diagnosis of women’s situation?

5. #thinksomemore

Choose some other fairy tale characters and think of the ways in which they could be revised, so that they are more suitable for modern times. In small groups, prepare profiles of those characters, indicating how you would change their looks, qualities, behavior, etc. You may write down short dialogues they are a part of, draw comic book excerpts, create their social media presence, etc. Role play the situations they might find themselves in.

Useful language

Poetry terminology

Do you know these terms? Look them up if you have doubts. With a partner identify these poetic analysis elements in Sexton's poem.

- Motif
- Tone
- Mood
- Imagery
- Figurative language
- Intertextuality
- Stanza
- Simile
- Irony

**"THE BUSINESS OF WORDS
KEEPS ME AWAKE."**

Anne Sexton



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Beat Generation

1. Warm-up activity

Have you heard about the Beat Generation? Confront what you know about the movement with a partner and together watch a short video which introduces the Beat culture, its main representatives and ideas.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYitYHntLI4&ab_channel=DecadesTVNetwork

2. Do some reading

Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" is considered to be one of the great works of American literature and a representative piece of the Beat Generation movement. First, read the poem all the way through without stopping and take a moment to write down your instant impression. Then, read the poem together aloud as a group. Each student should read a couple of lines before another student picks up the next segment.

You may also watch the interpretation of the poem accompanied by an animation.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IM9BMVFpk80&t=79s&ab_channel=MindFeeder

3. Comprehension and analysis

In small groups discuss the following questions.

- How does the poem make you feel?
- What is the portrait of America in the eyes of the author? What scenes, characters, and situations does he bring up in the text?
- Who are "the best minds of my generation"?
- According to Ginsberg, what has gone wrong in his country?
- How does the author perceive the industrial civilization and the consumerist society? Would you say his concerns may be valid in the contemporary world?
- Discuss the rhythm and structure of the poem. How does it affect its message and your understanding of this piece.

4. #thinksomemore

In small groups enlist and research unfamiliar words and cultural references that were used in the poem (e.g., the El, Blake-light, Paradise Alley, Fugazzi's, Bellevue,

Plotinus, Adonis, Bowery, Absolute Reality, Golgotha, Pilgrim State, Rockland, Grey-stone, eli eli lamma lamma sabaccthani, Moloch, etc). Analyze Ginsberg's choices to include these intertextual elements and how they affect your understanding of the poem. Share your thoughts, feelings, opinions and discoveries with your friends.

Useful language

Discussing poetry

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The poem consists of/comprises five stanzas.• The lines vary in length.• The poet conveys his/her message by...• The tone of the poem is ironic/melancholic/enthusiastic... | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The author uses a simile to compare...• What strikes me most when I read the poem...• The poem reflects the main ideas/nuances of the trend/movement.• The form of the poem is strictly related to its content. |
|--|--|

**“SUPPOSE WE SUDDENLY WAKE UP
AND SEE THAT WHAT WE THOUGHT
TO BE THIS AND THAT, AIN’T THIS
AND THAT AT ALL.”**

Jack Kerouac

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