

Year 11 English – Home Learning Pack 6

Task One – Spoken Language

Discuss with a trusted partner the following questions:

- Can you think of a time where you felt fear? What was it that made you scared and how did you deal with it?
- What is your reaction to fear? E.g. do you turn pale? Do you get goosebumps? Do you run/hide/ escape?
- Can you think of a time where you were brave and courageous, overcoming such fear?
- Is it important to overcome your fears? Why? Why not?

Task Two – Reading

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Little Women was written in 1868 and is one of the most beloved children's books of all time. It is the story of the four March sisters: Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy. They live with their mother while their father is fighting in the American Civil War. The family doesn't have much money. They live next door to Mr. Laurence, who is very wealthy, and his grandson, Laurie. In this passage, Beth's passion for music forces her to overcome her natural shyness. The 'Mansion of Bliss' is Mr. Laurence's house. As you read the extract, make notes on how the writer shows Beth overcoming her fear of Mr. Lawrence.

But Beth, though yearning for the grand piano, could not pluck up courage to go to the 'Mansion of Bliss', as Meg called it. She went once with Jo, but the old gentleman, not being aware of her nerves, stared at her so hard from under his heavy eyebrows, and said "Hey!" so loud, that he frightened her so much her 'feet chattered on the floor'.

She never told her mother, and she ran away, declaring she would never go there any more, not even for the dear piano. No persuasion could overcome her fear, till, the fact coming to Mr. Laurence's ear in some mysterious way, he set about mending matters.

During one of the brief calls he made, he artfully led the conversation to music, and talked away about great singers whom he had seen, and told such charming stories that Beth found it impossible to stay in her distant corner, but crept nearer and nearer, as if fascinated. At the back of his chair she stopped and stood listening, with her great eyes wide open and her cheeks red with excitement of this unusual performance.

Taking no more notice of her than if she had been a fly, Mr. Laurence talked on about Laurie's lessons and teachers. And presently, as if the idea had just occurred to him, he said to Mrs. March, "The boy neglects his music now, and I'm glad of it, for he was getting too fond of it. But the piano suffers for want of use. Wouldn't some of your girls like to run over, and practice on it now and then, just to keep it in tune, you know, ma'am?"

Beth took a step forward, and pressed her hands tightly together to keep from clapping them, for this was an irresistible temptation, and the thought of practicing on that splendid instrument quite took her breath away.

Before Mrs. March could reply, Mr. Laurence went on with an odd little nod and smile... "They needn't see or speak to anyone, but run in at any time. For I'm shut up in my study at the other end of the house, Laurie is out a great deal, and the servants are never near the drawing room after nine o'clock."

Here he rose, as if going, and Beth made up her mind to speak, for that last arrangement left nothing to be desired.

"Please, tell the young ladies what I say, and if they don't care to come, why, never mind."

Here a little hand slipped into his, and Beth looked up at him with a face full of gratitude, as she said, in her earnest yet timid way... "Oh sir, they do care, very very much!"

"Are you the musical girl?" he asked, without any startling, as he looked down at her very kindly.

"I'm Beth. I love it dearly, and I'll come, if you are quite sure nobody will hear me, and be disturbed," she added, fearing to be rude, and trembling at her own boldness as she spoke.

"Not a soul, my dear. The house is empty half the day, so come and drum away as much as you like, and I shall be obliged to you."

"How kind you are, sir!" Beth blushed like a rose under the friendly look he wore, but she was not frightened now, and gave the hand a grateful squeeze because she had no words to thank him for the precious gift he had given her.

Little Women: Text-focused questions

1. Alcott writes 'But Beth, though yearning for the grand piano, could not pluck up courage to go to' Mr. Laurence's house. What does the word 'yearning' mean here? Write a definition.
2. What two things does Mr. Laurence do that frighten Beth?
3. What does Mr. Laurence offer to the girls to go about 'mending matters'?
4. Where will everybody else be whilst the girls are playing the piano?
5. Alcott writes that Mr. Laurence 'stared at her so hard from under his heavy eyebrows, and said "Hey!" so loud, that he frightened her so much'. Why does she repeat the phrase 'so much' throughout this phrase? What does it suggest about Beth's fear?
6. Beth is repeatedly shown to be frail and nervous. Find six pieces of evidence from across the text which suggests this.
7. As Mr. Laurence makes his offer, Beth 'found it impossible to stay in her distant corner'. What other movements does Alcott describe which show Beth overcoming her fear of Mr. Laurence?

Task Three – Writing

The text above uses lots of contracted words and apostrophes, such as: needn't (need not), I'm (I am), don't (do not), I'll (I will), wouldn't (would not).

Complete the following exercises on apostrophes for contraction:

APOSTROPHE (')

SHOW CONTRACTIONS OF WORDS

Aren't, can't, couldn't, didn't, he'd, I'll, I've, mustn't, who're, wouldn't, won't ...

- It's raining outside.
- I'll be there.
- I haven't met him before.

APOSTROPHE BEFORE S

A. Use an apostrophe to combine the words.

1. will not won't
2. does not _____
3. you are _____
4. we will _____
5. they are _____
6. he is _____
7. I have _____
8. do not _____
9. she is _____
10. we are _____

A. Use an apostrophe to combine the words.

1. they will they'll
2. will not _____
3. should have _____
4. we had _____
5. it will _____
6. do not _____
7. is not _____
8. was not _____
9. have not _____
10. had not _____

B. Remove the apostrophe and write the full words. B. Remove the apostrophe and write the full words.

1. shouldn't should not
2. must've _____
3. won't _____
4. we're _____
5. they've _____
6. would've _____
7. I'd _____
8. you'd _____
9. he'll _____
10. what's _____

1. there's there is
2. haven't _____
3. where's _____
4. there're _____
5. we'd _____
6. mustn't _____
7. shouldn't _____
8. couldn't _____
9. can't _____
10. don't _____

Write each sentence in the negative form, using apostrophes.

*He will not play soccer. ->
He won't play soccer.*

1. We are first in line.

We aren't first in line. _____

2. They have paid for the movies.

3. I could work later tonight.

4. You can finish this book today.

5. He has taken the bus before.

6. She is the tallest of the class.



It is the end of the movie.

We could help them.

You are finished with your plate.

They have managed to escape.

I must read the last chapter.