Virginia Woolf, Writer

What can we learn from Virginia Woolf?

ASSESSING YOUR PROGRESS PACK for Elementary Students

by michelle (talkingpeople.net) – Spring 2018

THIS PACK BELONGS TO ________________________________________________

LEVEL, GROUP & COURSE YEAR: ________________________________________

As a woman I have no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.

— Virginia Woolf —

“Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.”

- Virginia Woolf
This project was designed by MF (me) in March 1 2018. This pack includes a listening & a reading comprehension exercise, plus a listening-reading exercise to help students do the writing exercise and the speaking exercise, too!

I earn a living as an English teacher in state-run language education for adults in Andalucía, Spain, where I’m also the coordinator of the crosscurricular subject of Education for Equality (“Coeducación” in Spanish).

I design these exercises for my Elementary students. Students are great inspiration! I hate exams, but to change the system more people need to understand why there are more positive ways of evaluating and self-assessing. So when I design exams I try to elicit curiosity and a meaningful learning experience, to help students stop being afraid and focus.

In my personal life, I am a social activist who believes we need to build a Society of Knowledge to replace war and hatred. I am the creator and webmistress of Talking People, a website offering free quality resources to non-sexist-minded English! TP is part of the broader Mujer Palabra online project at mujerpalabra.net, an independent site where artists, thinkers and activists can share their work and where we can spread the word about their existence, as most people publishing here are part of the population who never makes it to patriarchal history.
Assessing Your Progress Pack for Elementary. VIRGINIA WOOLF
Downloadable at talkingpeople.net > In Class > Básico 1

Be careful! The Answer Key is the last page! Don’t have a look till you’re done! 😊

LISTENING

Virginia Woolf, writer

Virginia & Vanessa playing cricket

Virginia Woolf Documentary: watch the first 6’40”
https://youtu.be/2Hnlsh8WyPE

Instructions
☐ Read the questions and underline key words to help you spot the questions fast!
☐ Watch the first 6 minutes 40 seconds of the documentary.
☐ Then listen 2 or 3 times while you answer the questions.
In all, how many times did you watch the documentary? _______

1. What date was she born? On January ____________
2. What year? __________________
3. Where did she live during her childhood? She lived in ____________________________
4. What did her sister Vanessa do?
☐ She was a writer
☐ She was a photographer
(But she was also a very good painter!!)
5. What was her mother’s name? Her mother’s name was __________________________
6. What did her father do? He was a __________________________
7. How many siblings did Virginia have? She had ______________ siblings
8. Where did she usually play in London?
☐ She played in the street
☐ She played in a big park
9. Where did she spend her happy summers?
☐ In Kensington Gardens
☐ In Cornwall by the sea
10. What were her parents like?
☐ The father was dominant and the mother was kind
☐ The father was insecure and the mother was dominant
11. Was Virginia good at cricket?
☐ Yes, she was
☐ No, she wasn’t
☐ I don’t know
The Hours (movie)

Text selected and rewritten by MF for Elementary students from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Methodology Questions
1. How long did it take you to skim the text? ___________________ minutes
2. How long did it take you to scan the text? ___________________ minutes
3. Did you do a second scanning to answer the difficult questions? ___________________

The Hours is a 2002 British-American drama film directed by Stephen Daldry, and starring Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore and Nicole Kidman. The screenplay by David Hare is based on Michael Cunningham’s 1998 novel of the same title.

The story is about three women of different generations. Their lives are interconnected by Woolf’s novel Mrs. Dalloway. Virginia Woolf (Kidman) lives in England in the 1920s. She suffers depression and mental illness. She is trying to write a novel. Laura Brown (Moore) is a housewife who feels very unhappy. She is happily married but she feels very unhappy. She doesn’t know what to do because she has a boy, too, Richard. Clarissa Vaughan (Streep) is a New Yorker waiting for her AIDS-stricken friend, Richard. The action takes place in one day in three different years.

• In 1923, Virginia Woolf begins writing Mrs. Dalloway.
• In 1951, Laura Brown, a housewife who feels very unhappy, escapes from her conventional life by reading Mrs. Dalloway.
• In 2001, Clarissa Vaughan spends the day preparing for a party in honor of her former lover and friend Richard, a poet with AIDS.

Virginia has nervous breakdowns and bipolar disorder. Sometimes she feels trapped because mental illnesses are terrible and there was no good medication then! Her husband, Leonard, creates a publishing house, the Hogarth Press, to work at home and stay close to her. One day Virginia rushes to the railway station. She wants to escape. Leonard gets to the station to bring Virginia home.

Laura is at home with her young son, Richie. She is pregnant. But she is very unhappy. She and Richie make a cake for Dan’s birthday, but it is a disaster. They make another cake and clean up, and she takes Richie a Mrs. Latch’s house. Laura checks into a hotel and she begins to read Mrs. Dalloway. She goes to sleep and dreams the hotel room is full of water! When she wakes up, she feels tenderness for her baby and Richie. She goes to pick him up and they return home to celebrate Dan’s birthday.

Clarissa is worried about Richard’s depression and the party she is planning for him. Clarissa is bisexual and has a relationship with Sally. But in the past she loved Richard. At the party, Richard wants to kill himself. Richard’s mother, Laura, arrives. She explains why she abandoned him: she decided to start a new life because her life was killing her and she didn’t want to commit suicide.

The film ends with Virginia saying thank you to Leonard for loving her. (Virginia decided to kill herself because she was suffering very much and because she was making Leonard suffer, too.) As a goodbye, she tells him, "Always the years between us. Always the years. Always the love. Always the hours."
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Reading Comprehension Questions

The Hours (movie)
Please, answer in full sentences!

In real life...

1. Who is Virginia Woolf?
   She ______________________________________________________________

2. When did she start writing her novel Mrs. Dalloway?
   She ______________________________________________________________

3. Who was Leonard Woolf?
   He ______________________________________________________________

4. What was wrong with Virginia Woolf’s health?
   She ______________________________________________________________

5. Why did Leonard create the Hogarth Press?
   Because he wanted ________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

In the movie The Hours...

6. Why does Virginia rush to the railway station? ____________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

7. What does Laura dream in the hotel? ________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

8. Why is Clarissa worried? __________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

9. Is Richard’s health OK? __________________________________________

10. Why does Virginia say thank you to Leonard? _______________________
    ________________________________________________________________
FAMOUS WORKS

- Voyage Out (Novel--1915)
- Night and Day (Novel--1919)
- Monday or Tuesday (Short Stories--1921)
- Jacob’s Room (Novel--1922)
- Mrs Dalloway (Novel--1925)
- The Common Reader (Essays--1925)
- To the Lighthouse (Novel--1927)
- Orlando: A Biography (Novel--1928)
- A Room of One’s Own (Essay--1929)
- The Waves (Novel--1931)
- Flush: A Biography (1933)
- The Common Reader Second Series (Essays--1935)
- The Years (Novel 1937)
- Three Guineas (Essay--1938)
- Between the Acts (Novel 1941)
- Collected Essays
- Collected Short Stories
Virginia Woolf, writer

What can we learn from Virginia Woolf?

Listen to my reading of the following text at the Talking People Podcast and then listen and repeat, until you can read it well!

http://www.talkingpeople.net/tppodcast/2018/03/01/people-what-can-we-learn-from-virginia-woolf/

From 1989 to 1992 I read Virginia Woolf & discovered a lot of worlds I didn’t know. I wrote this text I’m going to read myself, for you Elementary students, but I have included ideas & information from The School of Thought (link below).

Virginia Woolf is one of the most important writers in the twentieth century. Her analyses offer important ideas to understand the human world. She also explored new ways of writing becoming the most influential Modernist writer in the Western world.

Virginia Woolf captured in words all the excitement, pain, beauty and horror of the 20th (twentieth) century: urbanism, technology, war, shopping and consumerism, money, men and women, art and artists, and the human mind, with all the drama and comedy in life.

Virginia Woolf observed. She noticed everything and thought and wrote about it. She wrote about good things and about pain, about the power of words, of literature, and how much we can learn from all that to use in our lives. She wanted to understand life.

She developed her intelligence and helped people develop their intelligence! She learned from her own life. She just lived 55 years but with her life and work she helped us understand the human mind better!

Woolf’s parents died when she was young. After her mother’s death, she had her first nervous breakdown. She also suffered sexual abuse at the hands of a half brother. But at that time, you could not tell – women were always considered “guilty” of the abuse they suffered. Society was more sexist than today!

To make matters worse, women could not be thinkers or artists because – according to tradition – women did not have enough intelligence. For the same reason, women could not study at schools or universities. Virginia wanted to learn, but she couldn’t borrow books at the university library! This made her very sad and angry. Luckily, her family had a large library at home and Virginia read and read! She was self-educated.

In 1912 she married Leonard Woolf.
In 1914 the First World War started.
In 1917 Virginia and Leonard started their own publishing house, called the Hogarth Press. Virginia and Leonard, and the Hogarth Press, were part of the
Bloomsbury Group, a group of artists and thinkers who lived in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury in London. Virginia and Leonard published T.S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland*, a very important author in poetry. They also published Sigmund Freud’s complete works - when Freud was not famous!

At this time she was writing articles for newspapers, too, because first she worked as a journalist. Then she wrote her own stories, novels and essays. Between WWI (1914–18) and WWII (1939–45), in only four years, she wrote four of her most famous works: the novels *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Orlando* and the essay *A Room of One’s Own*.

She wrote about how gender roles can’t make us happy because we are human, we are more! She denounced that women were always poor and that they needed money, independence, freedom because they were human. She analysed the grave injustice of the situation of women – in society and in history, where women were ignored. She said,

Two of her essays, *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas* are very important in feminist thinking and women’s herstory. In *A Room of One’s Own* she imagines the life of Shakespeare’s sister. Women have always been poor! They need money and their own room! *Three Guineas* is an anti-war essay. She wrote against war because she experienced two world wars. She didn’t believe war could solve problems.

In 1941, after two years of the Second World War, a world war again!, and before having another mental crisis, Virginia decided to commit suicide. She wanted to stop all the suffering, inside and outside, for her and for her beloved husband and companion.

Emerson, one of her favorite writers, said: “In the work of a writer of genius we rediscover our own neglected thoughts” and she was a writer of genius, never afraid to think and explore!


☐ Watch the documentary of The School of Thought when you’re ready or get to Avanzado (B2)! [https://youtu.be/d1W7wqXD_b0](https://youtu.be/d1W7wqXD_b0)

**SPEAKING FILE.** Now use this audio to prepare a 3-minute talk on Virginia Woolf! Remember to use an outline, not a narrative! You can include your own information if you are sure that your English is OK!

Writing the narrative is the last test of all, the writing test (next page). You can base your writing on your oral but adapting it to the kind of written text you are required to write. Remember an oral presentation is not an article!
Write an **article in 100-125 words** about Virginia Woolf.

Be careful: movie stories (plots) are told in the present, but **biographies** are told in the past when the person is dead.

Remember to...

1. **Think** / brainstorm
2. **Work out an outline**
3. **Write** following your outline (use the back of this page)
4. **Think of a good or an informative title!**
5. **Proofread** your work at least twice!

Biography – an article
Be careful! The Answer Key is turning this page!!

**Answer Key**

**LISTENING p. 3**: Documentary
1. On January 25, 1882. 3. She lived in London. 4. She was a photographer (but she was also a very good painter!!). 5. Her mother’s name was Julia. 6. He was a writer. 7. She had 7 siblings. 8. She played in a big park. 9. In Cornwall by the sea. 10. The father was dominant and the mother was kind. 11. Yes, she was.

**READING p. 4**: Movie Review

1. She is a (British/English) writer. 2. She started writing Mrs. Dalloway in 1923 3. Leonard Wolf / He was Virginia’s husband. 4. She had nervous breakdowns and bipolar disorder / She had depression and a mental illness. 5. Because he wanted to work at home and stay close to Virginia. 6. Because she feels trapped / she wants to escape. 7. Laura dreams the hotel is full of water! 8. Because her friend is ill / has AIDS / She is worried about Richard’s depression and for the party for him. 9. No, it isn’t. He has AIDS (and depression). 10. For loving her / Because he loved her very much / For his love.

**WRITING p. 8**: An article (a bio). 100-125 words

**EXAMPLE**

**VIRGINIA WOOLF**

Virginia Woolf is a British writer. She was born in 1882. She lived in Bloomsbury, London, where she had a group, the Bloomsbury Group! They were artists and thinkers.

Her parents died and she had depression and had bipolar problems. But she loved life. She loved writing, learning. She loved language. She discovered a new way to write.

She married Leonard Woolf. They created the Hogarth Press. They worked together.

Virginia Woolf worked as a journalist. Then she became a writer, too. She wrote interesting books. She was very brave and intelligent.

She didn’t like war. She lived during the first and the second world wars. In 1941, during the second war, she committed suicide. She didn’t want to suffer more.

(123 words)