

Lesson Date: Prose Fiction

Reading & Speaking: *2BR02B* by Kurt Vonnegut

Lesson Objectives

- Become familiar and comfortable reading fiction.
- Answer comprehension questions on a work of fiction.
- Recognize themes in a work of fiction and find examples from the text to support such themes.
- Increase speaking fluency through casual conversation practice.
- Complete timed speaking responses to prompts extemporaneously
- Learn about the three areas of speaking evaluation and self-evaluate speaking samples

Speaking Assignment: Discuss the following conversation questions with a partner. Your responses will help you answer the extemporaneous speaking prompts later in the class.

1. Do you agree that the US, your home country, and the world face a population crisis now or in the future?
2. What are some of the consequences of an expanding global population?
3. What are some solutions to help control the population?
4. What is the best way to control the population?
5. Would you support or oppose population controls such as the “one child policy?” Why or why not?
6. Do you think that people are living too long?
7. What are some reasons that people are living longer?
8. Should the government provide care and medical support to people beyond a certain age?
9. Do you think it is fair that in the future young and healthy workers will have to pay high taxes to care for the growing elderly population?
10. What is your opinion of a society in which people are encouraged to commit suicide in order to control the population? Do you think this would ever happen?

Reading Assignment 1: Read part 2 of the short story and answer the questions to help you understand the plot and themes. Discuss your answers with a partner.

Section 5 Vocabulary

Keen

Taut

Reflectively

Luminously

Revolver

Sorry- adj

Dr. Hitz became rather severe with Wehling, towered over him. "You don't believe in population control, Mr. Wehling?" he said.

"I think it's perfectly *keen*," said Wehling *tautly*.

"Would you like to go back to the good old days, when the population of the Earth was twenty billion--about to become forty billion, then eighty billion, then one hundred and sixty billion? Do you know what a drupelet is, Mr. Wehling?" said Hitz.

"Nope," said Wehling sulkily.

"A drupelet, Mr. Wehling, is one of the little knobs, one of the little pulpy grains of a blackberry," said Dr. Hitz. "Without population control, human beings would now be packed on this surface of this old planet like drupelets on a blackberry! Think of it!"

Wehling continued to stare at the same spot on the wall.

"In the year 2000," said Dr. Hitz, "before scientists stepped in and laid down the law, there wasn't even enough drinking water to go around, and nothing to eat but sea-weed--and still people insisted on their right to reproduce like jackrabbits. And their right, if possible, to live forever."

"I want those kids," said Wehling quietly. "I want all three of them."

"Of course you do," said Dr. Hitz. "That's only human."

"I don't want my grandfather to die, either," said Wehling.

"Nobody's really happy about taking a close relative to the Catbox," said Dr. Hitz gently, sympathetically.

"I wish people wouldn't call it that," said Leora Duncan.

"What?" said Dr. Hitz.

"I wish people wouldn't call it 'the Catbox,' and things like that," she said. "It gives people the wrong impression."

"You're absolutely right," said Dr. Hitz. "Forgive me." He corrected himself, gave the municipal gas chambers their official title, a title no one ever used in conversation. "I should have said, 'Ethical Suicide

Studios," he said.

"That sounds so much better," said Leora Duncan.

"This child of yours--whichever one you decide to keep, Mr. Wehling," said Dr. Hitz. "He or she is going to live on a happy, roomy, clean, rich planet, thanks to population control. In a garden like that mural there." He shook his head. "Two centuries ago, when I was a young man, it was a hell that nobody thought could last another twenty years. Now centuries of peace and plenty stretch before us as far as the imagination cares to travel."

He smiled *luminously*.

The smile faded as he saw that Wehling had just drawn a *revolver*.

Wehling shot Dr. Hitz dead. "There's room for one--a great big one," he said.

And then he shot Leora Duncan. "It's only death," he said to her as she fell. "There! Room for two."

And then he shot himself, making room for all three of his children.

Nobody came running. Nobody, seemingly, heard the shots.

The painter sat on the top of his stepladder, looking down *reflectively* on the *sorry* scene.

Section 4 Questions

1. According to the doctor, what was the world like in the year 2000?
2. Why does the doctor mention the blackberry? What is the meaning of this metaphor?
3. What is the solution found by Wehling to allow all three of his triplets to live?

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Section 5 Vocabulary

Pondered

Mournful

Grim

Didn't have the nerve

The painter *pondered* the *mournful* puzzle of life demanding to be born and, once born, demanding to be fruitful ... to multiply and to live as

long as possible--to do all that on a very small planet that would have to last forever.

All the answers that the painter could think of were *grim*. Even grimmer, surely, than a Catbox, a Happy Hooligan, an Easy Go. He thought of war. He thought of plague. He thought of starvation.

He knew that he would never paint again. He let his paintbrush fall to the dropcloths below. And then he decided he had had about enough of life in the Happy Garden of Life, too, and he came slowly down from the ladder.

He took Wehling's pistol, really intending to shoot himself.

But he *didn't have the nerve*.

And then he saw the telephone booth in the corner of the room. He went to it, dialed the well-remembered number: "2 B R 0 2 B."

"Federal Bureau of Termination," said the very warm voice of a hostess.

"How soon could I get an appointment?" he asked, speaking very carefully.

"We could probably fit you in late this afternoon, sir," she said. "It might even be earlier, if we get a cancellation."

"All right," said the painter, "fit me in, if you please." And he gave her his name, spelling it out.

"Thank you, sir," said the hostess. "Your city thanks you; your country thanks you; your planet thanks you. But the deepest thanks of all is from future generations."

Section 5 Questions

1. What is the mournful puzzle of life that the painter thinks about?
2. Why do you think the painter decides that he will never paint again?
3. What is the painter's solution to his unhappiness?
4. What do you think about the story's ending? Is it surprising or interesting?
5. Does the story seem to think the problem is worse or the solution is worse? What might the author be warning the reader about?
6. After reading the story, what do you think is the message of the story? Is there a lesson or a message?

Speaking Assignment 2: In the lab, record your responses to the extemporaneous

speaking prompts. After recording your response, go back and listen to your response. Evaluate your response, using the provided rubric.

Writing Assignment:

Start thinking about the theme or message in the story. What is the message or lesson that the author is trying to send to the reader? Go back and find three examples in this section that promote this theme. Your examples might be a character, something that is said, or an event in the plot. Compose a paragraph in which you identify the theme and analyze how the examples support the theme.

Homework Assignments

1. Complete elaboration practice exercise
2. Complete writing assignment
3. Complete proposal for final project
4. Study for vocabulary quiz on these lessons
5. Study for CGT quiz 1

Speaking Prompts for 2BR02B

In the story the man will have triplets. Is it better to have a small family or a big family? Use reasons and details in your response.

In the story overpopulation is cited as a major social problem. What is the biggest problem facing society in your home country? Use reasons and details in your response.

Some people support one-child only laws such as the ones in China to control the population. Others feel that having children is a human right and should not be taken away. What is your opinion? Use reasons and details in your response.

Describe some of the reasons that people are now living longer. Use details and examples in your response.

There is no doubt that people are living longer. Some people would like to live to be very old, even if the last years were full of sickness. Others would prefer to live a shorter life without health problems. Which do you prefer? Use reasons and details in your response.

In the story, the man is sad to sacrifice his grandfather. Describe a family member that you are very close to.

Satire combines humor with serious criticism. Do you prefer books and movies that are funny and entertaining or books and movies that are about serious issues. Use reasons and examples in your response.

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Speaks smoothly										

Focus on delivery today. Evaluate your own responses by putting a check mark if you fulfill each criterion.