Chapter 4

ELT through Prose

Prose is considered to be a suitable genre for language teaching. In this particular chapter the possibility of utilizing prose texts for achieving the ELT objective will be explored. Etymologically speaking the term 'prose' has been derived from Latin 'prosa', which has its roots in the Latin phrase 'prose oratio' which meant "straight forward (or unembellished speech)." 1 'Prose' now means "straight forward speech, not poetically arranged". 2 Speaking in a simple manner prose "in its ordinary and most useful sense, is the sustained use of language as we ordinarily speak it, as distinguished from language patterned into recurrent units of meter, which we call verse." 3 But at times classification by the genres too becomes very complex because "Great prose has rhythm too," 4 though at times prose lacks rhythm, still, it does not mean that "distinguished prose is less an art" 5 than distinguished pieces of poetry.

It is an accepted fact that prose works developed much later in comparison to poetry. Ironically, the prose works are more popular than written verse in the present times. It is often believed that in today's fast moving world the availability of
high tech electronic media has led to a decline in the reading habit of the general public. However, Poirier (1988) considers such arguments to be unacceptable. In his words "Literature, by virtue of its formal conventions and the conscious struggle by which it appropriates language to poetry or the novel, is yet another and still more formidable example of media and representation." Though modern people do face time constraints yet the idea of literature being read by them is a tenable one. To quote Wilson (2001) the common reading public has a special inclination towards short stories. He says "as an art form the short story developed during the nineteenth century, it is, undoubtedly, one of the most popular forms of reading today. Its popularity stems from a variety of sources: its flexible narrative form, its artful constructions, the controlled organization around a single effect be it the exploration of character, creation of a mood, presentation of action, or development of a theme." Whatever be the reason for the popularity of the genre it explains how prose works can be successful in capturing the interest of the learners provided the language and the climax of the story are not beyond the reach of the learners' level of understanding.

Frye (1963) feels that when ordinary language is subjected to metamorphosis different literary genres like prose
and drama come into being. Frye (1963) finds it difficult to differentiate between prose and poetry. He says "The language of ordinary speech is an unshaped associative babble, a series of asyntactic short phrases, and it is psychologically a monologue, designed for expression and not primarily for communication... The direct and simple way is to put a pattern of recurrence on it and turn it into verse." The more difficult and sophisticated way is to put a logical pattern of recurrence on it and turn it into verse. Frye's argument is tantamount to a confession that both prose and verse are conventionalized manifestations of language. Verse by the virtues of rhyme and rhythm is more aesthetic of the two. However, it is important to notice that literary prose for a common reader is the more lucid, logical and organized use of ordinary language than poetry.

Since literary prose is closest to the language of ordinary usage, it is considered to be the ideal genre for teaching language. The main purpose of teaching poetry is often considered to impart pleasure to the readers. It is often believed that stimulating the heart and mind of the reader through the creative use of language is the main aim of the poet. He appeals to the heart and mind of the reader and motivates him to interpret the text in such a manner that the
reader has a fresh outlook towards the text, his surroundings and the entire world. It wouldn’t be wrong to carry on with the contention that great prose also at times appeals to the heart and mind of the reader. What then is the difference between poetry and prose? First and foremost the attitude of poet towards his subject matter and that of a prose writer towards his topic is extremely different. To quote Brown (1966) “in prose the characteristic assumption of both writer and reader is that the subject has an identity and an interest apart from the words, whereas in poetry it is assumed that word and idea are inseparable.” However to think that the ideas or thoughts of a prose writer are separable from his words is wrong. But still, his words can be subjected to translations and they can be easily paraphrased in comparison to poetry because words and ideas in poetry are so deeply entwined that they cannot be separated from each other easily. On second thoughts it can be said that it is difficult to translate or paraphrase poetry in comparison to prose, hence prose is more suitable for ELT because it is more comprehensible of the two.

Prose unlike poetry demands lucidity, brevity and precision from a prose writer. General prose writer is expected to be very clear and explicit in his treatment of language. Whether it is the factual description of an object or report of an
Read the following paragraph:

These effortless pleasures, these ready-made distractions that are same for everyone over the face of the whole Western world, are surely a worse menace to our civilizations than ever the Germans were. The working hours of the day already, for
the great majority of human beings, occupied in the performance of purely mechanical tasks in which no mental effort, no individuality, no initiative are required. And now, in the hours of leisure, we turn to distractions as mechanically stereotyped and demanding as little intelligence and initiative as does pure work. Add such leisure to such work and the sum is a perfect day which it is a blessed relief to come to the end of.

(from 'Pleasures' by A. Huxley)

In this paragraph Huxley is criticizing all the mechanical tasks like watching movies or a football match on T.V. that we perform in the name of pleasures. Yet, in this particular paragraph he leaves it to the imagination of the reader to finally decide what actual pleasures are.

All literary genres including literary prose are often condemned, as already noted elsewhere, for language teaching purposes. Leech and Svartvik (1975) reject the idea of using literary texts for ELT because they believe "literary, elevated and rhetorical forms of language are not particularly common in the everyday language of today." On the contrary, Leech and Svartvik (1975) themselves admit that "some features of English of limited use have a 'literary' or 'elevated' tone: they
belong mainly to the literary language of the past, but can still be used by a writer or public speaker of today if he wants to impress us or move us by the solemnity or seriousness of what he has to say."

Since literary language helps to heighten the effect of the thoughts through elevated or rhetoric use of the language. Given below is an extract from a letter written by Hopkins to his mother. If the reader would not be aware that it is an extract from a letter, the reader would take it to be an extract from some work of fictional prose.

Read the following extract from a letter written by Hopkins to his mother:

"They are shy of being overheard but they can't conceal their agreements. What one says the other assents to by the roots and upwards from the level of the sea. He makes a kind of Etna of assent, without effort but with a long fervent breathing out of all the breath there is in him."

(from a letter written by G.M. Hopkins)

Such descriptive explanation of the tone of agreement on the first reading seems to be an extract from a novel or a short-story (more because of the use of an uncommon word 'Etna'). However, as already mentioned in actuality it is an extract from Hopkin's letter where he tries to describe to his
mother the agreements of the two gardeners working for him through the letter. Thus, incorporating words to heighten the effect is not just a phenomena used in literature. Such efflorescent use of language is also found in letters and speeches for the achievement of emotive effect or sometimes for the sake of sheer emphasiz. So, there is not much difference between simple prose and fictional prose. They many a times keep their tryst though it is not very frequent.

Not only do ELT experts shun literary prose from ELT syllabuses but they also feel that a teacher who has taught literary texts shouldn't be entrusted to teaching of EST because his "enthusiasm and values have been formed in a rather narrow humanistic tradition centering round history and literature." 15 But on a close inspection in the field of English novels it can be deduced that language of prose is not limited; it is limitless. For instance Joseph Conrad writes about the experiences on sea in his novel Lord Jim, Robin Cook deals with the advancements in the field of medical sciences in his novel The Brain, George Eliot writes about the ordinary people and their moral struggles in her novel Silas Marner, Fredrick Forsyth writes about the ghettos and atrocities of Nazis' on Jews in his Odessa File and Virginia Woolf writes her novels in such a manner that if they are deprived of character names
and settings they would seem to be the study on human psyche. Hence, it can be said that language of literature is all-inclusive. And perhaps literary texts are the kind of texts that can boast of dealing with all kinds subjects at one point of time or another. The scope of literature is not narrow but extremely wide.

Mario Cuomo has said “you campaign in poetry; you govern in prose.” In Cuomo's opinion the language pattern of verse is fit for the purpose of enticing the readers. But when cold logic is required to control the public, prose comes to rescue. Though its not important to argue whether poetry is more persuasive or prose of the two. It is important to note that 'prose' is more comprehensible to the readers in comparison to poetry.

On a broader plane literary prose can be divided into three main categories: the essay, novel and short stories. The essay according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is “a piece of writing, usually short and in prose, on any one subject”. So an essay can be called a brief and clear account of the essayist on any specific subject.

Novels and short stories together come under the heading of fictional prose. While prose is straightforward speech devoid
of the metric arrangement found commonly in poetry “a prose fiction is a narrative of any length dealing with any subject. As fiction it creates an imaginary world, what the Renaissance poet and critic Sidney called as “second nature.” Lemon (1974) further adds as a “narrative, it relates a sequence of events, usually involving a conflict and a resolution of the conflict, along with such supporting elements as characters, setting and description.” It is very important to observe that all the elements of prose fiction like characters, setting, events etc. are interconnected through the medium of language.

It is true that “the simplest and oldest form of prose is the story or tale. Both refer to relatively uncomplicated (but sometimes very elaborate) narratives, usually plotted and designed to entertain. Either, but especially the tale, tends to sound as if it were created for oral rather than written presentation. Although usually in prose, stories may be told in verse too (Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales).”

Though stories are told in verse too for instance ‘Lochinvor’ by Sir Walter Scott, yet it can be said that “oratio prosa is opposite of oratio vincta” Oratio vincta is the embellished speech and is distinguished for its rhythmical compositions. As opposed to oratio vincta (poetry), proa oratio (prose) can be called the straightforward discourse or
speech. Thus, prose is more comprehensible and suitable in comparison to poetry for language teaching purpose.

Prose is the straightforward form of discourse, and its structure too is different from the highly patterned poetry known for its strictly marked stanzas. Prose texts are made up of loosely formed paragraphs that vary in length from time to time. As a result, when writing a piece of prose the writer does not need to bother about the rhyming scheme or rhythm as a poet does. As long as the ideas of a prose writer are coherent, well knit and clearly expressed through the medium of language they are bound to be effective.

Claude (1990) asks some profound questions "who better than the linguist can in effect within the real, seize upon a network of the real, seize upon the flash of a sense that no meaning comes to dull? Who, indeed, since the substance of that which the linguist manipulates is made up solely of these shimmerings?" The answer to the musings of Claude is that literature creates reality in its own way, which is real and authentic in the literary context. Moreover the language of literary texts is so lively that it has a mesmerizing effect on the reader. So, it can be said that prose texts have a magical quality which EST or ESP texts may lack.
If prose fiction has not been so effective in enlightening the language teachers; it has happened due to the lack of application of proper methodology for ELT through literary prose. Fictional prose is closest to the language of standard usage in the sense that it incorporates language in a clear manner. Collie and Slater (1987) consider short stories to be "an ideal way of introducing students to literature in the foreign language classroom." Their brevity of length and simple language makes it possible for the teacher to easily manage them in the classroom. Short stories can be completed in a short period of time in comparison to novels and long dramatic texts. A language learner can easily relate to the subjects of short stories because all the variety of experiences are immersed in the vast collection of short stories. The varied subjects of short stories cater to the need of all kinds of readers belonging to all ages.

However, the syllabus designers not only for intermediate class second language learners but all non-native speakers learning English should be well aware of the 'art of omission and selection'. The short stories, novels or essays chosen should certainly suit the difficulty level of the language learners they have been selected for.
Fictional prose texts can serve as samples of good language usage. By referring to literary texts Billows (1976) means “writing better than most of us can write in a text-book”. Hence literary texts are more interesting than ESP materials.

Widdowson (1983) raises a very vital point, he says “the fictional world is actual because we're engaged with it. But it’s not real. It’s because it’s immediate without being real and carries convention without-being real and carries conviction without being true that the reader has to use these procedures” of interpretation. Though the world created by literature is not actual but it becomes real for the reader as long as he/she is interacting with it. By engaging himself or herself in the process of reading, the reader accepts the reality as manifested by the writer. In this sense both the reader and the writer of the literary text determine the meaning of the literary text. The reader's response is arbitrary because the author/writer can never completely claim to have control over the reader's response. In being arbitrary the response of the reader is bound to be creative because it is based on the reader's perception of reality, as he/she has perceived it through the meaning of the literary text. Hence, the process of language learning through literature becomes real, authentic and interesting. Fictional prose gives an opportunity to the
reader to voice his/her opinions about different facets of the story. How he/she interprets the story? What is his/her opinion about the characters: their diction, dialect or speech, their style of dressing? How is one character's relationship with the other character in the context of the story? And finally whether the fate of the characters is justified in the story or not? And in order to answer all these and other such questions the learners/readers not only read the lines but also read in between the lines by concentrating on the subject matter of the story and language treatment in the story. Thus, it can be said "that the short story is one of the literary genres best suited to the needs of the language students".27

Jones (2001) says on the authority of Andrew Wright "The whole world is full of story tellers!" 28 The statement is true because people often hear anecdotes (unglorified, unelaborated and plain narrative of a single incident) from their friends, confidantes, relatives and colleagues. Thus, it can be concluded that short stories are ideal for teaching the art of narration as every human being indulges in the art of narration. Read the following story:
THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

She was one of those pretty, charming young ladies, born, as if through an error of destiny, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no hopes, no means of becoming known, appreciated, loved and married by a man either rich or distinguished; so she allowed herself to marry a petty clerk in the office of the Board of Education.

She was simple, not being able to adorn herself; but she was unhappy, as one out of her class; for women belong to no caste, no race; their grace, their beauty, and their charm serving them in the place of birth and family. Their inborn finesse, their instinctive elegance, their suppleness of wit are their only aristocracy, making some daughters of the people the equal of great ladies.

She suffered incessantly, feeling herself born for all delicacies and luxuries. She suffered from the poverty of her apartment, the shabby walls, the worn chair, and the faded stuffs. All these things, which another woman of her station would not have noticed, tortured and angered her. The sight of the little Breton, who made this humble home, awoke in her sad regrets and desperate dreams. She thought of quiet ante-chambers, with their oriental hangings, lighted by high, bronze
torches, and of the two great footmen in short trousers who sleep in the large armchairs, made sleepy by the heavy air from the heating apparatus. She thought of large drawing rooms, hung in old silks, of graceful pieces of furniture carrying bric-a-brac of inestimable value, and of the little perfumed coquettish apartments, made for five o'clock chats with most intimate friends, men known and sought after, whose attention all women envied and desired.

When she seated herself for dinner, before the round table where the tablecloth had been used three days, opposite her husband, who uncovered the tureen with delighted air, saying, "Oh! The good potpie! I know nothing better than that" —she would think of the elegant dinners, of the shining silver, of the tapestries peopling the walls with ancient personages and rare birds in the midst of fairy forests; she thought of the exquisite food served on marvellous dishes, of the whispered gallantries, listened to with smile of the sphinx, while eating the rose-coloured flesh of the trout or a chicken's wing.

She had neither frocks nor jewels, nothing. And she loved only those things. She felt that she was made for them. She had such a desire to please, to be sought after, to be clever, and courted.
She had a rich friend, a schoolmate at the convent, whom she did not like to visit, she suffered so much when she returned. And she wept for whole days from chagrin, from regret, from despair, and disappointment.

One evening her husband returned elated, bearing in his hand a large envelope.

"Here," he said, "here is something for you."

She quickly tore open the wrapper and drew out a printed card on which were inscribed these words:

The Minister of Public Instruction and Madame Georges Ramponneau ask the honour of Monsieur and Madame Loisel's company Monday evening, January 18, at the Minister's residence.

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation spitefully upon the table murmuring:

"What do you suppose I want with that?"

But, my dearie, I thought it would make you happy. You never go out, and this is an occasion, and a fine one! I had a great deal of trouble to get it. Everybody wishes one, and it is very select; not many are given to employees. You will see the whole official world there."
She looked at him with an irritated eye and declared impatiently:

"What do you suppose I have to wear to such a thing as that?"

He had not thought of that; he stammered.

"Why, the dress you wear when we go to the theatre. It seems very pretty to me"

He was silent, stupefied, in dismay, at the sight of his wife weeping. Two great tears fell slowly from the corners of her eyes toward the corners of her mouth.

He stammered, "What is the matter? What is the matter?"

By a violent effort, she had controlled her vexation and responded in a calm voice, wiping her moist cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no dress and consequently I cannot go to this affair. Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better fitted out than I."

"Let us see, Matilda. How much would a suitable costume cost, something that would serve for other occasions, something very simple?"
She reflected for some seconds, making estimates and thinking of a sum that she could ask without bringing with it an immediate refusal and frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.

Finally she said, in a hesitating voice:

"I cannot tell exactly, but it seems to me that four hundred francs ought to cover it."

He turned a little pale, for he had saved just this sum to buy a gun so that he might be able to join some hunting parties the next summer, on the plains of Nanterre, with some friends who went to shoot larks up there on Sunday. Nevertheless, he answered:

"Very well. I will give you four hundred francs. But try to have a pretty dress."

The day of the ball approached and Madame Loisel seemed sad, disturbed, anxious. Nevertheless, her dress was nearly ready. Her husband said to her one evening:

"What is the matter with you? You have acted strangely for two or three days."
And she responded, I am vexed not to have a jewel, not one stone, nothing to adorn myself with. I shall have such a poverty-laden look. I would prefer not to go to the party.”

He replied: “You can wear some natural flowers. At this season they look very chic. For ten francs you can have two or three magnificent roses.”

She was not convinced. “No,” she replied, “there is nothing more humiliating than to have a shabby air in the midst of rich women.”

Then her husband cried out: “How stupid we are! Go and find your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you her jewels. You are well enough acquainted with her to do this.”

She uttered a cry of joy. “It is true!” she said, “I had not thought of this.”

The next day she took herself to her friend’s house and related her story of distress. Madame Forestier went to her closet with the glass doors, took out a large jewel-case, brought it, opened it, and said: “Choose, my dear.”

She saw at first some bracelets, then a collar of pearls, then a Venetian cross of gold and jewels and of admirable workmanship. She tried the jewels before the glass, hesitated
but could neither decide to take them or leave them. Then she asked:

"Have you nothing more?"

"Why, yes. Look for yourself, I do not know what will please you."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb necklace of diamonds, and her heart beat fast with an immoderate desire. Her hands trembled as she took them. She placed them about her throat against her dress, and remained in ecstasy before them. Then she asked, in a hesitating voice, full of anxiety:

"Could you lend me this? Only this?"

"Why, yes certainly."

She fell upon the neck of her friend, embraced her with passion, then went away with her treasure.

The night of the ball arrived. Madame Loisel was a great success. She was the prettiest of all, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy. All the men noticed her, asked her name, and wanted to be presented. All the members of the Cabinet wished to waltz with her. The Minister of Education paid her some attention.
She danced with enthusiasm, with passion, intoxicated with pleasure, thinking of nothing in the triumph of her beauty. In the glory of her success, in a kind of cloud of happiness composed of all this homage, and all this admiration, of all these awakened desires, and this victory so complete and sweet to the heart of woman.

She went home towards four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been half asleep in one of the little ante-rooms since midnight, with three other gentlemen whose wives were enjoying themselves very much.

He threw around her shoulders the wraps they had carried for the coming home, modest garments of everyday wear, whose poverty clashed with elegance of the ball costume. She felt this and wished to hurry away in order not to be noticed by the other women who were wrapping themselves in rich furs.

Loisel retained her: "Wait," said he, "you will catch a cold out there. I am going to call a cab."

But she would not listen and descended the steps rapidly when they were in the street they found no carriage and they began to seek for one, hailing the coachmen whom they saw at a distance.
They walked alone towards the Seine, hopeless and shivering. Finally they found on the dock one of those old, nocturnal coupes that one sees in Paris after nightfall, as if they were ashamed of their misery by day.

It took them as far as their door in Martyr Street, and they went wearily up to their apartment. It was all over for her. And on his part, he remembered that he would have to be at the office by ten o'clock.

She removed the wraps from her shoulders before the glass, for a final view of herself in her glory. Suddenly she uttered a cry. Her necklace was not around her neck.

Her husband, already half undressed, asked “what is the matter? “

She turned towards him distractedly:

“I have – I have - I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace.”

He arose in dismay: “What! How is that ? It is not possible.”

And they looked in the folds of the dress, in the folds of the mantle, in the pockets, everywhere. They could not find it.
He asked: "You are sure you still had it on when we left the ball?"

"Yes, I felt it in the vestibule as we came out."

"But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes. It is probable. Did you take the number?"

"No. And, You, did you notice what it was? "

"No."

They looked at each other utterly cast down. Finally, Loisel dressed himself again.

"I am going ", said he, "over the track where we went on foot to see it, can find it."

And he went. She remained in her evening gown, not having the force to go to bed. Stretched upon a chair, without ambition or thoughts.

Towards seven o'clock her husband returned. He had found nothing.
He went to the police and to the cab offices, and put an advertisement in the newspapers, offering a reward; he did everything that afforded them a suspicion of hope.

She waited all day in a state of bewilderment before this frightful disaster. Loisel returned at evening with his face harrowed and pale; and had discovered nothing.

"It will be necessary", said he, "To write to your friend that you have broken the clasp of the necklace and that you will have it repaired. That will give us time to turn around."

She wrote as he dictated.

At the end of the week, they had lost all hope. And Loisel, older by five years, declared:

"We must take measures to replace this jewel."

The next day they took the box which had enclosed it, to the jeweller whose name was on the inside. He consulted his books:

"It is not I, Madame," said he, "who sold this necklace; I only furnished the casket."
Then they went from jeweller to jeweller, seeking a necklace like the other one, consulting their memories, and ill, both of them, with chagrin and anxiety.

In a shop of the Palais-Royal, they found a chaplet of diamonds which seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost. It was valued at forty thousand francs. They could get it for thirty-six thousand.

They begged the jeweller not to sell it for three days. And they made an arrangement by which they might return it for thirty-four thousand francs if they found the other one before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He borrowed the rest.

He borrowed it, asking for a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis of this one, and three louis of that one. He gave notes, made ruinous promises, took money of usurers and the whole race of lenders. He compromised his whole existence, in fact, risked his signature, without even knowing whether he could make it good or not, and, harassed by anxiety for the future, by the black misery which surrounded him, and by the prospect of all physical privations and moral
tortures, he went to get the new necklace, depositing on the merchant's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took back the jewels to Madame Forestier, the latter said to her in a frigid tone:

"You should have returned them to me sooner, for I might have needed them."

She did not open the jewel-box, as her friend feared she would. If she should perceive the substitution, what would she think? What should she say? Should she take her for a robber?

Madame Loisel now knew the horrible life of necessity. She did her part, however, completely, heroically. It was necessary to pay this frightful debt. She would pay it. They sent away the maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented some rooms under a mansard roof.

She learned the heavy cares of household, the odious work of a kitchen. She washed the dishes, using her rosy nails upon the greasy pots and the bottoms of the stewpans. She washed the soiled linen, the chemises and dish-cloths, which she hung on the line to dry, she took down the refuse to the street each morning and brought up the water, stopping at each landing to breathe. And clothed like a woman of the people, she went to the grocer's, the butcher's, and the
fruiterer's, with her basket on her arm, shopping, haggling to the last sous of her miserable money.

Every month it was necessary to renew some notes, thus obtaining time, and to pay others.

The husband worked evenings, putting the books of some merchants in order, and nights he often did copying at five sous a page. And this life lasted for ten years.

At the end of ten years, they had restored all, all, with interest of the usurer, and accumulated interest besides.

Madame Loisel seemed old now. She had become a strong, hard woman, the crude woman of the poor household. Her hair badly dressed, her skirts awry, her hands red, she spoke in a loud tone, and washed the floors with large pails of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she would seat herself before the window and think of that evening part of former times, of that ball where she was so beautiful and so flattered.

How would it have been if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? Who knows? How singular is life, and how full of changes! How small a thing will ruin or save one!
One Sunday, as she taking a walk in the Champs Elysees to rid herself of the cares of the week, she suddenly perceived a woman walking with a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still pretty, still attractive. Madame Loisel was affected. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not? She approached her. “Good morning, Jeanne.”

Her friend did not recognize her and was astonished to be so familiarly addressed by this common personage. She stammered:

“But, Madame – I do not know – you must be mistaken - ”

“No, I am Matilda Loisel.”

Her friend uttered a cry of astonishment: “Oh, my poor Matilda! How you have changed?”

“Yes, I have had some hard days since I saw you; and some miserable ones – and all because of you-”

“Because of me? How is that?”

“You recall the diamond necklace that you loaned me to wear to the Commissioner’s ball?

“Yes, very well.”
"Well, I lost it."

"How is that, since you returned it to me?"

"I returned another to you exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. You can understand that it was not easy for us who had nothing. But it is finished and I am decently content."

Madame Forestier stopped short. She said:

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes. You did not perceive it then? They were just alike."

And she smiled with a proud and simple joy. Madame Forestier was touched and took both hands as she replied:

"Oh my poor Matilda. Mine were false. They were not worth even five hundred francs."

( by Guy De Maupassant )

Given below is the lesson plan for Maupassant's story 'The Diamond Necklace':

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Lesson Plan 1 - **The Diamond Necklace**

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**Pre-reading phase:**

Activity I - What does the title suggest to you?

Activity II - What do you feel the word diamond signifies?

Activity III -(Invite the students to talk about diamonds):

(a) Are diamonds more expensive than platinum and gold?

(b) Which is the most expensive diamond you have heard of?

Activity IV -(Invite learners to express their views on the following statements):

(a) ‘Diamonds are forever.’

(b) ‘Diamonds are a woman’s best friends.’
Reading phase:

Techniques of narration-

Activity I - The learners are asked to find three instances each of first person narration, second person narration and the third person narration from the story.

Direct- indirect speech

Activity II - The learners are asked to identify five instances each of direct and indirect speech form the story.

Vocabulary

Difficult words in context

Activity III - The learners are asked to make a list of difficult words in the context they come up with the following words - destiny, suppleness, instinctive, elegance, aristocracy, finesse etc.

Activity IV - Look at the word ‘destiny’ in the sentence — ‘She was one of those pretty, charming young ladies, born as if through an error of destiny into a family of clerks.’

(1) What part of speech does ‘destiny’ belong to?
(2) Note that 'destiny' is preceded by a preposition 'of', and following by a preposition 'into':

(3) What happens if 'y' is dropped and 'ed' is added to it?

(4) Can you think of any other word that can be used in its place?

Activity V- Read the following sentence very carefully — 'Their inborn finesse, their instinctive elegance, their suppleness of wit are their only aristocracy, making some daughters of the people the equal of great ladies.'

The learners are asked to:

(1) Make a list of the adjectives in this sentence. They come up with following responses— inborn, instinctive, suppleness, equal and great.

(2) They are asked to replace them with other adjectives, e.g. Their innate finesse, their intrinsic elegance, their quality of wit are their only aristocracy, making some daughters of the people the equivalent of sophisticated ladies.'

(3) They are again asked to make the list of the nouns in the same sentence, they come up with these responses — finesse, elegance, wit, aristocracy, daughters, people and ladies.
(4) Now the learners are asked to replace these nouns with some other nouns, e.g. 'Their innate charm, their instinctive grace, their quality of intellect, are their only prerogative, making some ladies of the high class the part of sophisticated bandwagon.'

(5) After all the adjectives and nouns have been replaced the sentence would be read like this: "Their innate charm, their instinctive grace, their quality of intellect are their only prerogative making some ladies of the high class, the part of sophisticated bandwagon."

(6) The learners are asked to make some other similar sentence by replacing all the adjectives and nouns?

Post reading phase:

Activity -I

Answer the following:-

(a) Do you feel it's correct to borrow things from your friends or relatives?

(b) What do you think is the moral of the story?

Activity II –

Subject verb agreement
The learners are asked to supply a verb in agreement with the subject in the following sentences:

(i) The students requested not to pluck flowers from the garden.

(ii) Three and three-six.

(iii) One or the other of those fellows finished the task.

(iv) Each of the girls punished.

(v) Shakespeare was one of the greatest dramatists that ever lived.

Activity -III

Direct-indirect speech

The learners are supplied with examples of direct speech and are asked to change them into indirect speech:

The exercise is as follows-

(1) "What's wrong with you?" she said to him.

(2) "The damsel in distress exclaimed"will none of you help me? "

(3) Larah said "How clever I am! "
(4) Tom said "You have done a great job!"

(5) She said to her, "Is not your name Bella?"

After the learners finish the tasks assigned to them the teacher collects their notebooks and checks them to find out how competent the learners are in English language. The language areas in which he/she finds the learners deficient, the teacher provides them with more exercises and drills for the sake of improving their language skills. Thus, a single prose text can also be used to tackle innumerable language problems but for using the prose texts such as a short story a talented teacher must prepare a lesson plan.

For instance if the teacher wishes to teach through a particular story, for instance ‘Night Train at Deoli’ by Ruskin Bond the phenomena of ‘sentence and word stress.’ He/she will in advance explain to the learners the phenomena of sentence stress and word stress. He/she must explain that when English is spoken with out any special emphasis the "significant words which are normally the content or lexical words “ should be accented, e.g. nouns, demonstratives (like this, that, etc) pronouns (notably interrogatives) and adjectives should be stressed, while insignificant words, e.g. articles prepositions, auxiliaries conjunctions, personal pronouns and
relative pronouns should not be stressed. Prose texts offer innumerable opportunities for teaching the language. Through prose texts the teacher can explain when English is spoken normally without any special emphasis. The significant words which are normally the content or lexical words should be accented, e.g.

(i) He 'won a 'race.

(ii) He 'went for a 'ride in the 'car.

(iii) The 'cuckoo is 'singing in the 'trees.

The teacher can explain to the learners that in words of two syllables when it comes to the nouns and adjectives the stress falls on first syllable. In verbs and adverbs stress falls on second syllable. For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Noun or Adjective</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>/æbsənt/</td>
<td>/əb sənt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert</td>
<td>/dɛzət/</td>
<td>/dæ ɪzət/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the phenomena of sentence stress and word stress becomes clear to the learners, the teacher also trains the learners in identifying grammatical patterns from the story, e.g. Sub + verb + that clause etc. When all these things become
clear to the learners. The teacher will proceed with the story. Take for instance a short story - *The Night Train at Deoli* by Ruskin Bond. A teacher who wishes to take up this story for ELT purpose will select the language items he/she wishes to teach through this story. In accordance with the items the teacher wishes to teach to the learners he/she will prepare the lesson plan of the story. The teacher asks the learners to read the entire story:

**The Night Train at Deoli**

When I was at college I used to spend my summer vacations in Dehra, at my grandmother's place. I would leave the plains early in May and return late in July was a small station about thirty miles from Dehra: it marked the beginning of the heavy jungles of the Indian Terai.

The train would reach Deoli at about five in the morning, when the station would be dimly lit with electric bulbs and oil-lamps, and the jungle across the railway tracks would just be visible in the faint light of dawn. Deoli had one platform, an office for the station-master and a waiting room. The platform boasted a tea stall, a fruit vendor, and few stray dogs; not much else, because the train stopped there for only ten minutes before rushing on into the forests.
Why it stopped at Deoli, I don’t know. Nothing ever happened there. Nobody got off the train and nobody got in. There were never any coolies on the platform. But the train would halt there a full ten minutes, and then a bell would sound, the guard would blow whistle, and presently Deoli would be left behind and forgotten.

I used to wonder what happened in Deoli, behind the station walls. I always felt sorry for that little platform, and for the place that nobody wanted to visit. I decided that one day I would get off the train at Deoli, and spend the day there, just to please the town.

I was eighteen, visiting my grandmother, and the night train at Deoli. A girl came down the platform, selling baskets.

It was a cold morning and the girl had a shawl thrown across her shoulder. Her feet were bare and her clothes were old, but she was a young girl, walking gracefully and with dignity.

When she came to my window, she stopped. She saw that I was looking at her intently, but at first she pretended not to notice. She had a pale skin, set off by shiny black hair, and dark troubled eyes. And those eyes, searching and eloquent, met mine.
She stood by my window for some time and neither of us said anything. But when she moved on, I found myself leaving my seat and going to the carriage door. She noticed me at the door, and stood waiting on the platform, looking the other way. I walked across to the tea stall. A kettle was boiling over on a small fire, but the owner of the stall was busy serving tea somewhere on the train. The girl followed behind the stall.

'Do you want to buy a basket?' she asked. 'They are very strong, made of the finest cane....'

'No,' I said, 'I don't want a basket.'

We stood looking at each other for what seemed a very long time and then she said, 'Are you sure you don't want a basket?'

'All right, give me one,' I said, and took the one on top and gave her a rupee, hardly daring to touch her fingers.

As she was about to speak, the guard blew his whistle she said something, but it was lost in the clanging of the bell and the hissing of the engine. I had to run back to my compartment. The carriage shuddered and jolted forward.

I watched her as the platform slipped away. She was alone on the platform and she did not move, but she was
looking at me and smiling. I watched her until the signal-box came in the way, and then jungle hid the station, but I could still see her standing there alone.

I sat up awake for the rest of the journey. I could not rid my mind of the picture of the girl’s face and her dark, smouldering eyes.

But when I reached Dehra the incident became blurred and distant; for there were other things to occupy my mind. It was only when I was making the return journey, two months later, that I remembered the girl.

I was looking out for her as the train drew into the station and I felt an unexpected thrill when I saw her walking up the platform. I sprang off the foot-board and waved to her.

When she saw me, she smiled. She was pleased that I remembered her. I was pleased that she remembered me. We were both pleased, and it was almost like a meeting of old friends.

She did not go down the length of the train selling baskets, but came straight to the tea stall; her dark eyes were suddenly filled with light. We said nothing for some time but we couldn’t have been more eloquent. I felt the impulse to put her on the train there and then, and take her away with me; I could
not bear the thought of having to watch her recede into the
distance of Deoli station. I took the baskets from her hand and
put them down on the ground. She put out her hand for one of
them, but I caught her hand and held it.

'I have to go to Delhi', I said.

She nodded. 'I do not have to go anywhere,'

The guard blew his whistle for the train to leave and how I
hated the guard for doing that.

'I will come again.' And as she nodded, the bell changed
and the train slid forward. I had to wrench my hand away from
the girl and run for the moving train.

This time I did not forget her. She was with me for the
remainder of the journey, and for long after. All that year she
was a bright, living thing. And when college term finished I
packed in haste and left for Dehra earlier than usual. My
grandmother would be pleased at my eagerness to see her.

I was nervous and anxious as the train drew into Deoli,
because I was wondering what I should say to the girl, and
what I should do; I was determined that wouldn't stand
helplessly before her, hardly able to speak or do anything
about my feelings.
The train came to Deoli, and I looked up and down the platform, but I could not see the girl anywhere.

I opened the door and stepped off the footboard. I was deeply disappointed, and overcome by a sense of foreboding. I felt I had to do something, and so I ran up to the station-master and said, 'Do you know the girl who used to sell baskets here?'

'No, I don't, said the station-master, you better get on the train if you don't want to be left behind.'

But I paced up and down the platform and stared over the railing at the station yard; all I saw was a mango tree and a dusty road leading into the jungle. Where did the road go? The train was moving out of the station, and I had to jump for the door of my compartment. Then, as the train gathered speed and rushed through the forests, I sat brooding in front of the window.

What could I do about finding a girl I had seen only twice, who had hardly spoken to me, and about whom I knew nothing — absolutely nothing — but for whom I felt a tenderness and responsibility that I had never felt before?

My grandmother was not pleased with my visit after all, because I didn't stay at her place more than a couple of weeks. I felt restless and ill-at-ease. So I took the train back to the
plains, meaning to ask further questions of the station-master at Deoli.

But at Deoli there was a new station-master. The previous man had been transferred to another post within the past week. The new man didn't know anything about the girl who sold baskets. I found the owner of the tea stall, a small, shrivelled-up man, wearing greasy clothes, and asked him if he knew anything about the girl with the baskets.

'Yes, there was such a girl here, I remember quite well,' he said. 'But she stopped coming now.'

'Why?' I asked. 'What happened to her?'

'How should I know?' said the man. 'She was nothing to me.'

And once again I had to run for the train.

As Deoli platform receded, I decided that one day I would have to break journey there, spend a day in the town, make enquiries and find the girl who had stolen my heart with nothing but a look from her dark, impatient eyes.

With this thought I consoled myself throughout my last term in college. I went to Dehra again in the summer and when, in the early hours of the morning, the night train drew into
Deoli station, I looked up and down the platform for signs of the girl, knowing I wouldn't find her but hoping just the same.

Somehow, I couldn't bring myself to break journey at Deoli and spend a day there. (if it was all fiction or a film, I reflected, I would have got down and cleared up the mystery and reached a suitable ending for the whole thing.) I think I was afraid to do this. I was afraid of discovering what really happened to the girl. Perhaps she was no longer in Deoli, perhaps she was married, perhaps she held fallen ill . . . .

In the last few years I have passed through Deoli many times, and I always look out of the carriage window, half expecting to see the same unchanged face smiling up at me. I wonder what happens in Deoli, behind the station walls. But I will never break my journey there. I prefer to keep hoping and dreaming, and looking out of the window up and down lonely platform, waiting for the girl with the baskets.

I never break my journey at Deoli, but I pass through as often as I can.

(by Ruskin Bond)
Lesson Plan 2: The Night Train at Deoli

Skills and language areas covered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading skill</th>
<th>Writing skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a-Skimming</td>
<td>a- Making sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b-Scanning</td>
<td>b- General answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c-Intensive-reading</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<pre><code>                                    | a-Identifying structures                |
                                    | b-Usage of idiomatic-phrases            |
                                    | Vocabulary                              |
                                    | Word stress in categorical differentiation|
                                    | Sentence stress                         |
</code></pre>

Pre-reading phase:

Activity I- What does the title suggest to you?

Activity II- Have you ever travelled by train?

Activity III- If 'yes' which has been your most memorable journey?

Reading phase:

Vocabulary
Activity I- The learners are told to write all the two syllable words they find in the story, e.g. picture, lonely, college, vendor, whistle, platform etc.

Activity II- Learners are asked to make a list of difficult words for eg; boast, eloquent, forebode, smoulder etc. from the story. Then the teacher asks them to guess their meanings from the context in the story.

Activity III- Identify the sentences having:

(a) Sub + verb + as + adv.clause

   e.g. Sub + verb+as + adv.clause

   (i) I watched her as the platform slipped away.

   (ii) I was looking out for her as the train drew into the station

(b) Subject + verb+ That clause

   (i) She was pleased that I remembered her

   (ii) I was pleased that she remembered me

   (iii) I was determined that I wouldn't stand helplessly before, her...

   (iv) I was making the return two months later, that I remembered her
Idiomatic phrases

Activity IV - The story also exemplifies the use of idioms with prepositions and adverbs. The learners are asked to identify all such phrases. They might come up with the following phrases - thrown across, jolted forward, looking out, boiling over, slipped away etc.

Post reading phase:

Vocabulary

Activity I- The learners are provided with a list of difficult words and they are told to match the words with their correct meanings:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Boast</td>
<td>a) sudden urge to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forebode</td>
<td>b) burn slowly without flame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Eloquent</td>
<td>c) talk with pride and satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Smoulder</td>
<td>d) be a sign or warning of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. impulse</td>
<td>e) expressive language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the learners finish matching words with their meanings. The teacher asks them to exchange their sheets with each other and announces the correct meanings of the words. Each correct meaning gets +1 mark and each wrong choice gets -1. This kind of an exercise motivates the learners to remember the meaning of the words and helps them to do better in such vocabulary texts taken again by the teacher.

Pronunciation

Activity II - After the correct meanings of words are announced. The teacher writes the phonetic transcription of the following words on the black board making the learners familiar with the phonetic transcription of these words, e.g.

(i) Boast /b əʊst/  
(ii) forebode /fɔr bəʊd/  
(iii) eloquent /ɪˈloʊkənt/  
(iv) smoulder /smʌldə(r)/  
(v) impulse /ɪmˈpʌls/  

This activity makes the learners aware about the correct pronunciation of the words and trains them not only in word
stress but also in looking up the correct pronunciation of words in the dictionary.

Activity III - The teacher pronounces the above mentioned words and asks the learners to repeat the same. This kind of oral drill not only improves the pronunciation of the learners but also inscribes the words in their memory. So, it is very useful for language learning purpose.

Word stress

Activity IV - Mark the word stress for the following two syllable words in the story:

a). Picture
b). Lovely
c). College
d). Vendor
e). Forebode
f). Whistle
g). Platform
h). Station
i). Behind
j). Smoulder

Sentence Stress

Activity V - Mark the sentence stress in the following sentences:

a. I watched her as the platform slipped away.
b. I was looking out for her as the train drew into the station.

c. She was pleased that I remembered her.

d. I was pleased that she remembered me.

e. I was making the return journey two months later, that I remembered her.

Exercises in word stress & sentences stress are fruitful for the improvement in the speaking skill.

Sentence formation

Activity VI - Make three sentences each based on the structure: sub + verb + as + adv.clause.

Activity VII - Make three sentences exemplifying the use of subject + verb + that clause

Activity VIII - Use the following idiomatic phrases in sentences of your own:-

a). Thrown across

b). Jolted forward

c). Boiling over

d). Looking out
e). Slipped away

These kind of exercises are highly beneficial in training the learners in incorporating different grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions in their answers. As a result, it can be said that such exercises improve the writing skills of the learners.

Answer the following:

Activity IX - Do you think the end of the story is justified?

Activity X - Have you ever felt responsible for a stranger?

Activity XI – If ‘yes’ then when? Elaborate:

After the learners finish doing all the exercises the teacher collects their notebooks and scrutinizes them carefully. The teacher writes his/her suggestions and comments for the learners in their notebooks in order to help them further improve their languages skills. On the basis of his/her checking experiences, the teacher provides the learners with exercises based on remedial measures.

According to Dicker "Through a careful selection of sentences of any sort can be studied. The teacher who wishes to expose students to the use of infinitives in English would search the text for infinitives used in different ways. Most texts
contain fine examples of several different grammatical structures. Some texts are heavily weighted in certain areas and should be selected for those areas. Broken grammatical rules can be analyzed in a similar fashion in prose.30

Thus, prose texts can aggrandize the language teaching abilities of the learners. Just like short stories, essays can also serve as good materials for language teaching. However, in comparison to novels, short stories are more suitable for language teaching. The idea of teaching entire novels in the class is not so feasible due to time constraints. But the reading of novels can be assigned as a home task to the learners. Every weekend the learners can be asked to read two chapters and the teacher can facilitate the discussion in the classroom about the assigned chapters in the next week. This kind of an exercise would train the learners to read extensively without noticing each and every detail or without looking up the meaning of every difficult word in the dictionary. Still, in comparison to teaching entire novels for ELT purpose. A more logical idea would be to take up suitable extracts from the novels.

Take for instance a letter written by a character Gopal to his youngest brother in Anurag Mathur's novel—The Inscrutable Americans. The letter is as follows:
Beloved Youngest One,

How much I am missing one and all I simply cannot say. My head is eating circles with all new new things.

Two weeks are already proceeding and I am not even knowing. I am receiving Respecting Parent’s letter and sending reply. You may also kindly assure that I am strictly avoiding traps of divorcees. But, brother, you tell, how I am to refuse meeting divorcees when all here are divorcees? Even Respected Landlady who is regarding me as own son is divorcee with three divorces.

Also brother, I am telling you frankly, Revered Grandmother I am loving and respecting very much but she is becoming nuisance. How I can help it if no Brahmins here? And, brother, she is instructing that I must go to every kitchen before eating and ask if cooks are Brahmins. Brother, here they are not even knowing what caste is! But you may kindly tell her that I am strictly doing needful otherwise I am fearing she is starting to sing Holy Songs and Mother is getting headache.

I do not know what she is saying if I am telling her that I am also cleaning own latrine. I think she is leaving Earthly form. Brother, I am not liking, but what to do? No one is having
servants here. I am even cooking own food but only eggs. I am grateful to our cook who is telling me how long to boil egg, but he is not telling me that water is required to be added? Anyway, I am learning all many things.

I am happy to say Higher Studies are progressing. They are having all facilities here but standard of studies is not so high as in India. In technical matters they are having very good teachers but American boys are not taking much interest. Mostly my class is having foreign students. Course is quite easy I am knowing mostly already, so Respected Professor is saying I may take test and move to next class. They are allowing many kinds of things like this here. I think this way is better than in India and if we are also doing then nation will be on march.

Also no one is bothering who you are and you are also not to bother. You are not believing, but I am calling Respected Professors by first name. One is saying to me, "My name is Sam, not Sir Sam. The British are not knighting me yet." Good joke I think. Brother, are you imagining if I am going to Great Principal of Jajau College and calling him by first name? I think he is dying of heart attack.
I am making one friend here by name of Randy but that is not what it is meaning and is common name. He is very studious, sober and religion minded boy you may tell Mother. He is from good family of high status. He is showing me different kind of ropes as they are saying here.

I am now knowing where to go. Earlier I am getting lost every time. On first day I am going to one class and sitting for half an hour and not understanding one word. First I am thinking it is accent I am not knowing. Then I am thinking I am gone mad. Then girl sitting near is whispering it is French class. Now I am having good laugh.

Brother, in food matters I am having big botheration. Everyday I am eating cornflakes and boiled eggs for all meals. Now when I am burping I am getting cornflakes taste. But what to do? I think Americans are hating vegetarians. But their orange juice and milk is being something else. You are having to try it to believing it.

Well, that is all from my side. Only worry I am having but kindly you are not telling family, is of high blood pressure. I am never having before but all Americans I am meeting when they are leaving are saying "Take it easy." Brother even if I am standing fully relaxed and taking deep breaths they are still
saying "Take it easy". Maybe some problem in water is causing blood pressure problems. And more they are telling me, more blood pressure I am getting anyway let us see. We are all in God's Hands.

All else is fine at my end. I hope studies and work are progressing and you are doing hard work at your end.

Assuring that I will check you out later.

Your beloved brother,

Gopal.

Anyone having basic knowledge of English language is bound to find the letter hilarious if not hilarious then definitely amusing; hence it would immediately captivate the interest of the learners, the letter is loaded with unusual phraseology. For example divorcee with three divorces, religion minded, good family of high status etc. And the entire letter is written in present continuous tense. The teacher can treat the extracted letter as language teaching material. And make a lesson plan.

The letter abounds with grammatical errors, instances of wrong phraseology etc. the teacher can distribute the copies of the letter to the learners and read the letter adopting a funny,
rustic accent, in order to achieve a realistic effect. The lesson plan for the letter can be as follows:

Lesson plan 3: The Letter from the Instructable Americans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and language areas covered.</th>
<th>Reading skill</th>
<th>Writing skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a- Scanning</td>
<td>b- Correction of grammatical errors and wrong phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b- Listening skill</td>
<td>Grammar: Testing the knowledge of tenses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-reading phase:

Activity – I

Answer the following questions:

1. Have you ever come across an unusual letter?
2. If 'yes' what was it like?
3. Have you ever written formal letters?
4. If 'yes' what was the format?
5. Have you written informal letters, if 'yes' what was the format?
6. Have you ever read letters written by some famous personality or a celebrity?

7. How were they?

Reading phase:

Listening

Activity I: The learners listen to the teacher as he/she reads the letter.

Activity II: The learners are asked to identify from the tone of the teacher the identity of the person who has written the letter. They come up with the answer that it is a rustic who has a very shallow knowledge of English language.

Grammar

Activity III - The teacher asks the learners to identify the tense in which the letter is written. They answer, it is written in present continuous tense.

Activity IV - The learners are asked to make a list of sentences having grammatical errors. They come up with the following responses:

a. Even respected landlady who is regarding me as/own son is divorcee with three divorces.
b. Revered Grandmother I am loving and respecting very much but she is becoming a nuisance.

c. First I am thinking it is accent I am not knowing

d. Brother, in food matters I am having big botheration.

e. Assuring that I will check you out later.

Phrases

Activity V - Learners are asked to find out the errors of phraseology in the letter. They come up with a few responses which are as follows:- Respected landlady, divorcee with three divorces, revered Grand mother. Religion minded, good family of high status, knighting me etc.

Post reading phase:

Grammar

Activity I: The teacher asks the learners to point out why the sentences they have chosen for grammatical errors are grammatically incorrect?

The learners answer:
a. Even respected landlady who is regarding me as my own son is divorcee with three divorces. (the pronoun 'her' is missing)

b. Revered Grandmother I am loving and respecting very much is becoming a nuisance.( pronoun 'her' is missing)

c. First I am thinking it is my accent I am not knowing. ('that' is missing)

d. Brother, in food matters I am having big botheration (article 'a' is missing)

e. Assuring that I will check you out later. (preposition 'on' is missing) this sentence would rather be written as "Assuring that I will check out on you later"

Phrases

Activity II - Once all these errors are corrected the teacher asks the learners to use correct phrases or words in place of the wrong phrases and words that 'Gopal' has used in his letter. The teacher explains to his/her students how this can be done. Take for instance the sentence 'He is very studious, sober and religion minded boy you may tell mother'.
This sentence would rather be written and read as 'He is very studious, sober and religious boy you may tell mother.'

The teachers asks the learners to correct all such errors in the entire letter.

Tense

Activity III - The teacher tells the students that since Gopal is writing about the experiences he has already had. He should have written the letter in past perfect tense. The teacher asks the learners to change the entire letter from present continuous tense to past perfect tense.

Writing

Activity IV - The teacher asks each student to suppose that he/she is a close friend of Gopal and Gopal has asked him/her to dictate the letter to him incorporating all his ideas. How would the learners dictate the letter to Gopal? The students are asked to write such a letter.

Once the students finish all these activities the teacher collects their notebooks, and corrects all the mistakes in the notebooks. And the teacher also writes his comments on the notebooks with the aim of improving the language skills of the learners.
As a result, it can be said that prose texts can help in improving the writing skills of the learners. In an article ‘Children write text book for Children’ Written by Pallavi Majumdar and published on 26th October 2002 in The Times of India a unique experiment was mentioned. As a part of this unique experiment St. James school in Kolkata had adopted text book called "Voices of Today", these text books prepared for English language teaching in school were compilations of short-stories written by teenagers. The idea of publishing text books comprising stories written by school children themselves seems to be a far fetched idea due to problems of editing, printing, publishing, lack of funds etc. On the contrary an intermediate class learners can be asked to write stories in the class. An interesting method would be to supply them with the beginning of the story.

For instance:

The night was dark, clouds were muttering there was thunder and lightening in the air, heavy winds were blowing, in his living room Mr. D’costa was sitting on his rocking chair with his eyes closed, suddenly ---------

Then the teacher asks the students to complete their stories. The teacher tells the students that they are free to
choose any number of characters they want. However, the teacher sets a word limit of around 250 words. Once the students complete writing their stories, the teacher collects their notebooks and corrects the errors of grammar, vocabulary and spellings. Three of the best stories selected by the teacher are read out in the class. This kind of an exercise trains the pupils in the art of combining the narrative and description. In addition to it, this kind of an exercise motivates the students not only to write better but also to listen to interesting stories read out in the class.

So, it can be said that prose texts can serve as ideal materials for language teaching especially when used by a discerning teacher. For instance 'An interview with a lemming' a passage by James Thurber can serve as an ideal prose text for training for the learners in the skill of word formation. Read the following passage:-

An Interview with a Lemming

THE WEARY scientist, tramping through the mountains of northern Europe in the winter weather, dropped his knapsack and prepared to sit on a rock

'Careful, brother,' said a voice.
'Sorry,' murmured the scientist, noting with some surprise that a lemming which he had been about to sit on had addressed him. 'It is a source of considerable astonishment to me,' said the scientist, sitting down beside the lemming 'that you are capable of speech.'

'You human beings are astonished,' said the lemming 'when any other animal can do anything you can. Yet there are many things animals can do that you cannot, such as stridulate, or chirr, to name just one. To stridulate; or chirr, one of the minor achievements of the cricket, your species is dependent on the intestines of the sheep and the hair of the horse.'

'We are a dependent animal,' admitted the scientist. 'You are perhaps the most mysterious of creatures.'

'If we are going to indulge in adjectives beginning with "m", said the lemming, sharply, 'let me apply a few to your spices—murderous, maladjusted, maleficent, malicious and muffle-headed.'

'You find our behaviour as difficult to understand as we do yours?'

'You as you would say, said it,' said the lemming, 'You kill, you mangle, you torture, you imprison, you starve each
other. You cover the nurturing earth with cement, you cut down
elm trees to put up institutions for people driven insane by the
cutting down of elm trees, you —'

'You could go on all night like that,' said the scientist,
'listing our sins and our shames.'

'I could go on all night and up to four o' clock tomorrow
afternoon,' said the lemming, 'It just happens that I have made
a life-long study of the self-styled higher animal. Except for
one thing. I know all there is to know about you, and a
singularly dreary, dolorous and distasteful store of information
it is, too, to use only adjectives beginning with "d".'

'You say you have made a life-long study of my species
began the scientist.'

'Indeed I have,' broke in the lemming. 'I know that you are
cruel, cunning and carnivorous, sly sensual and selfish,
greedy, gullible and guileful— .

'Pray don't wear yourself out,' said the scientist, quietly
'It may interest you to know that I have made a life-long study
of lemmings, just as you have made a life-long study of people.
Like you, I have found but one thing about my subject which I
do not understand.'
'And what is that?' asked the lemming.

'I don't understand,' said the scientist, 'Why you lemmings all rush down to the sea and drown yourselves.'

'How curious,' said the lemming? 'The one thing I don't understand is why you human beings don't.'

(By James Thurber)

The teacher executes the following lesson plan in the class:-

**LESSON PLAN 4: An Interview With a Lemming**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and language areas covered</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Intensive reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Scanning</td>
<td>Word formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Speaking</td>
<td>Writing character sketches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-reading phase:**

Answer the following:

Activity I - What do you think a lemming is? Is there anything unusual about a lemming?

Activity II - If 'yes' what is unusual about it?
Activity III - Do you know anything about the other members of the rodent family?

Activity IV - How is a lemming different from a mouse?

Reading Phase:

Activity I - The learners are asked to read the passage intensively observing each and every detail.

Vocabulary

Activity II - The teacher asks the learners to underline the difficult words in the lesson with a pencil. They underline the words like maladjusted, malicious, guileful etc.

Activity III - The teacher asks the learners to guess the meanings of the difficult words from the context and then the learners are told to write their guesses in their rough note books. They are also told to look up the correct meaning of the difficult words in the dictionary.

Activity IV - The teacher gives a list of words taken from the passage to the learners and asks them to read it carefully.
The list is as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Careful</th>
<th>Tramping</th>
<th>Sins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharply</td>
<td>Murmured</td>
<td>Addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maladjusted</td>
<td>Astonished</td>
<td>Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singularly</td>
<td>Distasteful</td>
<td>Listing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guileful</td>
<td>Styled</td>
<td>Nurturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insane</td>
<td>Imprison</td>
<td>Shames</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the students have finished reading the list twice or thrice the teacher asks them to perform following activities:-

Activity V -

i. Isolate the prefixes and suffixes from these words.

ii. Isolate the roots.

iii. What is the part of speech of the words without these prefixes and suffixes?

iv. What is the category of the form after the suffixes have been attached?

v. Does all the suffixation lead to change in the category?

vi. What kind of change results from the use of prefixes?
Word formation

Activity VI - What other words can you make by adding following suffixes:

-ful, -en, -ed, -ly, -s.

Activity VII - Use the following prefixes in word formation:

mal-, dis, in-, im-.

Grammar

Activity VIII - Complete the following table:

(The first line has been done for you)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Astonished</td>
<td>Astonishment</td>
<td>Astonish</td>
<td>Astonishingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Considerable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Singularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Torture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mysterious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Malicious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post reading phase:

Activity I - This can be taken up in form of classroom debate, the topic of debate could be "Human species are – murderous, malicious and muffle headed". The classroom orators can speak in favour of or against the topic under consideration. This kind of an activity will enhance the speaking skill of the learners.

Activity II - Answer the following:-

a. Is lemming’s query (referring to the act of drowning themselves) “The one thing I don’t understand is why you human beings don’t.” logical?

b. Have you read any other story or novel etc with a similar theme?

c. Do you know what a fable is?

d. Can you suggest the name of any other fable that you have read?

Activity III - The teacher asks the learners to write the character sketches of the lemming and the scientist bringing out the contrast and similarities between the two.
Many second language learners are deficient in different language areas, so for such learners remedial classes should be taken up. A talented and determined teachers will always indulge in remedial teaching. The remedial exercises are as follows:-

Exercise- 1

Mark the sentence stress for the following sentences:-

1. Here is the book Tina asked for.

2. She always talks but never thinks.

3. Hallmark is undoubtedly the best gift shop in the city.

4. Too many cooks spoil the broth.

5. The ship was wrecked on the coast of Africa.

Exercise 2

Mark the words stress in the following words bringing out the categorical differentiation (as nouns & verbs) of the words:-

1. Address

2. Conduct

3. Object
4. Export

5. Desert

Exercise 3

Make sentences by using the following idiomatic phrases:

1. Backed up

2. Lodged for

3. Shake off

4. Trumped up

5. Hit upon

Exercise 4

1. Make five sentences following the grammatical pattern — subject + transitive verb + direct object + finite clause / infinite clause.

2. Make five sentences following the grammatical pattern — Subject + verb + that clause.
Exercise 5

Give the phonetic transcription of the following words:-

1. Prose
2. Novel
3. Story
4. Paragraph
5. Writer

Exercise 6

Rewrite the following sentences so that the verbs will be in the active voice:-

1. She was scolded by her father.
2. Lord Jim was written by Joseph Conrad.
3. The Prime Minister was welcomed by the people.
4. He was struck by her million dollar smile.
5. Let the engagement be announced.

Exercise 7

Report the following in indirect speech:-
1. The teacher said "it gives me great pleasure to teach all my students".

2. The father said "I do not wish to talk to any of you; go away."

3. She said, "Let us wait and watch."

4. "Please God help me" moaned the patient.

5. "This sure is Darjeeling tea" exclaimed Mrs. Khan with delight.

Exercise 8

In the following sentences fill in the blanks with a verb in agreement with its subject:-

1. Time __________ money.

2. Moll Flanders __________ written by Daniel Defoe.

3. The strain of divorce and lack of finances __________ more than she could bear.

4. The famous soprano and actress __________ too unwell to perform
5. A good leader and useful citizen _________ passed away.

The benefit of such remedial exercises is that when the teacher checks these exercises up he/she will find out how far the learners have progressed. These exercises will help the teacher test the language competence of the learners and will further enlighten the teacher about the language areas in which his/her students are deficient. Once the teacher will become aware of their weaknesses, he/she will further prepare lesson plans and exercises to improve their language skills.

With reference to all the literary prose passages used in this chapter it can be said that literary prose enriches the language learning possibilities by evoking in the learners the desire to respond to them effectively. Literary prose not only includes different genres of creative writing but also variety of subjects “Which bring variety of themes in the fields of science and sports, travel and biography, description and reflection, fact and fiction”. Hence, literary prose can be termed as suitable language teaching material. After exploiting all the possibilities of using literary prose texts for language teaching, in the next two chapters it will be explored how the two genres, poetry and drama, will be exploited to their utmost advantage for achieving the ELT objective.
References:


2. Ibid.


11. Ibid., p. 6.


13. Ibid.


16. To get back to this material click the cursor on http://www.spicyquotes.com/html/Mario_Cuomo_Elections.html/


19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p.3.


