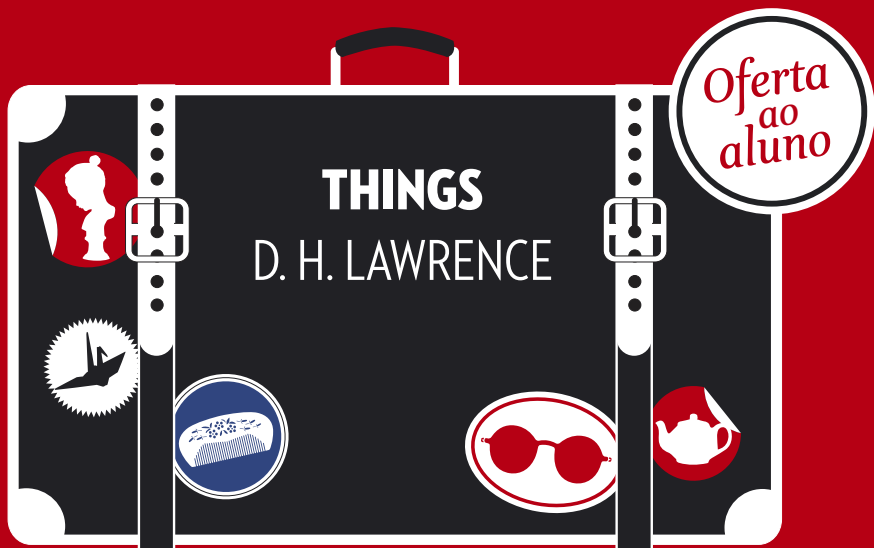




EXTENSIVE READING

LINK UP TO YOU!

Inglês
11.º Ano



LINK UP TO YOU!

Extensive reading

Things

D. H. Lawrence

Neither here nor there

Bill Bryson

Activities

Carlota Martins

Célia Albino Lopes

Noémia Rodrigues



Texto

CONTENTS

Things, D. H. Lawrence

- 4** About the author
- 9** Before reading activities
- 10** Things
- 23** While reading activities
- 28** After reading activities

Neither here nor there, Bill Bryson

- 30** Before reading activities
- 31** About the author
- 33** Part 1
- 35** While reading activities
- 36** Part 2
- 55** After reading activities



Things

D. H. Lawrence



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

1. Read the author's biography and write down when and why he lived in the identified places and what he did there.

D. H. LAWRENCE

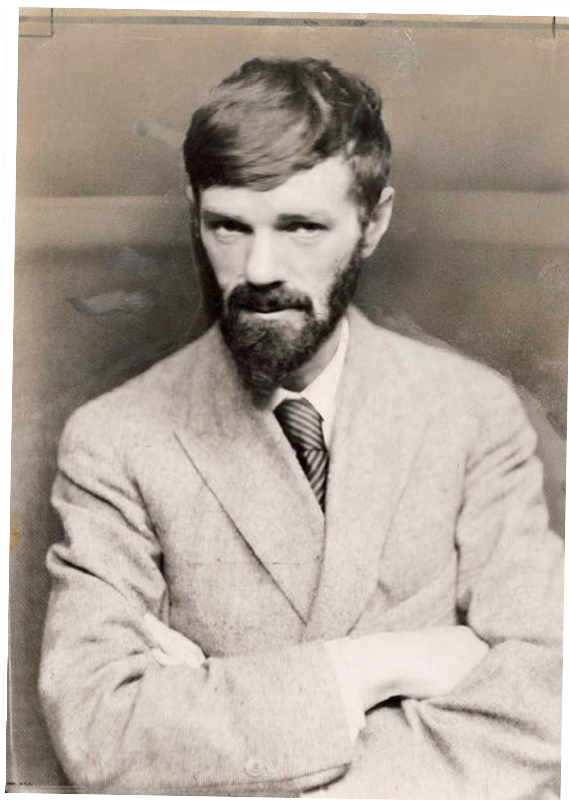
Early Life

Author D.H. Lawrence was born David Herbert Lawrence on September 11, 1885, on the Hags Farm in the small mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England.

- 5 As a child, D.H. Lawrence often struggled to fit in with other boys. He was physically frail and frequently susceptible to illness. However, he was an excellent student and, in 1897, at the age of 12, he became the first boy in
- 10 Eastwood's history to win a scholarship to Nottingham High School. In 1901 he began working as a student teacher at the British School in
- 15 Eastwood.

Adulthood

- In the fall of 1906, Lawrence left Eastwood to attend the University College
- 20 of Nottingham to obtain his teacher's certificate. While there, he won a short story competition for "An Enjoyable Christmas:
- 25 A Prelude", which was published in the *Nottingham*



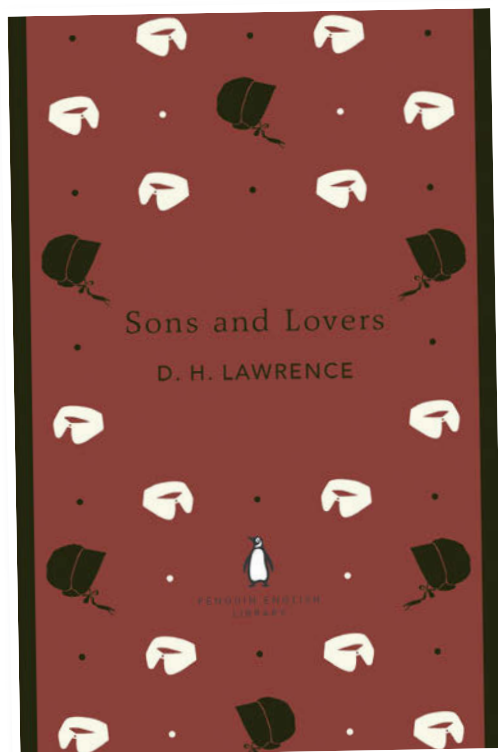
Guardian in 1907. In 1908, having received his teaching certificate, Lawrence took a teaching post at an elementary school in the London suburb of Croydon. Around the same time, Lawrence became engaged to an old friend from college named Louies Burrows.

Love and Books

However, in the spring of 1912, Lawrence's life changed suddenly and irrevocably when he went to visit an old Nottingham professor, Ernest Weekley, to solicit advice about his future and his writing. During his visit, Lawrence fell desperately in love with Weekley's wife, Frieda von Richthofen. He immediately resolved to break off his engagement, quit teaching, and try to make a living as a writer, and, by May of that year, he had persuaded Frieda to leave her family. The couple ran off to Germany, later travelling to Italy. While travelling with his new love, Lawrence continued to write at a furious pace.

Later in 1913, Lawrence published his novel *Sons and Lovers*. The novel is widely considered Lawrence's first masterpiece, as well as one of the greatest English novels of the 20th century.

D. H. Lawrence and Frieda von Richtofen soon returned to England, where they married on July 13, 1914. In 1915 he published another novel, *The Rainbow*, which was quite sexually explicit for the time and the book was soon banned for obscenity.



Feeling betrayed by his own country but unable to travel abroad because of World War I, Lawrence retreated to Cornwall, at the far southwestern edge of Great Britain. However, the local government considered the presence of a controversial writer and his German wife so near the coast to be a wartime security threat, and it banished him from Cornwall in 1917. Lawrence spent the next two years moving among friends' apartments.

After the War

In 1919, after World War I had finally ended, Lawrence once again departed for Italy. There, he spent two highly enjoyable years travelling around and writing. In 1920, he revised and published *Women in Love*. He also edited a series of short stories that he had written during the War, which were published under the title *My England and Other Stories* in 1922.

Determined to fulfill a lifelong dream of travelling to America, in February 1922 Lawrence left Europe. By the end of the year he landed in the United States, settling in Taos, New Mexico. Excepting brief trips to Mexico, New York and England, Lawrence lived primarily on a ranch in New Mexico until 1927.

Late Years

Having fallen ill with tuberculosis, Lawrence returned to Italy in 1927. There, in his last great creative burst, he wrote *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, his best-known and most infamous novel. Published in 1928, the book was banned in the United States until 1959, and in England until 1960, due to its graphic content. The allowed publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is considered a turning point in the



history of freedom of expression and the open discussion of sex in
90 popular culture.

Increasingly hobbled by his tuberculosis, Lawrence wrote very little near the end of his life. D. H. Lawrence died on March 2, 1930, at the age of 44, in Vence, France.

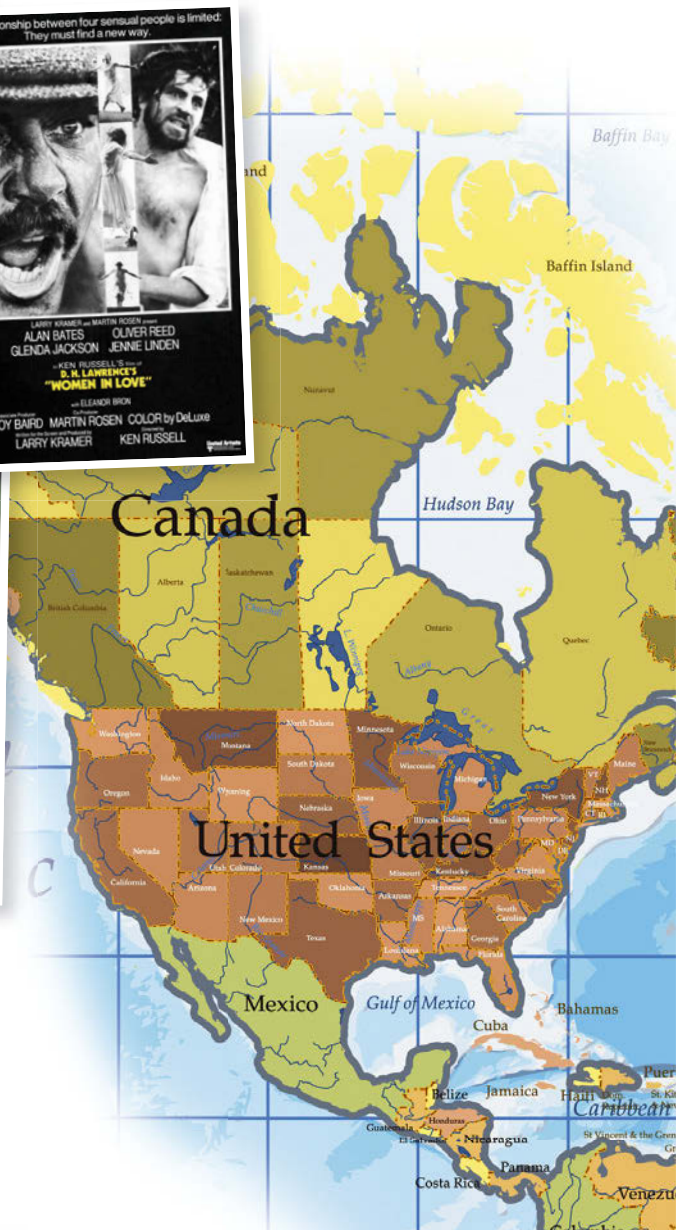
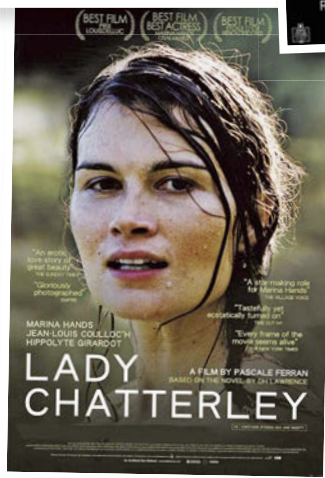
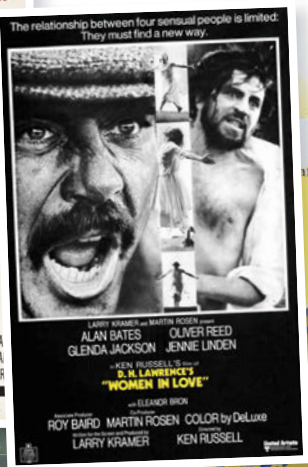
95 He is now widely considered as one of the great modernist English-language writers and one of the most refined and revolutionary English writers of the early 20th century.

www.biography.com
(accessed in December 2013)

2. Find out from the biography of D. H. Lawrence:

- a. what D. H. Lawrence was like as a child;
- b. what his first job was;
- c. what his first literary achievement was;
- d. how he met his wife;
- e. how his life changed after he met Frieda;
- f. if his book *The Rainbow* was well-received;
- g. why he was banned from Cornwall;
- h. what he did in Italy in the 1920s;
- i. how long he stayed in the US;
- j. why his book *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was banned in the USA and the UK;
- k. the turning point caused by the publication of the book.

3. D. H. Lawrence's most famous books have been adapted to the cinema. Search the internet for information about the plot of some of those adaptations and share your findings with the class.



BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

1. To understand the story better, work in small groups and do some research about the following historical/cultural aspects. You may ask your history teacher for help.
 - a. The Indian thought
 - b. Baroque style
 - c. Renaissance
 - d. Impressionism
 - e. Idealism
2. While you are reading the text, mark the couple's journey along their lives and give each part a title consisting of the name of a place (country/city/region).



They were true idealists, from New England. But that is some time ago: before the War. Several years before the War they met and married; he a tall, keen-eyed¹ young man from Connecticut, she a smallish, demure², Puritan-looking young woman from Massachusetts. They both had a little money. Not much, however. Even added together it didn't make three thousand dollars a year. Still – they were free. Free!

Ah! – freedom! To be free to live one's own life! To be twenty-five and twenty-seven, a pair of true idealists with a mutual love of beauty and an inclination towards "Indian thought" and an income a little under three thousand dollars a year! But what is money? All one wishes to do is to live a full and beautiful life. In Europe, of course, right at the fountain-head³ of tradition. It might possibly be done in America: in New England, for example. But at forfeiture⁴ of a certain amount of "beauty". True beauty takes a long time to mature. The baroque is only half-beautiful, half-matured. No, the real silver bloom, the real golden-sweet bouquet of beauty, had its roots in the Renaissance, not in any later or shallower period.



Therefore, the two idealists, who were married in New Haven, sailed at once to Paris: Paris of the old days. They had a studio apartment on the Boulevard Montparnasse, and they became real Parisians, in the old, delightful sense, not in the modern, vulgar. It was the shimmer⁵ of the pure impressionists, Monet and his followers, the world seen in terms of pure light, light broken and unbroken. How lovely! How lovely! How lovely the nights, the river, the mornings in the old streets and by the flower-stalls and the book-stalls, the afternoons up on Montmartre or in the Tuileries, the evenings on the boulevards!

Glossary

- ¹ **keen-eyed:** com olhar perspicaz
- ² **demure:** séria, reservada
- ³ **fountain-head:** origem
- ⁴ **forfeiture:** com a perda
- ⁵ **shimmer:** fraca luminosidade

They both painted, but
 30 not desperately. Art had not
 taken them by the throat,
 and they did not take Art
 by the throat. They painted:
 that's all. They knew people
 35 – nice people, if possible,
 though one had to take
 them mixed. And they
 were happy.



Yet it seems as if human
 40 beings must set their claws
 in something. To be "free", to be "living a full and beautiful life", you must, alas!
 be attached to something. A "full and beautiful life" means a tight attachment
 to something – at least, it is so for all idealists – or else a certain boredom
 supervenes⁶; there is a certain waving of loose ends upon the air, like the
 45 waving, yearning tendrils⁷ of the vine that spread and rotate, seeking
 something to clutch⁸, something up which to climb towards the necessary
 sun. Finding nothing, the vine can only trail⁹, half-fulfilled, upon the ground.
 And human beings are all vines. But especially the idealist. He is a vine, and
 he needs to clutch and climb. And he despises the man who is a mere potato,
 50 or turnip, or lump of wood.

Our idealists were frightfully¹⁰ happy, but they were all the time reaching
 out for something to cotton on to¹¹. At first, Paris was enough. They explored
 Paris thoroughly. And they learned French till they almost felt like French
 people, they could speak it so glibly¹².

Glossary

⁶ **supervenes:** aparece, surge

⁷ **tendrils:** ramos

⁸ **clutch:** agarrar

⁹ **trail:** rastear

¹⁰ **frightfully:** tremendamente

¹¹ **cotton on to:** agarrar-se

¹² **glibly:** fluentemente

55 Still, you know, you never talk French with your soul. It can't be done. And
though it's very thrilling, at first, talking in French to clever Frenchmen – they
seem so much cleverer than oneself – still, in the long run, it is not satisfying.
The endlessly clever materialism of the French leaves you cold, in the end,
gives a sense of barrenness¹³ and incompatibility with true New England
60 depth. So our two idealists felt.

They turned away from France – but ever so gently. France had
disappointed them. "We've loved it, and we've got a great deal out of it.
But after a while, a considerable while – several years, in fact – Paris leaves
one feeling disappointed. It hasn't quite got what one wants."

65 "But Paris isn't France."

"No, perhaps not. France is quite different from Paris. And France is lovely
– quite lovely. But to us, though we love it, it doesn't say a great deal."



So, when the War came, the idealists moved to Italy. And they loved Italy.
They found it beautiful, and more poignant¹⁴ than France. It seemed much
70 nearer to the New England conception of beauty: something pure, and full of
sympathy, without the materialism and the cynicism of the French. The two
idealists seemed to breathe their own true air in Italy.

And in Italy, much more than in Paris, they felt
they could thrill¹⁵ to the teachings of the Buddha.

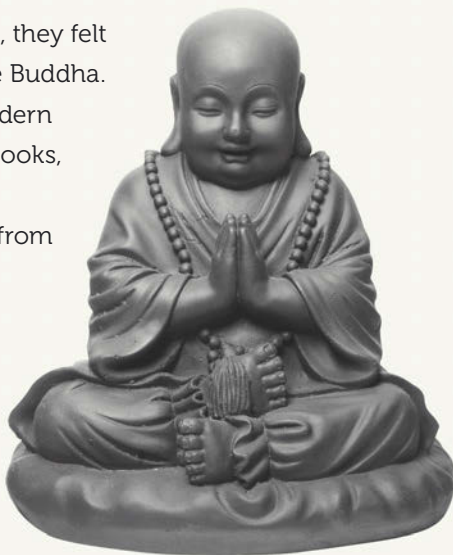
75 They entered the swelling stream of modern
Buddhistic emotion, and they read the books,
and they practised meditation, and they
deliberately set themselves to eliminate from
their own souls greed, pain, and sorrow.

Glossary

¹³ **barrenness**: aridez

¹⁴ **poignant**: intensa

¹⁵ **thrill**: vibrar



80 They did not realise – yet – that Buddha's very eagerness¹⁶ to free himself from pain and sorrow is in itself a sort of greed¹⁷. No, they dreamed of a perfect world, from which all greed, and nearly all pain, and a great deal of sorrow, were eliminated.

But America entered the War, so the two idealists had to help. They did
 85 hospital work. And though their experience made them realise more than ever that greed, pain, and sorrow should be eliminated from the world, nevertheless, the Buddhism didn't emerge very triumphant from the long crisis. Somehow, somewhere, in some part of themselves, they felt that greed, pain and sorrow would never be eliminated, because most people don't care
 90 about eliminating them, and never will care. Our idealists were far too Western to think of abandoning all the world to damnation while they saved their two selves. If the whole wide world was not going to be saved, they, personally, were not so very keen on being saved just by themselves. No, it would be so lonesome¹⁸. They were New Englanders, so it must be all or nothing. Greed,
 95 pain and sorrow must either be eliminated from all the world, or else what was the use of eliminating them from oneself? No use at all! One was just a victim.

(...) They were again "disappointed". But they never admitted it. "Indian thought" had let them down. But they never complained. Even to one another they never said a word. But they were disappointed, faintly but deeply
 100 disillusioned, and they both knew it. But the knowledge was tacit. And they still had so much in their lives. They still had Italy – dear Italy. And they still had freedom, the priceless treasure. And they still had so much "beauty". About the fullness¹⁹ of their lives they were not quite so sure. They had one little boy, whom they loved as parents should love their children, but whom
 105 they wisely refrained from fastening upon, to build their lives on him. No, no, they must live their own lives! They still had strength of mind to know that.

But they were now no longer so very young. Twenty-five and twenty-seven had become thirty-five and thirty-seven. And though they
 110 had had a very wonderful time in Europe, and though they still loved Italy – dear Italy! – yet:

Glossary

¹⁶ **eagerness:** ânsia

¹⁷ **greed:** ganância

¹⁸ **lonesome:** solitário

¹⁹ **fullness:** plenitude

they were disappointed. They had got a lot out of it: oh, a very great deal indeed! Still, it hadn't given them quite, not quite, what they had expected; Europe was lovely, but it was dead. Living in Europe, you were living on
115 the past. And Europeans, with all their superficial charm, were not really charming. They were materialistic, they had no real soul. They just did not understand the inner urge²⁰ of the spirit, because the inner urge was dead in them; they were all survivals. There, that was the truth about Europeans: they were survivals, with no more getting ahead in them. (...)

120 The two idealists had lived in Europe, lived on Europe and on European life and European things as vines in an everlasting vineyard.

They had made their home here: a home such as you could never make in America. Their watchword²¹ had been "beauty". They had rented, the last four years, the second floor of an old *palazzo* on the Arno, and here they had all
125 their "things". And they derived a profound satisfaction from their apartment: the lofty²², silent, ancient rooms with windows on the river, with glistening, dark-red floors, and the beautiful furniture that the idealists had "picked up".

Yes, unknown to themselves, the lives of the idealists had been running with a fierce swiftness²³ horizontally, all the time. They had become tense,
130 fierce hunters of "things" for their home. While their soul was climbing up to the sun of old European culture or old Indian thought, their passions were
135 running horizontally, clutching at "things". Of course, they did not

Glossary

²⁰ **urge:** anseio, desejo

²¹ **watchword:** lema

²² **lofty:** imponente, grandioso

²³ **fierce swiftness:** velocidade feroz



buy the things for the things' sakes, but for the sake of "beauty". They looked upon their home as a place entirely furnished by loveliness, not by "things" at all. Valerie had some very lovely curtains at the windows of the long *salotto*²⁴,
 140 looking on the river: curtains of queer²⁵ ancient material that looked like finely knitted silk, most beautifully faded down from vermilion and orange and gold and black, to a sheer soft glow. Valerie hardly ever came into the *salotto* without mentally falling on her knees before the curtains. "Chartres!" she said. "To me they are Chartres!" And Melville never turned and looked at
 145 his sixteenth-century Venetian book-case, with its two or three dozen of choice books, without feeling his marrow stir in his bones. (...)

Still, a couple of New England idealists cannot live merely on the bygone²⁶ glory of their furniture. At least, one couple could not. They got used to the marvellous Bologna cupboard, they got used to the wonderful Venetian
 150 book-case, and the books, and the Siena curtains and bronzes, and the lovely sofas and side-tables and chairs they had "picked up" in Paris. Oh, they had been picking things up since the first day they landed in Europe. And they were still at it. It is the last interest Europe can offer to an outsider: or to an insider either. When people came, and were thrilled by the Melville interior,
 155 then Valerie and Erasmus felt they had not lived in vain: that they still were living. But in the long mornings, when Erasmus was desultorily²⁷ working at Renaissance Florentine literature, and Valerie was attending to the apartment; and in the long hours after lunch; and in the long, usually very cold and oppressive evenings in the ancient *palazzo*: then the halo²⁸ died from around
 160 the furniture, and the things became things, lumps of matter that just stood there or hung there, *ad infinitum*, and said nothing; and Valerie and Erasmus almost hated them. The glow of beauty, like every other glow, dies down unless it is fed. The idealists still dearly loved their things.

165 But they had got them. And the sad fact is, things that glow vividly while you're getting them go almost quite cold

Glossary

²⁴ **salotto**: salão

²⁵ **queer**: estranho

²⁶ **bygone**: passada

²⁷ **desultorily**: sem propósito ou objetivo

²⁸ **halo**: glória

after a year or two. Unless, of course, people envy you them very much, and
 170 the museums are pining for them. And the Melvilles' "things", though very
 good, were not quite as good as that.

So the glow gradually went out of everything, out of Europe, out of Italy
 – "the Italians are dears" – even out of that marvellous apartment on the
 Arno. "Why, if I had this apartment I'd never, never even want to go out of
 175 doors! It's too lovely and perfect." That was something, of course, to hear that.

And yet Valerie and Erasmus went out of doors; they even went out to get
 away from its ancient, cold-floored, stone-heavy silence and dead dignity.
 "We're living on the past, you know, Dick," said Valerie to her husband.
 She called him Dick.

180 They were grimly²⁹ hanging on. They did not like to give in. They did not
 like to own up that they were through. For twelve years, now, they had been
 "free" people, living a "full and beautiful life". And America for twelve years had
 been their anathema³⁰, the Sodom and Gomorrah of industrial materialism.

185 It wasn't easy to own that you were "through". They hated to admit that
 they wanted to go back. But at last, reluctantly, they decided to go, "for the
 boy's sake". "We can't bear to leave Europe. But Peter is an American, so he
 had better look at America while he's young." The Melvilles had an entirely
 English accent and manner – almost – a little Italian and French here and
 there.



190 They left Europe behind, but they took as much of it along with them
 as possible. Several van-loads, as a matter of fact. All those adorable and
 irreplaceable "things". And all arrived in New York, idealists, child, and the huge
 bulk of Europe they had lugged along³¹.

195 Valerie had dreamed of a pleasant
 apartment, perhaps on Riverside Drive,
 where it was not so expensive as east
 of Fifth Avenue, and where all their

Glossary

²⁹ **grimly**: desagradavelmente

³⁰ **anathema**: maldição

³¹ **lugged along**: arrastado

wonderful things would look marvellous. She and Erasmus house-hunted. But, alas! their income was quite under three thousand dollars a year. They
 200 found – well, everybody knows what they found. Two small rooms and a kitchenette, and don't let us unpack a thing!

The chunk³² of Europe which they had bitten off³³ went into a warehouse, at fifty dollars a month. And they sat in two small rooms and a kitchenette, and wondered why they'd done it.

205 Erasmus, of course, ought to get a job. This was what was written on the wall, and what they both pretended not to see. But it had been the strange, vague threat that the Statue of Liberty had always held over them: "Thou shalt get a job!" Erasmus had the tickets, as they say. A scholastic career was still possible for him. He had taken his exams brilliantly at Yale, and had kept
 210 up his "researches" all the time he had been in Europe.

But both he and Valerie shuddered³⁴. A scholastic career! The scholastic world! The American scholastic world! Shudder upon shudder! Give up their freedom, their full and beautiful life? Never! Never! Erasmus would
 215 be forty next birthday.

The "things" remained in warehouse. Valerie went to look at them. It cost her a dollar an hour, and horrid pangs³⁵. The "things",
 220 poor things, looked a bit shabby³⁶ and wretched³⁷ in that warehouse.

Glossary

- ³² **chunk:** bocado, pedaço
- ³³ **bitten off:** arrancado
- ³⁴ **shuddered:** estremeciam
- ³⁵ **pangs:** angústias
- ³⁶ **shabby:** gastas
- ³⁷ **wretched:** estragadas





However, New York was not all America. There was the great clean West. So the Melvilles went West, with Peter, but without the things. They tried living the simple life in the mountains. But doing their own chores became
 225 almost a nightmare. "Things" are all very well to look at, but it's awful handling them, even when they're beautiful. To be the slave of hideous things, to keep a stove going, cook meals, wash dishes, carry water, and clean floors: pure horror of sordid anti-life!

In the cabin on the mountains Valerie dreamed of Florence, the lost
 230 apartment; and her Bologna cupboard and Louis Quinze chairs, above all, her "Chartres" curtains, stored in New York – and costing fifty dollars a month.



A millionaire friend came to the rescue, offering them a cottage on the Californian coast – California! Where the new soul is to be born in man. With joy the idealists moved a little farther west, catching at new vine-pros of hope.
 235 And finding them straws! The millionaire cottage was perfectly equipped. It was perhaps as labour-savingly³⁸ perfect as is possible: electric heating and cooking, a white-and-pearl-enamelled³⁹ kitchen, nothing to make dirt except the human being himself. In an hour or so the idealists had got through their chores. They were "free" – free to hear the great Pacific pounding the coast,
 240 and to feel a new soul filling their bodies. Alas! the Pacific pounded the coast with hideous brutality, brute force itself! And the new soul, instead of sweetly stealing into their bodies, seemed only meanly⁴⁰ to gnaw⁴¹ the old soul out of their bodies. To feel you are under the fist of the most blind and crunching brute force: to feel that your cherished idealist's soul is being gnawed out of
 245 you, and only irritation left in place of it: well, it isn't good enough.

Glossary

³⁸ **labour-savingly:** poupar trabalho

³⁹ **enamelled:** lacada

⁴⁰ **meanly:** com mesquinhez

⁴¹ **gnaw:** corroer, atormentar

After about nine months the idealists departed from the Californian west. It had been a great experience; they were glad to have had it. But, in the long run, the West was not the place for them, and they knew it. No, the people who wanted new souls had better get them. They, Valerie and Erasmus
 250 Melville, would like to develop the old soul a little further. Anyway, they had not felt any influx of new soul on the Californian coast. On the contrary.



So, with a slight hole in their material capital, they returned to Massachusetts and paid a visit to Valerie's parents, taking the boy along. The grandparents welcomed the child – poor expatriated boy – and were rather cold to Valerie,
 255 but really cold to Erasmus. Valerie's mother definitely said to Valerie one day that Erasmus ought to take a job, so that Valerie could live decently. Valerie haughtily⁴² reminded her mother of the beautiful apartment on the Arno, and the "wonderful" things in store in New York, and of the "marvellous and satisfying life" she and Erasmus had led. Valerie's mother said that she didn't
 260 think her daughter's life looked so very marvellous at present: homeless, with a husband idle⁴³ at the age of forty, a child to educate, and a dwindling⁴⁴ capital, looked the reverse of marvellous to her. Let Erasmus take some post in one of the universities.

"What post? What university?" interrupted Valerie.

265 "That could be found, considering your father's connections and Erasmus's qualifications," replied Valerie's mother. "And you could get all your valuable things out of store, and have a really lovely home, which everybody in America would be proud to visit. As it is, your furniture is eating up your income, and you are living like rats in a hole, with nowhere to go to."

270 This was very true. Valerie was beginning to pine for a home, with her "things". Of course, she could have sold her furniture for a substantial sum. But nothing would have induced her to.

Whatever else passed away – religions,
 275 cultures, continents, and hopes – Valerie

Glossary

⁴² **haughtily**: orgulhosamente

⁴³ **idle**: inativo

⁴⁴ **dwindling**: diminuto

would never part from the “things” which she and Erasmus had collected with such passion. To these she was nailed.

But she and Erasmus still would not give up that freedom, that full and beautiful life they had so believed in. Erasmus cursed America. He did not
280 want to earn a living. He panted⁴⁵ for Europe.

Leaving the boy in charge of Valerie’s parents, the two idealists once more set off for Europe. In New York they paid two dollars and looked for a brief, bitter hour at their “things”. They sailed “student class” – that is, third. Their income now was less than two thousand dollars, instead of three. And they
285 made straight for Paris – cheap Paris.

They found Europe, this time, a complete failure. “We have returned like dogs to our vomit,” said Erasmus; “but the vomit has staled⁴⁶ in the meantime.” He found he couldn’t stand Europe. It irritated every nerve in his body. He hated America, too. But America at least was a darn⁴⁷ sight better
290 than this miserable, dirt-eating continent; which was by no means cheap any more, either.

Valerie, with her heart on her things – she had really burned to get them out of that warehouse, where they had stood now for three years, eating up two thousand dollars – wrote to her mother she thought Erasmus would
295 come back if he could get some suitable work in America. Erasmus, in a state of frustration bordering on rage and insanity, just went round Italy in a poverty-stricken fashion, his coat-cuffs frayed⁴⁸, hating everything with intensity. And when a post was found for him in Cleveland University, to teach French, Italian, and Spanish literature, his eyes grew more beady⁴⁹,
300 and his long, queer face grew sharper and more rat-like with utter baffled fury. He was forty, and the job was upon him.

Glossary

⁴⁵ **panted:** desejava ardentemente

⁴⁶ **has staled:** apodreceu

⁴⁷ **a darn:** remendado

⁴⁸ **frayed:** esfarrapados

⁴⁹ **beady:** pequenos



"I think you'd better accept, dear. You don't care for Europe any longer. As you say, it's dead and finished. They offer us a house on the College lot, and mother says there's room in it for all our things. I think we'd better cable⁵⁰ 'Accept'."

305 He glowered at her like a cornered rat. One almost expected to see rat's whiskers twitching at the sides of the sharp nose.

"Shall I send the cablegram?" she asked.

"Send it!" he blurted.

And she went out and sent it.

310 He was a changed man, quieter, much less irritable. A load was off him. He was inside the cage.

Glossary

⁵⁰ **cable:** mandar um telegrama



But when he looked at the furnaces of Cleveland, vast and like the greatest of black forests, with red-and-white hot cascades of gushing metal, and tiny
315 gnomes of men, and terrific noises, gigantic, he said to Valerie:

“Say what you like, Valerie, this is the biggest thing the modern world has to show.”

And when they were in their up-to-date little house on the college lot of Cleveland University, and that woe-begone debris⁵¹ of Europe – Bologna
320 cupboard, Venice book-shelves, Ravenna bishop’s chair, Louis Quinze side-tables, “Chartres” curtains, Siena bronze lamps – all were arrayed⁵², and all looked perfectly out of keeping, and therefore very impressive; and when the idealists had had a bunch of gaping⁵³ people in, and Erasmus had showed off in his best European manner, but still quite cordial and American, and Valerie
325 had been most ladylike, but for all that “we prefer America”; then Erasmus said, looking at her with the queer sharp eyes of a rat:

“Europe’s the mayonnaise all right, but America supplies the good old lobster – what?”

“Every time!” she said, with satisfaction.

330 And he peered at her. He was in the cage: but it was safe inside. And she, evidently, was her real self at last. She had got the goods. Yet round his nose was a queer, evil, scholastic look, of pure
335 scepticism. But he liked lobster.



Glossary

⁵¹ **debris:** miseráveis destroços

⁵² **arrayed:** expostos

⁵³ **gaping:** de olhar embasbacado

WHILE READING ACTIVITIES

1. Fill in the following table with information about the main characters, Erasmus and Valerie.

	Age (at the beginning of the story)	Place of origin	Description
Erasmus			
Valerie			

2. Go through the 2nd paragraph and find out:
- a. the two words they ruled their lives by;
 - b. their attitude towards money;
 - c. the reason they link “beauty” to Europe;
 - d. the art period that is the symbol of beauty.

Paris (Il. 17-67)

3. Find two idiomatic expressions that mean:
- a. they were not avid passionate painters;
.....
 - b. people need to have commitments for which to live for.
.....
4. With the help of the text explain the metaphor “And human beings are all vines” (line 48).
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Why did France disappoint the Melvilles?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Reasoning link: How would you describe an idealist way of life if we take the couple as an example?

Italy (ll. 68-189)**6. Answer the following questions.**

6.1 Describe Italy as the couple saw it when they moved.

.....

.....

6.2 What can you learn from the “teachings of Buddha”, a life philosophy that they both followed? (2nd paragraph)

.....

.....

.....

6.3 Explain how the War turned them away from the Buddhist philosophy.

.....

.....

6.4 What ended up disappointing them about Europe and the Europeans?

.....

.....

6.5 Describe the house where they lived in Italy.

.....

.....

6.6 Is there a contradiction between the principles they ruled their lives by and the house you have just described? Explain.

.....

.....

6.7 What excuse did they use to decide to return to America?

.....

.....

Reasoning link: How do you account for the couple's constant changes and dissatisfaction with the lives they lead?

New York / The West / California (ll. 190-251)

7. Answer YES or NO to the following questions about the time they lived in New York and justify your answers by quoting from the text.

7.1 Did they carry all their things with them to New York?

.....

.....

7.2 Did they have enough money to rent a pleasant apartment?

.....

.....

7.3 Was there enough room for all the things they had brought from Europe?

.....

.....

7.4 Did Erasmus have the qualifications to get a good job?

.....

.....

7.5 Did they see eye-to-eye about the possibility of Erasmus getting a job?

.....

.....

8. Complete the sentences according to the text.

- a. Although the Melvilles moved to the mountains, the things
.....
- b. What they really hated about simple life was
.....
- c. They then had the chance to
.....
- d. The difference between the house in the mountains and the cottage in California was
- e. They decided that California wasn't good enough for them because
.....

Massachussets (ll. 252-280)

9. Find out in the text:

- a. how Valerie's parents felt towards Valerie and Erasmus;
.....
- b. their opinion about the couple's lifestyle;
.....
- c. Valerie's vision of her own life compared to her mother's vision of it;
.....
- d. Valerie's mother's suggestion;
.....
- e. how Valerie felt towards her "things";
.....
- f. if the couple was starting to rethink their lifestyle.
.....

Reasoning link: At this point, after more than half way through the story, do you think the Melvilles will ever feel satisfied? How and where will they end their life? Will they ever conform to the mainstream society?

Paris (ll. 281-311)

10. Use your own words to clarify the following expressions:

a. "We have returned like dogs to our vomit (...)" (ll. 286-287)

.....

b. "(...) the job was upon him." (l. 301)

.....

c. "I think we'd better cable 'Accept'." (l. 304)

.....

d. "He glowered at her like a cornered rat." (l. 305)

.....

Reasoning link: Bearing in mind the couple's love for "beauty" and "freedom", explain the rat/cage metaphor used in the text.

Cleveland (ll. 312-334)

11. Answer the following questions on the last part of the text.

11.1 According to the description, what kind of town was Cleveland?

.....

11.2 How did they keep and show off their European manner?

.....

11.3 Find out examples of the author's irony when describing the couple's "things".

.....

.....

11.4 What does that tell us about the author's message about the whole story?

.....

11.5 Explain how both Valerie and Erasmus felt towards the fact that they were finally settled in a place.

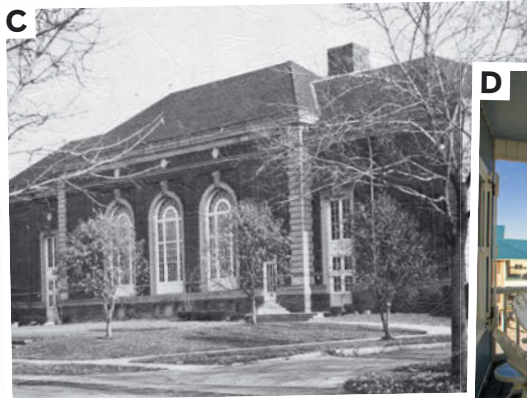
.....

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

1. Go back to the text and match each picture with one of the phases in the couple's life. Explain your choices.



B



D



2. Write a different ending for the story where Erasmus doesn't accept the job in Cleveland.
3. Write a review of the short story (Go to your Coursebook page 234 for tips on how to write a review).



Neither here nor there

Bill Bryson



BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

1. Write down words that you associate with the idea of travelling and explain the association.



2. Work together in small groups. Each group will choose one of the quotations below and explain what message it is conveying concerning “travelling”.

- a. “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.”

Mark Twain

- b. “The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.”

St Augustine

- c. “The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are.”

Samuel Johnson

- d. “One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.”

Henry Miller

- e. “To travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries.”

Aldous Huxley

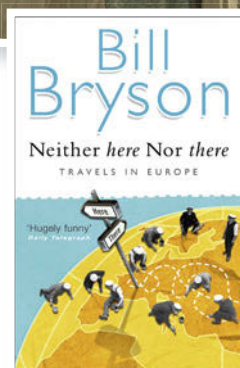
- f. “Don’t tell me how educated you are, tell me how much you have travelled.”

The Prophet Mohammed

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BILL BRYSON

Bill Bryson was born in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1951. He settled in England in 1977, and worked in journalism until he became a full time writer. He lived for many years with his English wife and four children in North Yorkshire. He and his family then moved to New Hampshire, in America, for a few years, but they have now returned to live in the UK.



Twenty years after backpacking across Europe as a young man with his (rather unlikeable) friend Katz, Bryson retraces his journey across the continent. Now middle-aged and somewhat less wild and spontaneous, he travels from the northernmost town in Europe through Scandinavia, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

www.goodreads.com (accessed in December 2013)

1. Identify the countries quoted above and their capital cities, which Bill Bryson tells us about along the book.



2. Match each picture to a capital city to find out the countries you are going to read about.

A. Maison du Roi



B. The Mermaid



D. The Rijksmuseum



C. The Louvre



E. The Colosseum

PART 1

Sometimes a nation's little contrivances are so singular and clever that we associate them with that country alone – double-decker buses in Britain, windmills in Holland, sidewalk cafés in Paris. And yet there are some things that most countries do without difficulty that others cannot get a grasp of at all.

The French, for instance, cannot get the hang of queuing. They try and try, but it is beyond them. Wherever you go in Paris, you see orderly lines waiting at bus stops, but as soon as the bus pulls up the line instantly disintegrates into something like a fire drill at a lunatic asylum as everyone scrambles to be the first aboard, quite unaware that this defeats the whole purpose of queuing.

The British, on the other hand, do not understand certain of the fundamentals of eating, as evidenced by their instinct to consume hamburgers with a knife and fork. To my continuing amazement, many of them also turn their fork upside-down and balance the food on the back of it. I've lived in England for a decade and a half and I still have to quell an impulse to go up to strangers in pubs and restaurants and say, 'Excuse me, can I give you a tip that'll help stop those peas bouncing all over the table?'

Germans are flummoxed by humour, the Swiss have no concept of fun, the Spanish think there is nothing at all ridiculous about eating dinner at midnight, and the Italians should never, ever have been let in on the invention of the motor car.

One of the small marvels of my first trip to Europe was the discovery that the world could be so full of variety, that there were so many different ways of doing essentially identical things, like eating and drinking and buying cinema tickets. It fascinated me that Europeans could at once be so alike – that they could be so universally bookish and cerebral, and drive small cars, and live in little houses in ancient towns, and love soccer, and be relatively unmaterialistic and law-abiding, and have chilly hotel rooms and cosy and

30 inviting places to eat and drink – and yet be so endlessly, unpredictably different from each other as well. I loved the idea that you could never be sure of anything in Europe. (...)

When I told friends in London that I was going to travel around Europe and write a book about it, they said, 'Oh, you must speak a lot of languages.'

35 'Why, no,' I would reply with a certain pride, 'only English,' and they would look at me as if I were crazy. But that's the glory of foreign travel, as far as I am concerned. I don't want to know what people are talking about. I can't think of anything that excites a greater sense of childlike wonder than to be in a country where you are ignorant of almost everything. Suddenly you are five
40 years old again. You can't read anything, you have only the most rudimentary sense of how things work, you can't even reliably cross a street without endangering your life. Your whole existence becomes a series of interesting guesses. (...)

I had an itch to roam. I wanted to wander through Europe, to see movie
45 posters for films that would never come to Britain, gaze wonderingly at hoardings and shop notices full of exotic umlauts and cedillas and No Parking-sign øs, hear pop songs that could not by even the most charitable stretch of the imagination be a hit in any country but their own, encounter people whose lives would never again intersect with mine, be hopelessly
50 unfamiliar with everything, from the workings of a phone box to the identity of a foodstuff.

I wanted to be puzzled and charmed, to experience the endless, beguiling variety of a continent where you can board a train and an hour later be somewhere where the inhabitants speak a different language, eat different
55 foods, work different hours, live lives that are at once so different and yet so oddly similar. I wanted to be a tourist.



WHILE READING ACTIVITIES

1. Find out what is generally said about the following peoples' habits.

- a. The French:
- b. The British:
- c. The German:
- d. The Swiss:
- e. The Spanish:
- f. The Italians:

2. Make a list of the characteristics the author assigns to the Europeans. Explain each of them briefly and say if you, as a European, agree with the description or not.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What are the various things the author wants to experience while travelling?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Go back to page 30 and choose the quotation which would best match the author's perspective about travelling. Explain your choice.

.....

.....

.....

.....

PART 2



Paris

On my first trip to Paris I kept wondering, Why does everyone hate me so much? Fresh off the train, I went to the tourist booth at the Gare du Nord, where a severe young woman in a blue uniform looked at me as if I were infectious. 'What do you want?' she said, or at least
5 seemed to say.

'I'd like a room, please,' I replied, instantly meek.

'Fill this out.' She pushed a long form at me. 'Not here. Over there.' She indicated with a flick of her head a counter for filling out forms, then turned to the next person in line and said, 'What do you want?' I was amazed –

- 10 I came from a place where everyone was friendly, where even funeral directors told you to have a nice day as you left to bury your grandmother – but I soon learned that everyone in Paris was like that. (...)

- In the morning I got up early and went for a long walk through the sleeping streets. I love to watch cities wake up, and Paris wakes up more abruptly, more startlingly, than any place I know. One minute you have the city to yourself: it's just you and a guy delivering crates of bread, and a couple of droning street-cleaning machines. (It might be worth noting here that Paris spends £58 a year a head on street-cleaning compared with £17 a head in London, which explains why Paris gleams and London is a toilet.)
- 20 Then all at once it's frantic: cars and buses swishing past in sudden abundance, cafés and kiosks opening, people flying out of Metro stations like flocks of startled birds, movement everywhere, thousands and thousands of pairs of hurrying legs.

- By half-past eight Paris is a terrible place for walking. There's too much traffic. A blue haze of uncombusted diesel hangs over every boulevard. I know Baron Haussmann made Paris a grand place to look at, but the man had no concept of traffic flow. At the Arc de Triomphe alone thirteen roads come together. Can you imagine that? I mean to say, here you have a city with the world's most pathologically aggressive drivers – drivers who in other circumstances would be given injections of thorazine from syringes the size of bicycle pumps and confined to their beds with leather straps – and you give them an open space where they can all try to go in any of thirteen directions at once.
- 30 Is that asking for trouble or what? (...)

- You also constantly keep coming up against these monumental squares and open spaces that are all but impossible to cross on foot. (...)



Eventually I gave up trying to cross streets in any kind of methodical way and instead just followed whatever route looked least threatening. So it was with some difficulty and not a little surprise that I managed to pick my way
45 by early afternoon to the Louvre, where I found a long immobile queue curled around the entrance courtyard like an abandoned garden hose.

I hovered, undecided whether to join the queue, come back later in the faint hope that it would have shrunk, or act like a Frenchman and jump it. The French were remarkably shameless about this. Every few minutes one
50 would approach the front of the queue, affect to look at his wristwatch and then duck under the barrier and disappear through the door with the people at the front. No one protested, which surprised me. In New York, from where many of these people came, judging by their accents and the bullet holes in their trench coats, the queue jumpers would have been seized by the crowd
55 and had their limbs torn from their sockets. (...)

I couldn't bring myself to jump the queue, but equally I couldn't stand among so much motionless humanity while others were flouting the rule of order and getting away with it.
60 So I passed on, and was rather relieved. The last time I went to the Louvre, in 1973 with Katz, it was swarming with visitors and impossible to see anything. The 'Mona Lisa' was like a postage
65 stamp viewed through a crowd of heads from another building and clearly things had not improved since then (...).

With the Louvre packed I went instead to the new – new to me, at any
70 rate – Musée d'Orsay, on the Left Bank opposite the Tuileries. When I had last passed it, sixteen years before, it had been a derelict hulk, the shell of the old



Gare d'Orsay, but some person of vision had decided to restore the old
75 station as a museum and it is simply wonderful, both as a building and as a
collection of pictures. I spent two happy hours there, and afterwards checked
out the situation at the Louvre – still hopelessly crowded – and instead went
to the Pompidou Centre, which I was determined to try to like, but I couldn't.
Everything about it seemed wrong. For one thing, it was a bit weathered and
80 faded, like a child's toy that has been left out over winter, which surprised me
because it is only a dozen years old and the government had just spent £40
million refurbishing it, but I guess that's what you get when you build with
plastic. And it seemed much too overbearing a structure for its cramped
neighbourhood. It would be an altogether different building in a park.(...)
85 It has none of the sense of space and light and majestic calm of the Musée
d'Orsay. It's like a department store on the first day of a big sale. There's
hardly any place to sit and no focal point – no big clock or anything – at
which to meet someone. It has no heart. (...)

It took me two or three days to notice it, but the people of Paris have
90 become polite over the last twenty years. They don't exactly rush up and
embrace you and thank you for winning the war for them, but they have
certainly become more patient and accommodating. The cab drivers are
still complete jerks, but everyone else – shopkeepers, waiters, the police –
seemed almost friendly. I even saw a waiter smile once. And somebody held
95 open a door for me instead of letting it bang in my face.

It began to unsettle me. Then on my last night, as I was strolling near the
Seine, a well-dressed family of two adults and two teenage children swept
past me on the narrow pavement and without breaking stride or interrupting
their animated conversation flicked me into the gutter. I could have hugged
100 them. (...) I was glad to see some things never change.



Brussels

Brussels, it must be said, is not the greatest of cities for venturing. After Paris, it was a relief just to cross a street without feeling as if I had a bull's-eye painted on my butt, but once you've done a couple of circuits of the Grand-Place and looked politely in the windows of one or two of the many thousands of shops selling chocolates or lace (and they appear to sell nothing else in Brussels), you begin to find yourself glancing at your watch and wondering if nine-forty-seven in the morning is too early to start drinking.

I settled instead for another circuit of the Grand-Place. It is fetching, no doubt about it. It is the centrepiece of the city, a nicely proportioned cobbled

square surrounded by grand and ornate buildings: the truly monumental Hôtel de Ville and opposite it the only slightly less grand Maison du Roi (which despite its name has never been a royal palace – don't say you never learned anything from me), all of them linked by narrow, ornately decorated guild
115 houses. The ground floors of these guild houses almost all contain dark, cosy cafés, full of wooden furniture and crackling fires, where you can sit over a coffee or beer and gaze out on this most beguiling of backdrops. Many people seem to spend whole days doing little else. (...)

I spent two and a half days seeing the sights – the grand and splendid
120 Musée d'Art Ancien, the Musée d'Art Moderne, the two historical museums in the ponderously named Parc du Cinquanteaire (the museums were a bit ponderous, too), the Musée Horta, and even the gloomy and wholly forgotten Institut des Sciences Naturelles – and in between times just shuffled around among the endless office complexes in a pleasantly vacant state of mind.

125 Brussels is a seriously ugly place, full of wet litter, boulevards like freeways and muddy building sites. It is a city of grey offices and faceless office workers, the briefcase capital of Europe. It has fewer parks than any city I can think of, and almost no other features to commend it – no castle on a hill, no mountainous cathedral, no street of singularly elegant shops, no backdrop of
130 snowy peaks, no fairy-lighted seafront. It doesn't even have a river. How can a city not at least have a river? They did once have some city walls, but all that remains is a crumbly fragment stuck next door to a bowling alley on the Rue des Alexiens. The best thing that can be said for Brussels is that it is only three hours from Paris. If I were in charge of the EEC, and frankly you could
135 do worse, my first move would be to transfer the capital to Dublin or Glasgow or possibly Naples, where the jobs would be appreciated and where the people still have some pride in their city, because in Brussels, alas, they simply haven't. (...)

The one corner of charm in the city is a warren of narrow, pedestrian-
140 only streets behind the Grand-Place called, with a mildly pathetic dash of hyperbole, the Sacred Isle. Here the little lanes and passageways are packed with restaurants and crowds of people wandering around in the happy state

of deciding where to eat, nosing around the ice barrows of lobsters, mussels and crayfish that stand outside each establishment. Every doorway issues a
145 warm draught of grilled aromas and every window reveals crowds of people enjoying themselves at almost any hour of the day or night. It is remorselessly picturesque and appealing, and it has been like this since the Middle Ages. (...)

Yet Brussels has its virtues. It's the friendliest big city in Europe (which may or may not have something to do with the fact that a quarter of its
150 residents come from abroad), it has a couple of good museums, the oldest shopping arcade in Europe, the small but pleasurable Galleries St-Hubert, lots of terrific bars and the most wonderful restaurants. Eating out is the national sport in Belgium, and Brussels alone has 1,500 restaurants, twenty-three of them carrying Michelin rosettes. You can eat incredibly well there for less
155 than almost anywhere else on the continent. (...)

After dinner each night I would go for a necessarily aimless stroll – there is nothing much to aim for – but, like most cities, Brussels is always better at night. (...)

I walked out to the headquarters of the EEC. In a city of buildings so ugly
160 they take your breath away, the headquarters of the EEC at Rond Point Schuman manages to stand out. It was only six o'clock, but there wasn't a soul about, not a single person working late, which made me think of the old joke: Question: How many people work in the European Commission? Answer: About a third of them. You cannot look at all those long rows of
165 windows without wondering what on earth goes on in there. I suppose there are whole wings devoted to making sure that post-office queues are of a uniform length throughout the community and that a soft-drinks machine in France dispenses the same proportion of upside-down cups as one in Italy.

As an American, it's interesting to watch the richest countries in Europe
170 enthusiastically ceding their sovereignty to a body that appears to be out of control and answerable to no one. Did you know that because of its Byzantine structure, the European Commission does not even know 'how many staff members it has or what they all do'? (I quote from *The Economist*.) I find this worrying.



Amsterdam

175 **A**rriving at Amsterdam's Centraal Station is a strange experience. It's in the middle of town on a sunny plaza at the foot of the main street, the Damrak. (...) I walked up the Damrak in a state of high anticipation. Amsterdam had been my favourite European city by a factor too high to compute. It was beautiful, it was friendly, it had excellent bars and
180 legal dope. (...)

The Dutch are very like the English. Both are kind of sloppy (and I mean that in the nicest possible way): in the way they park their cars, in the way they set out their litter bins, in the way they dump their bikes against the nearest tree or wall or railing. There is none of that obsessive fastidiousness

185 you find in Germany or Switzerland, where the cars on some residential streets look as if they were lined up by somebody with a yardstick and a spirit level. In Amsterdam they just sort of abandon their cars at the canalside, often on the brink of plunging in.

They even talk much the same as the English. This has always puzzled
190 me. I used to work with a Dutch fellow on The Times, and I once asked him whether the correct pronunciation of the artist's name was Van Go or Van Gok. And he said, a little sharply, 'No, no, it's Vincent Van – ' and he made a sudden series of desperate hacking noises, as if a moth had lodged in his throat. After that, when things were slow around the desk, I would ask him
195 how various random expressions were said in Dutch and he would always respond with these same abrupt hacking noises. Passing people would sometimes slap him on the back or offer to get him a glass of water. (...)

In the morning I returned to Amsterdam. I used to love walking in cities on Sunday mornings, but it gets more and more dispiriting. All the things left
200 over from Saturday night – vomit slicks, litter, twisted beer cans – are still lying around, and everywhere now there are these depressing grilles and iron shutters on all the shop fronts. They make every street look dangerous and forbidding, which is just absurd in Europe. (...)

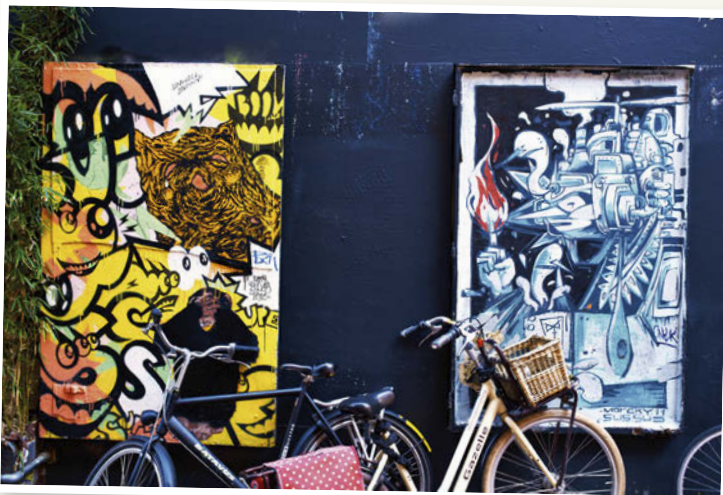
I found my way to the canals – the Singel, Herengracht, Keizersgracht and
205 Prinsengracht – and things were immediately better. I roamed along them in a happily random way, shuffling through leaves and litter, cocooned by the tall narrow houses and old trees. Along its canals Amsterdam is an immensely beautiful city, especially on a Sunday morning when there is almost no one about. A man sat in a patch of sun on his stoop with a cup of coffee and a
210 newspaper, another was returning from somewhere with a bottle of wine, a young couple passed entwined in a post-coital glow, and the occasional unhurried cyclist crossed from one side street to another somewhere up ahead, like extras employed to lend colour to the scene, but in two hours of wandering around I saw not another soul but them.

215 Again and again, I found myself leaning on a railing on a small humpbacked bridge just gazing into the shimmering green water, lost in a simple-minded

reverie until a tour boat would chunter by, full of tourists with cameras, slicing through the mirrored street scene below me to break the spell. (...)

220 The graffiti is everywhere – on phone boxes, on park benches, on the
walls of almost every building, even on the marbled vaults of the passageway
that runs like a tunnel beneath the Rijksmuseum. I have never seen so much
graffiti. And it's not even good graffiti. It's just random squiggles, sprayed by
people with brains the size of a Cheerio. The Dutch seem to have a problem
with mindless crime. You may never get mugged in Amsterdam, but I'm told
225 you can't park a car on the streets anywhere in the centre of the city in the
evening without a strong probability of someone scoring the paintwork from
end to end with a screwdriver. (...)

Here and there I would pass a house braced with timbers, awaiting urgent
repairs. Amsterdam was built on a swamp, and just keeping the canalside
230 houses from sinking into it is an unending task. (...) I suppose the same
experience has been repeated in countless buildings all over the city, so you
have to admire the good people of Amsterdam for keeping the houses
standing, and even more for having the sense to keep the canal streets
residential. In Britain the ground floors would long ago have been filled with
235 kebab houses and building-society offices and Sketchley dry cleaner. So I am
full of admiration for the Dutch for preserving their finest streets and insisting
that people live on them. (...)



Evening came. A light rain began to fall. Pulling my collar round my ears, I walked to the dark streets of the red-light district and squinted through
240 rain-spattered glasses at the goods on offer. The red-light district had changed since my day. (...)

The whores were still there. They sat in luminous body stockings in windows lit with a pinkish glow, and winked at me as I passed. Behind them, I could sometimes glimpse the little cells where they conduct their business,
245 looking white and clinical. (...) There was a whole street of this stuff, several blocks long, with a spill-over into neighbouring side streets. (...)

I spent the morning of my last day in the Rijksmuseum. 'The Night Watch' wasn't on view because a few days earlier some crazy person had attacked it with a knife, and both he and it had been taken away for rehabilitation, but
250 the museum is so massive – 250 rooms – and so filled with wonderful pictures that there was plenty else to look at.

Afterwards I strolled on to the Anne Frank House on Prinsengracht. It was packed, but moving none the less. Eight people spent three years hiding in a secret flat above Otto Frank's spice business, and now an endless line of
255 visitors shuffles through it every day, to see the famous bookcase that hid the secret entrance and the five rooms in which they lived. The tragic part is that when the Franks and their companions were anonymously betrayed and finally captured in August

1944, the Allies were on the
260 brink of liberating Holland.

A few more weeks and they would have been saved. As it was, seven of the eight died in concentration camps. Only
265 Anne's father survived.

The Anne Frank museum is excellent at conveying the horror of what happened to the Jews, but it is a shame



270 that it appears not to give even a
passing mention to the Dutch people
who risked their own lives in helping the
Franks and others like them. Miep Gies,
Otto Frank's secretary, had to find food
275 each day for eight people, as well as
herself and her husband, for three years
at a time of the strictest rationing.
It must have been extremely trying, not
to mention risky. Yet this was hardly
280 a rare act: twenty thousand people in
Holland sheltered Jews during the war
at considerable peril to themselves.
They deserve to be remembered too.



What must it have been to be a Jew in Europe in the 1930s? From the
285 beginning they were subjected to the grossest indignities: forbidden to sit in
parks or cafés or to ride on trams, required to give up their cars and bicycles,
even their children's bicycles. If it had ended there, it would have redounded
to Germany's shame for ever, but of course it grew unspeakably worse, as
the photographs and documents in the museum's other rooms gruesomely
290 testify – people being herded onto cattle trains, piles of stick-like corpses,
the gaunt faces of the living dead, all the pictures you have seen a thousand
times.

One picture I hadn't seen transfixed me. It was a blurry photo of a German
soldier taking aim with a rifle at a woman and the baby she was clutching as
295 she cowered beside a trench of bodies. I couldn't stop staring at it, trying to
imagine what sort of person could do such a thing.



Copenhagen

- Y**ou could certainly do worse than Copenhagen. It is not an especially beautiful city, but it's an endlessly appealing one. It is home to one and a half million people – a quarter of the Danish population – but
- 300 it has the pace and ambience of a university town. Unlike most great cities, it is refreshingly free of any delusions of self-importance. It has no monuments to an imperial past and little to suggest that it is the capital of a country that once ruled Scandinavia. Other cities put up statues of generals and potentates. In Copenhagen they give you a little mermaid. I think that's swell.
- 305 I walked along Nyhavn, a three-block-long street with a canal in the middle filled with tall-masted ships and lined with narrow, step-gabled

seventeenth-and eighteenth-century houses, looking for all the world like a piece of Amsterdam gone astray. The neighbourhood was in fact originally settled by Dutch sailors and remained the haunt of jolly tars until recent
310 times. Even now it has a vaguely raffish air in parts – a tattoo parlour and one or two of the sort of dive bars through whose windows you expect to see Popeye and Bluto trading blows – but these are fading relics. For years, restaurateurs have been dragging Nyhavn almost forcibly upmarket and most of the places now are yuppie bars and designer restaurants, but very
315 agreeable places for all that, since the Danes don't seem to be the least bit embarrassed about living well, which is after all how it should be.

The whole length of Nyhavn was lined with outdoor tables, with young, blond, gorgeous people drinking, eating and enjoying the unseasonably warm weather. I always wonder in Copenhagen what they do with their old
320 people – they must put them in cellars or send them to Arizona – because everyone, without exception, is youthful, fresh-scrubbed, healthy, blond and immensely good-looking. You could cast a Pepsi commercial in Copenhagen in fifteen seconds. And they all look so happy.

The Danes are so full of joie de vivre that they practically sweat it. In a
325 corner of Europe where the inhabitants have the most blunted concept of pleasure, the Danes' relaxed attitude to life is not so much refreshing as astonishing. (...)

I dined in a crowded, stylish basement restaurant halfway along Nyhavn. (...) When I climbed the steps to the street, darkness had fallen and the air had
330 chilled, but people still sat outside at tables, drinking and talking enthusiastically, jackets draped over their shoulders. I crossed Kongens Nytorv, one of the city's principal squares, sleepy and green, passed beneath the soft lights of the Hotel D'Angleterre, full of yet more happy diners, and headed up Strøget, Copenhagen's main shopping street. Strøget is the world's
335 longest pedestrian street. Actually it's five streets that run together for a little over a mile between Kongens Nytorv and the city's other main square, Raadhushpladsen, at the Tivoli end. Every travel article you read about Copenhagen talks rapturously about Strøget, but I always feel vaguely

disappointed by it. Every time I see it, it seems to have grown a tiny bit
340 seedier. There are still many swish and diverting stores down at the Kongens
Nytorg end – Georg Jensen for silver, Brødrene Andersen for clothes,
Holmegaard for china and glass – but as you pass the half-way point Strøget
swiftly deteriorates into tatty gift shops and McDonald's, Burger Kings and
other brightly lit temples of grease. The whole thing could do with a lot more
345 in the way of benches and flagstones (it's all patched asphalt now) and even
– dare I say it? – the odd tub of geraniums. It's a shame that in a country as
wealthy and design-conscious as Denmark they can't make the whole street
– the words tumble involuntarily from my lips – more picturesque. (...)

The Danes are almost absurdly law-abiding. The most virulent crime in
350 the country is bike theft. In 1982, a year for which I just happen to have the
facts at my fingertips, there were six murders in Copenhagen, compared with
205 in Amsterdam, a city of similar size, and 1,688 in New York. The city is so
safe that Queen Margarethe used to walk from Amalienborg Palace to the
shops every morning to buy flowers and vegetables just like a normal citizen.
355 I once asked a Dane who guarded her in such circumstances, and he looked
at me with surprise and replied, 'Why, we all do,' which I thought was rather
sweet.





Rome

I hadn't been to Rome before, but I had been wanting to go there for about as long as I could remember. (...) Rome was as wonderful as I had hoped it would be.

360

My hotel was in a battered, out-at-the-elbow district just off the Via Cavour; it had the compensating virtue of being central. You could walk anywhere in the city from there, and that's what I did, day after day, just walked and walked. I rose daily just after dawn, during that perfect hour when the air still has a fresh, unused feel to it, and watched the city come awake – whistling shopkeepers slopping out, sweeping up, pulling down awnings, pushing up shutters.

365

I walked through the gardens of the Villa Borghese, up and down the Spanish Steps, window-shopped along the Via dei Condotti, admired the
370 Colosseum and Forum, crossed the river by the Isola Tiberina to tramp the hilly streets of Trastevere, and wandered up to the lofty heights of the Gianicolo, where the views across the city were sensational and where young couples entwined themselves in steamy embraces on the narrow ledges. (...) For a week, I just walked and walked. I walked till my feet steamed. And when
375 I tired I sat with a coffee or sunned myself on a bench, until I was ready to walk again. Having said this, Rome is not an especially good city for walking. For one thing, there is the constant danger that you will be run over. Zebra crossings count for nothing in Rome, which is not unexpected but takes some getting used to. It is a shock to be strolling across some expansive
380 boulevard, when suddenly it dawns on you that the six lanes of cars bearing down upon you at speed have no intention of stopping.

It isn't that they want to hit you, as they do in Paris, but they just will hit you. This is partly because Italian drivers pay no attention to anything happening on the road ahead of them. They are too busy tooting their horns,
385 gesturing wildly, preventing other vehicles from cutting into their lane, making love, smacking the children in the back seat and eating a sandwich the size of a baseball bat, often all at once. So the first time they are likely to notice you is in the rear-view mirror as
390 something lying in the road behind them.

Even if they do see you, they won't stop. There is nothing personal in this. It's just that they believe that if something is in the way they must move it, whether it is a telephone pole or
395 a visitor from the Middle West. (...)

I love the way the Italians park. You turn any street corner in Rome and it looks as if you've just missed a parking competition for blind people. Cars are pointed in every direction, half



400 on the pavements and half off,
facing in, facing sideways,
blocking garages and side
streets and phone boxes, fitted
into spaces so tight that the only
405 possible way out would be
through the sun roof.

Italians will park anywhere.
If the opening is too small for a
car, the Romans will decorate it
410 with litter – an empty cigarette
packet, a wedge of half-eaten
pizza, twenty-seven cigarette
butts, half an icecream cone
with an ooze of old icecream
415 emerging from the bottom,
danced on by a delirium of
flies, an oily tin of sardines,
a tattered newspaper and something truly unexpected, like a tailor's dummy
or a dead goat.



420 Even the litter didn't especially disturb me. I know Rome is dirty and
crowded and the traffic is impossible, but in a strange way that's part of the
excitement. Rome is the only city I know, apart from New York, that you can
say that about. In fact, New York is just what Rome reminded me of – it had
the same noise, dirt, volubility, honking, the same indolent cops standing
425 around with nothing to do, the same way of talking with one's hands, the
same unfocused electric buzz of energy. The only difference is that Rome is
so wondrously chaotic. New York is actually pretty well ordered. People stand
patiently in queues and for the most part obey traffic signals and observe the
conventions of life that keep things running smoothly.

430 Italians are entirely without any commitment to order. They live their lives
in a kind of pandemonium, which I find very attractive. They don't queue,

they don't pay their taxes, they don't turn up for appointments on time, they don't undertake any sort of labour without a small bribe, they don't believe in rules at all. On Italian trains every window bears a label telling you in three
435 languages not to lean out of the window. The labels in French and German instruct you not to lean out, but in Italian they merely suggest that it might not be a good idea. It could hardly be otherwise. (...)

The country has the social structure of a banana republic, yet the amazing thing is that it thrives. It is now the fifth biggest economy in the world, which
440 is a simply staggering achievement in the face of such chronic disorder. If they had the work ethic of the Japanese they could be masters of the planet. Thank goodness they haven't. They are too busy expending their considerable energies on the pleasurable minutiae of daily life – children, good food, arguing in cafés – which is just how it should be. (...) What a
445 wonderful country.



AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

Work together in groups on one of the five capital cities described in the book.

STEPS

1. Read the text referring to the capital city of your choosing and look up the words you don't know in your dictionary.
2. Find information in the text to be able to describe the following:
 - the characteristics of the people;
 - the specific characteristics of the city;
 - problems the author found or criticisms he makes;
 - places/monuments he visited or wandered about (give a short description of each).
3. Organise a PowerPoint presentation to help you share the above information with the other people in your class.
4. Your classmates should have previously read the text about your city to be able to ask you questions, whether about vocabulary or more specific information, so be prepared to give answers.

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