

4.5 The Old Man and The Sea : Book Review

Warming Up!

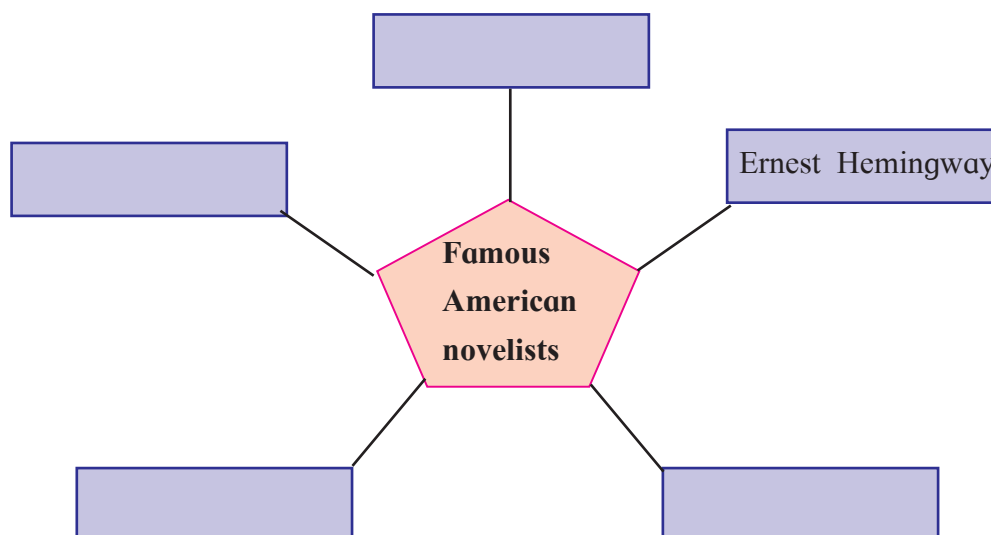
1. Pair up with your partner and answer the following questions :

- (a) Which animal would you relate yourself to and why?
- (b) Do you have a hero or a role model to look up to? Who is he/she?
- (c) Do you have a passion you would fight for? Why?
- (d) What is meant by a review?
- (e) Have you ever read any book review? If yes, which one? If no, make it a point to read one.

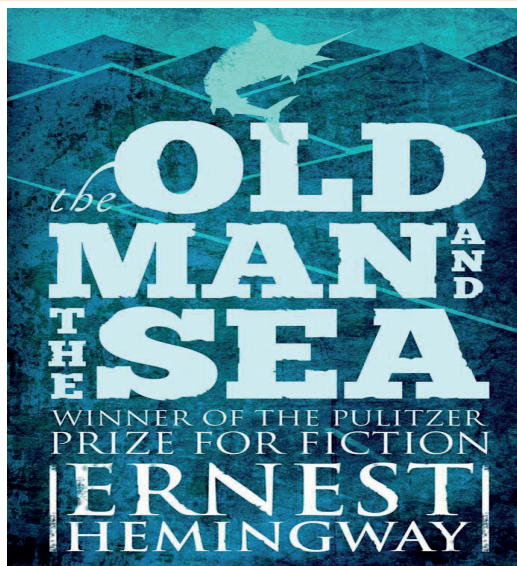
2. Make a list of famous novels of Ernest Hemingway. Two are given to you.

- (1) A Farewell to Arms
- (2) For Whom the Bell Tolls.
- (3)
- (4)
- (5)
- (6)
- (7)

3. Ernest Miller Hemingway was a famous American novelist, short story writer and journalist. Make a list of other famous American novelists. Complete the web filling the boxes with the names of famous American novelists.



The Old Man and The Sea : Book Review



An old and experienced Cuban fisherman has a run of terrible bad luck and is unable to catch any fish for eighty-four days. His young and devoted **apprentice**, Manolin, has been forced by his parents to start working with another fisherman. The old man resolves to sail out farther than all the other fishermen and attempt to catch the really big fish. On the eighty-fifth day he succeeds in hooking a marlin with his bait but the **marlin** is too strong for him and starts pulling the boat. 'The Old Man and the Sea' is the story of the old man's struggle with the marlin and his later battle against sharks.

Social/Historical context:

Hemingway's novel is based on real events and it also draws heavily on his own life. He had experience of fishing in the Cuban waters and like the old man he was also a fan of baseball. He worked for the Red Cross during the First World War and was injured by **shrapnel** when he was in Italy. Hemingway always talks about the need to struggle against defeat or death and how determination and endurance can help one to win in this struggle. The old man is at the end of the novel very near death, but we know that the story of his suffering and loss will live on in the memories of the people of his village. Ultimately, his story becomes one of triumph because the tales of his life will live on even after his death. The novel was published in 1952, when people were trying to recover from the

- **apprentice** : a person who works for another in order to learn a trade
- **marlin** : a large saltwater fish with an elongated body and a spear-like snout
- **shrapnel** : small pieces of metal that fly during an explosion of a bomb/weapon to hurt people

- **wrought** : brought about
- **pithy** : brief, full of vigour

- **formidable** : causing fear

mass destruction **wrought** by the two world wars, and this tale of endurance and ultimate triumph immediately struck a chord with the readers.

Writing Style:

Hemingway's language is simple and **pithy**. He mostly writes in short and straight-forward sentences and practises an extreme economy in his use of words. This simplicity is deceptive and a reader can read his work again and again and find new layers of meaning every time.

My Thoughts:

I first read this novel years ago, when I did not understand it at all and was left unimpressed. In spite of this a vivid image remained with me – an old man holding on to his fishing line with the last of his strength. Recently I read this book again and was extremely moved. The **formidable** strength of the old man's character, the quiet devotion of the empathetic Manolin and the relationship between the two are heart-warming. Hemingway's descriptions of the sea and the creatures of the water are beautiful. The marlin fights for its life desperately and it's hard to know whether our sympathies should lie with the old man or with the marlin. But as the novel progresses the old man and the marlin are inseparably linked because both stand for the same ideal, that is, a noble struggle against destruction.

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. Read the passage and name the following.

- Young and devoted apprentice
- The place where Hemingway had experience of fishing
- That which Hemingway was injured by, during First World War
- Language of the novel
- In his first reading, the review writer was left

2. Correct the following sentences using facts from the review.

- Manolin's parents insisted on his working with the same old fisherman.
- This novel is pure fiction.
- Hemingway's style of writing does not unfold the hidden meaning.
- The relationship between the old man and Manolin is coarse.

3. Compare the points that you would use for a book review with those of the review of a play and write in your notebook.

4. The line – ‘I first read this novel years ago, when I did not understand it at all and was left unimpressed.’ tells us about the book reviewer’s opinion about the book. Complete the following sentences using the expressions.

- (1) In my opinion, every hard working person achieves success in life.
- (2) I strongly feel that
- (3) I wish I could
- (4) As far as I know you
- (5) I think

5. The review describes the struggle between the old man with the marlin and sharks, Ernest Hemingway’s struggle against defeat or death and noble struggle against destruction. Find all the words from the text that are related to the word ‘brave’ or ‘courage’.

- strength • • • •

6. The review mentions struggles of both the writer, Ernest Hemingway and the old man. Fill the incidents of struggle of Hemingway in table A and those of the old man in table B.

Table A	Table B
Ernest Hemingway	Old man
• • • •	

7. Read the text again. You will find that the text contains many phrases. Match the phrases in ‘A’ and their meanings in ‘B’. After matching their meanings, make sentences of your own.

‘A’ Phrases	‘B’ Meanings
1. run of terrible bad luck	a. hit on a topic
2. draws heavily on	b. without being affected by a particular factor
3. struck a chord	c. endure in difficult circumstances
4. in spite of	d. a period of time when bad things happen
5. holding on	e. makes use of

8. (A) Rewrite as directed, without change of meaning, in your notebook.

- (1) Hemingway’s novel is based on real events. (Convert the underlined adjective to an Adjectival Clause)
- (2) He hooks a marlin but the marlin is too strong for him. (Rewrite beginning with ‘Although’)

- (3) The reader can read his work again and again and find new layers of meaning. (Begin the sentence with 'On reading')
- (4) As the novel progresses, the old man and the marlin are inseparably linked. (Rewrite using 'progress' as a Noun)
- (5) Being strong, the marlin starts pulling the boat. (Rewrite inserting 'and' as a Co-ordinator)
- (6) When I first read this novel, I was unimpressed. (Rewrite using 'but' as a Co-ordinator)

(B) Write the 'root-word' after dropping the prefix or suffix or both.

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|-------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) unable | (2) heavily |
| (3) determination | (4) endurance |
| (5) unimpressed | (6) relationship |
| (7) inseparably | (8) empathetic |
| (9) beautiful | (10) simplicity |

9. Write a book review on any book of your choice with the help of the following points.

- Story line ● Social/Historical content ● Writing style ● My thought

10. You know the essential points required for a book review. Now form pairs and find essential points required for a play review and film review. You can take help of your teacher, library or the internet.

Book Review	Play Review	Film Review
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11. Project

Classroom Library :

Ask all your classmates to donate a book each to the class. In this way everyone will have a book of his/her own to read. Read the book in a week or two. After reading it, exchange your book with your classmate. Keep exchanging and reading books for the whole year. Every fortnight give the book review of the book that you have read recently in the form of presentation.

