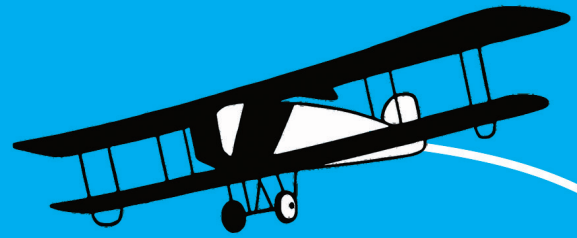


Exploring



Mrs Dalloway

EMC Approaches



EMC

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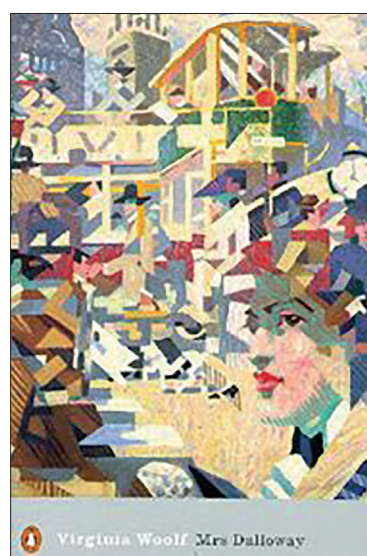
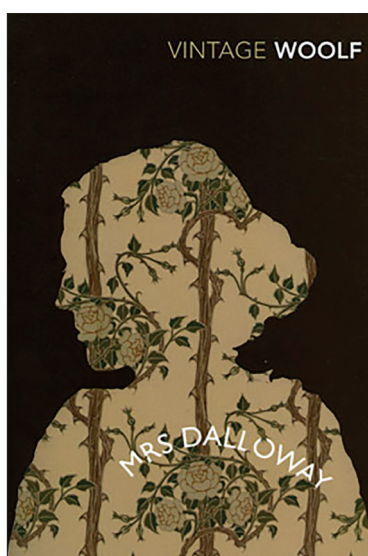
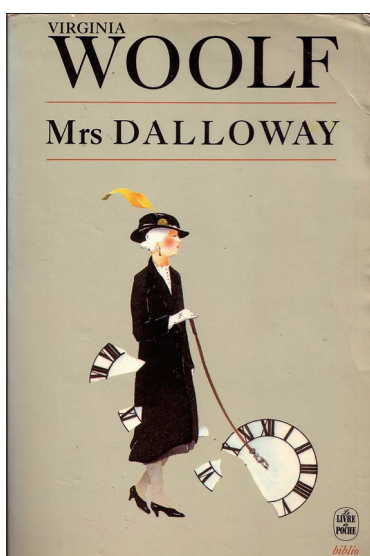
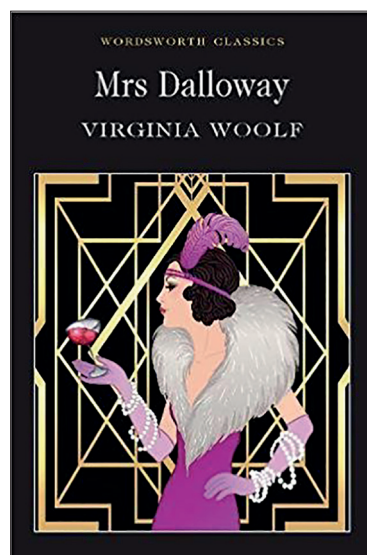
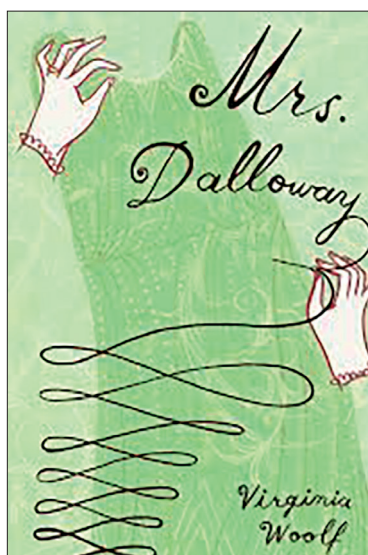
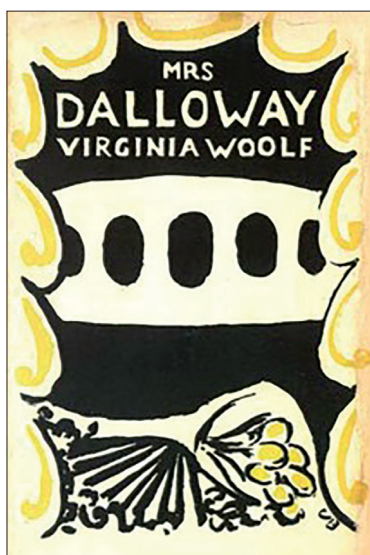
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STARTING YOUR EXPLORATIONS OF *MRS DALLOWAY*

Book Covers

Included here are some of the covers that have been used for different editions of *Mrs Dalloway* since it was first published in 1925.

- In pairs, look closely at the covers – the image, the style of text, the relationship with the title. Talk about what each suggests to you about the novel.
- Share your thoughts in class discussion, drawing out the similarities and differences between the covers and the expectations and questions each provokes about the novel.



Exploring Quotations

Included on pages 8 to 11 is a collection of quotations taken from across *Mrs Dalloway* for you to explore before reading the novel. You can use them in different ways, depending on whether you are working on your own or with the rest of your class. In each case, your aim is to explore the quotations and connections between them, noticing patterns or repeated ideas, to speculate about events, characters and ideas and to ask questions.

Connecting and Speculating – Ten Quotations to Explore on Your Own

- On your own, look through the quotations on page 8. Annotate them with anything that strikes you as interesting or puzzling, connections you notice and questions they raise in you.
- What sort of novel do you think you are dealing with? Can you make any comments about:
 - ▶ Events (i.e. what seems to be happening)
 - ▶ Themes
 - ▶ Language and style
 - ▶ Connections between events, themes and language?
- Record your ideas in two lists: observations and questions. If you can, compare your ideas with those of other people in your class.

Whole Class Speed-dating

- For this activity, you will each need one of the quotations. Write out the quotation you have been given and read it to yourself two or three times.
- When your teacher tells you to, stand up and get into pairs. Read your quotations to each other and talk about what you notice, including any connections between them or any interesting differences.
- After a few minutes, your teacher will tell you to swap partners and do the same again.
- Repeat this several more times, so that you have discussed your quotation in relation to six or seven others.
- What sort of novel do you think you are dealing with? As a class, reflect on everything you have discovered and see if you can make any comments about:
 - ▶ Events (i.e. what seems to be happening)
 - ▶ Themes
 - ▶ Language and style
 - ▶ Connections between events, themes and language?

A Single Page of Quotations

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as one did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen;

But how strange, on entering the Park, the silence; the mist; the hum; the slow-swimming happy ducks; the pouched birds waddling; and who should be coming along with his back against the Government buildings, most appropriately, carrying a despatch box stamped with the Royal Arms, who but Hugh Whitbread; her old friend Hugh – the admirable Hugh!

Her only gift was knowing people almost by instinct, she thought, walking on. If you put her in a room with some one, up went her back like a cat's; or she purred.

Septimus Warren Smith, who found himself unable to pass, heard him.

'Look, look, Septimus!' she cried. For Dr Holmes had told her to make her husband (who had nothing whatever seriously the matter with him but was a little out of sorts) take an interest in things outside himself.

Laying her brooch on the table, she had a sudden spasm, as if, while she mused, the icy claws had had the chance to fix in her. She was not old yet. She had just broken into her fifty-second year. Months and months of it were still untouched. June, July, August! Each still remained almost whole, and, as if to catch the falling drop, Clarissa (crossing to the dressing-table) plunged into the very heart of the moment, transfixed it, there –

'But, thank you, Lucy, oh, thank you,' said Mrs Dalloway, and thank you, thank you, she went on saying (sitting down on the sofa with her dress over her knees, her scissors, her silks), thank you, thank you, she went on saying in gratitude to her servants generally for helping her to be like this, to be what she wanted, gentle, generous-hearted.

Septimus was one of the first to volunteer. He went to France to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays and Miss Isabel Pole in a green dress walking in a square.

Lord, lord, the snobbery of the English! thought Peter Walsh, standing in the corner. How they loved dressing up in gold lace and doing homage! There! That must be – by Jove it was – Hugh Whitbread, snuffing round the precincts of the great, grown rather fatter, rather whiter, the admirable Hugh!

He could see the first moment they came into the room (the Warren Smiths they were called); he was certain directly he saw the man; it was a case of extreme gravity. It was a case of complete breakdown – complete physical and nervous breakdown, with every symptom in an advanced stage, he ascertained in two or three minutes (writing answers to questions, murmured discreetly, on a pink card.)

SECTION 1

From *Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself* to *as if those motor cars, those tyres of motor cars, were all her fault*.

Before Reading

A Creative Writing Activity

Mrs Dalloway begins:

Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.

For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning – fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

What a lark! What a plunge!

- As a class, share your first thoughts about this opening, using the prompts below:
 - ▶ Who do you think might say these words
 - ▶ What sort of novel does it seem to be from
 - ▶ What do you notice about the style of writing
 - ▶ What are your expectations of the novel?
- Copy out these opening lines and then, without thinking too much, write for ten minutes, continuing the novel's opening in any way you want.
- After ten minutes, stop and get it into groups of four. Take it in turns to read out your openings. Discuss the similarities and differences in what you chose to write and the style you used.
- Pull out one or two things that strike you about the way you each (or all) of you chose to write, to feed back in whole class discussion.

During and After Reading Section 1

A First Reading

- Read to the end of the section (*as if those motor cars, those types of motor cars, were all her fault*), and share your first response:
 - ▶ What happens
 - ▶ What is it about
 - ▶ What are your impressions of it.
- Thinking about your experience as a reader, what is it like to read this novel?

Introducing Clarissa

- What are your impressions of Clarissa so far? As a class, share your image of her.

Some of the techniques Virginia Woolf uses to create the character of Clarissa are listed here.

- ▶ The narrator's description of her
- ▶ Facts about her (for example, she is holding a party in the evening)
- ▶ What she does
- ▶ What she says
- ▶ What she thinks about
- ▶ The ways she is shown as thinking
- ▶ The associations she makes
- ▶ The way she reacts to other characters
- ▶ Repeated phrases or ways of expressing herself
- ▶ What other characters say or think about her

- As a class, debate which of these are most significant in creating your impression of Clarissa Dalloway.

What's Special About *Mrs Dalloway*? Reading and Annotating the Opening Section

As this extract from the *Chicago Herald's* 1925 review shows, the very first reviews recognised that in *Mrs Dalloway* Virginia Woolf was doing something rather different from most novels:

She has attempted something rather daring in this her latest book [...] It is rather exciting this process of pulling each moment apart to see what it's made of.

- Re-read the opening of *Mrs Dalloway* as far as *London; this moment of June*. (The passage is reproduced on page 24 so that you can copy it for annotating.)
 - Working in pairs, annotate the opening with what you think is distinctive about it.
- Included here are six tiny critical fragments about *Mrs Dalloway*. (See page 65 for the sources.)
- In pairs, talk about the ways in which these fragments might help you talk about Woolf's style of writing in this opening section.

pulling each moment apart to see what it's made of

capturing the flux of random associations

some kind of whole made of shivering fragments

disarmingly simple

rhythmical merging and shifting between the poles of poetry and prose

like a ballet – movements in different directions, both time and space












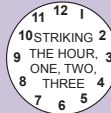






- Share your ideas as a class.

A Close Reading of the Opening Section























You can read a close reading of this opening by Professor Judy Simons on page 90.

THE COUNTERS

Times

THE HOUR 	THE HALF-HOUR 	10 	ELEVEN O'CLOCK 	HALF-PAST ELEVEN 	THE QUARTER TO TWELVE 
PRECISELY TWELVE O'CLOCK 	HALF-PAST ONE 	THE CLOCK STRUCK THREE 	3.30PM 	SIX O'CLOCK 	STRIKING THE HOUR, ONE, TWO, THREE 
THE CLOCK WAS STRIKING 					

Places

REGENT'S PARK 	BOND STREET 	ST JAMES'S PARK 	FLEET STREET 	HARLEY STREET 	OXFORD STREET 
VICTORIA STREET 	THE MALL AND BUCKINGHAM PALACE 	TRAFALGAR SQUARE 	PICCADILLY 	GREAT PORTLAND STREET 	HAYMARKET 
PORTLAND PLACE 	CONDUIT STREET 	DEAN'S YARD 	HOUSE OF COMMONS 	ARMY AND NAVY STORES 	WESTMINSTER 
BEDFORD PLACE 	RUSSELL SQUARE 	GREEN PARK 	WHITEHALL 	CHANCERY LANE 	STRAND 
					

Motifs

SOUND OF CAR BACKFIRING	SKY-WRITING AEROPLANE	SONG OF THE FLOWER SELLER	STRIKING OF BIG BEN	CLOCK FACES	PLACES
'FEAR NO MORE THE HEAT OF THE SUN'	PETER WALSH'S POCKET KNIFE	'THE LEADEN CIRCLES DISSOLVED IN THE AIR'			

Actions

VISITING	BEING VISITED BY	WALKING	PASSING BY	FOLLOWING	REMEMBERING
SITTING	RESTING	WAITING	WORKING	OBSERVING	ARRIVING
LEAVING	RETURNING	THINKING/ REFLECTING	TALKING	QUESTIONING	REJECTING