

Virginia Woolf

MRS DALLOWAY

London 1923. The First World War has been over for five years, but its effects are still being felt all round the city. A socialite and politician's wife prepares for one of her famous parties while, elsewhere in the city, an old friend considers the pain of past and present love and other characters live out the uncertainties and dramas of post-war England. All touch each other in some way with their actions, directly or indirectly, in Virginia Woolf's portrait of a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway.

In this reader you will find:

- Information about Virginia Woolf's life
- A section focusing on background and context
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension activities
- C1 Advanced-style activities
- Exit test

Tags

Love Society

Downloadable
**Audio
Files**

Look at the inside front cover flap to find out how to download your free Audio files.

STAGE 1	600 headwords	Elementary	A1	Movers
STAGE 2	800 headwords	Pre-Intermediate	A2	Key
STAGE 3	1000 headwords	Intermediate	B1	Preliminary
STAGE 4	1800 headwords	Upper Intermediate	B2	First
● STAGE 5	2500 headwords	Advanced	C1	Advanced
STAGE 6	Unabridged Texts	Proficiency	C2	Proficiency

Classic

www.eligradedreaders.com

 The pleasure of Reading

Eli Readers is a beautifully illustrated series of timeless classics and specially-written stories for learners of English.

ISBN 978-88-536-3260-9



9 788853 632609

ELI Virginia Woolf
Stage 5 C1

MRS DALLOWAY

Young Adult Readers



Young Adult Readers

Classic

Virginia Woolf

MRS DALLOWAY



Downloadable
**Audio
Files**

Book brief

- 1 *Mrs Dalloway* is a modernist novel by British author Virginia Woolf, first published in 1925.
- 2 The story is mostly set in mid-June, 1923, in London, in the rich neighbourhood of Westminster. There are also many flashbacks through the memories of the different characters.
- 3 The reader is given different points of view from one character's stream of consciousness to another's.
- 4 The story covers one day from morning to night in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, an upper-class housewife.
- 5 Main themes include communication, privacy, the fear of death and the threat of oppression.

Virginia Woolf

Mrs Dalloway

Adaptation and Activities by
Richard Larkham

Illustrated by
Antonio Marinoni

For Review Only

Contents

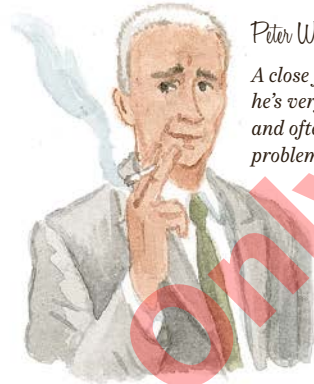
6	Main Characters	
8	Before you Read	
10	Chapter One	An Eventful Visit to the Florist's
20	Activities	
24	Chapter Two	An Echo from the Past
34	Activities	
38	Chapter Three	Painful Memories
48	Activities	
52	Chapter Four	Taking Hold of Experience
62	Activities	
66	Chapter Five	A Sense of Proportion
76	Activities	
80	Chapter Six	Lunching with a Lady
90	Activities	
94	Chapter Seven	A Singular Friendship
104	Activities	
108	Chapter Eight	Impulsive Decisions
118	Activities	
122	Chapter Nine	Everything Comes Together
132	Activities	
134	Focus on...	Virginia Woolf
136	Focus on...	The Aftermath of World War One
138	Focus on...	The Style of <i>Mrs Dalloway</i>
140	Focus on...	The Genesis of <i>Mrs Dalloway</i>
142	Test yourself	
143	Syllabus	

Main Characters



Clarissa Dalloway

The protagonist of the story, she's lively and cares a lot about what people think of her, but is also very self-reflective.



Peter Walsh

A close friend of Clarissa's, he's very critical of others and often has romantic problems.



Richard Dalloway

Clarissa's husband and a member of Parliament in the Conservative government. He's a sportsman, likes being in the country and a loving father and husband.



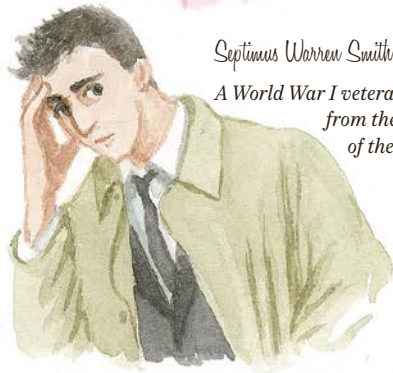
Sally Seton

A close friend of Clarissa when they were young girls. She was a wild teenager but is now married.



Lucrezia Warren Smith

Septimus's wife, she's 24 and a hat-maker from Milan. Rezia loves Septimus but is forced to bear the weight of his mental illness alone and feels isolated.



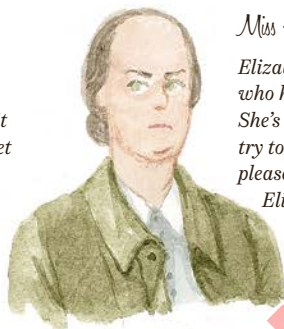
Septimus Warren Smith

A World War I veteran suffering from the horrors of the war.



Elizabeth Dalloway

Clarissa and Richard's only child, she's 17 and is gentle, considerate, and a bit passive. She prefers the quiet of the country to parties.



Miss Kilman

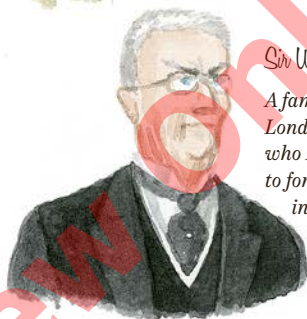
Elizabeth's history teacher, who has German blood. She's over forty and doesn't try to dress attractively to please others. She adores

Elizabeth but doesn't like Clarissa at all.



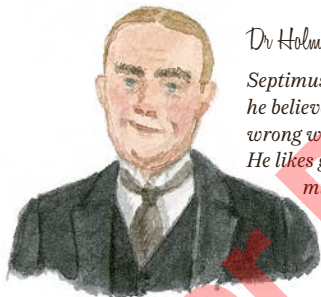
Hugh Whitbread

Clarissa's old friend and married to Evelyn Whitbread. He's proud to be English and supports English traditions.



Sir William Bradshaw

A famous, respected London psychiatrist, who Lucrezia turns to for help with her insane husband, Septimus.



Dr Holmes

Septimus's family doctor, he believes there's nothing wrong with Septimus. He likes going to the music hall and playing golf.



Lady Bradshaw

Sir William Bradshaw's wife, she's good at photography.



Aunt Helena

Clarissa's aunt, she grew up in the strict English society of the past. She's a great botanist and is over 80.



Ellie Henderson

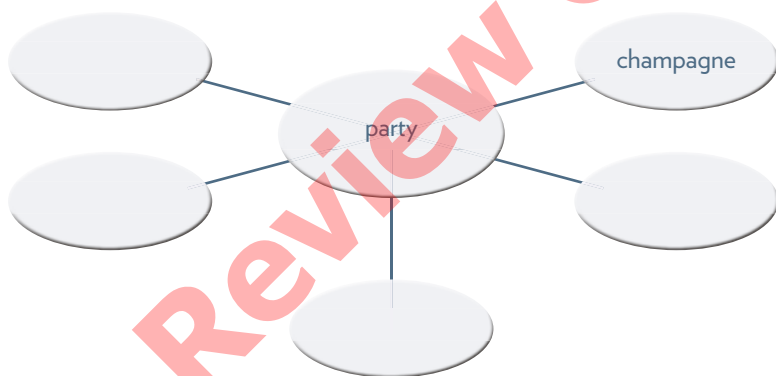
Clarissa's old-fashioned cousin, she's in her early fifties, has no job and lives on a small income.

Before you Read

Vocabulary

- 1 Read the blurb on the back of this book. *Mrs Dalloway* is about what happens to a small group of people on the day of a London party in the early 1920s. What words would you expect to find in the story? Use this word map to write down your ideas.

London 1923. The First World War has been over for five years, but the effects are still being felt all round the metropolis. A socialite and politician's wife prepares for one of her famous parties while somewhere else in the city an old friend considers the pain of past and present love, a war veteran struggles with his inner demons, and other characters live out the uncertainties and dramas of post-war English society. All touch each other in some way with their actions, directly or indirectly, in Virginia Woolf's ground-breaking and celebrated portrait of a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway.



- 2 In Chapter One, we're introduced to the main character of this book, Clarissa Dalloway. Look at the front cover and make a list to describe her.

Mrs Dalloway seems:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Writing

21st Century Skills

- 3 This chapter is called *An Eventful Visit To The Florist's*. Can you imagine what happens when Clarissa goes out to buy flowers? Write your prediction here... and then read to find out what actually happened!

.....

.....

.....

- 4 The story of *Mrs Dalloway* is set in London. Write a list of the streets and places you know of this city.

.....

.....

.....

Reading Comprehension

21st Century Skills

- 5 At one point Clarissa says that she 'always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day'. What do you think she means? Do you agree with her?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Speaking

21st Century Skills

- 6 Think about the title of this book. Why, for example, isn't it called *Mrs Dalloway's Party* or *An Important Occasion*? What does Virginia Woolf want to say with this title?

An Eventful Visit to the Florist's

- ▶ 2 Mrs Dalloway said she'd buy the flowers herself.

Lucy had enough work to do; Rumpelmayer's workmen were coming to take the doors off. And what a fresh morning it was, thought Clarissa Dalloway... just like being at the seaside.

Bourton is a village in Gloucestershire, England, in the Cotswolds area, famous for its outstanding beauty.

On days like this at Bourton, as a girl of eighteen, she'd burst open the French windows* and plunged* into the fresh, calm open air. Yet she also remembered standing at the open window, serious, thinking that something terrible was about to happen. She'd stand and look at the flowers and the trees and the birds — until Peter Walsh said, perhaps at breakfast, 'Talking to the vegetables, were you?' Peter Walsh — he'd be coming back from India soon; Clarissa remembered his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile and his grumpiness.*

Clarissa waited on the kerb* for a van to pass. Meanwhile, Scrope Purvis saw her and thought (as much as he knew his next-door neighbour in Westminster): a charming woman, full of energy, even though she's over fifty and has gone* very white since her illness.

Clarissa recalled that she'd lived in Westminster for over twenty years now. As she crossed Victoria Street, Big Ben struck; first of all the musical warning, then the hour. Boom! She wondered why most people in this city loved life so much, amidst* the traffic; and this was

the French windows the pair of glass doors
(to the garden)
plunge jump
grumpiness bad temper

kerb edge of the pavement
has gone (here) her hair has become
amidst surrounded by

Mrs Dalloway

what *she* loved: life; London; this moment in mid-June.

The War* was over, thank Heaven. The King and Queen were at Buckingham Palace. And everywhere, there was activity in this grey-blue early morning air; and Clarissa, too, loved it because she was going to give her party that night. How strange, then, walking into St James's Park, was the silence, the ducks swimming slowly – and who was that walking along? Her old dear, admirable friend Hugh Whitbread!

'Good-morning to you, Clarissa!' said Hugh, rather extravagantly, 'Where are you off to?'

'I love walking in London,' said Mrs Dalloway. 'Really it's better than walking in the country.'

Other people came to London to see exhibitions – the Whitbreads came to London 'to see doctors'. Clarissa had visited Evelyn Whitbread many times in a nursing home.* Was Evelyn ill again? Nothing serious, said Hugh. And as he quickly moved away, assuring her that he and Evelyn would be at her party, Clarissa felt aware of her hat. Not the right hat for the early morning, was that it? Hugh always made her feel a little underdressed – but he *was* a good person, although he nearly drove Richard mad, and Peter Walsh had never forgiven her for liking Hugh.

How *she* and Peter had argued! He said she'd marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase; the perfect hostess*, he called her (she'd cried about that in her bedroom), she had the makings of* the perfect hostess, he said.

She'd been right not to marry Peter Walsh. For in marriage there must be a little independence between people living together

George V was King of the United Kingdom from 1910 to 1936. His wife was Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, a distant cousin, and known as 'May' within the family.

The War The First World War (1914-18)

off to going

nursing home care home for old people

hostess (here) the woman who gives the party and entertains her guests

have the makings of have the right qualities to become

day in day out* in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him. (Where was he this morning for instance*?) But with Peter everything had to be shared; and when, in the little garden at Bourton by the fountain, she had to break with him* or they'd have been destroyed, she was convinced; though there was sadness in her heart for years; and then the shocking moment when someone told her at a concert that he'd married a woman he met on the boat going to India! He was quite happy, he assured her — although he'd never done a thing that they'd talked of; his whole life had been a failure. It made Clarissa angry still.

She'd reached the Park gates. She stood for a moment, looking at the omnibuses* in Piccadilly.

She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably* old. She had a perpetual sense of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day. She knew nothing; no language, no history; she hardly ever read a book now; but to her all this was absolutely absorbing*.

Her only gift was knowing people almost by instinct. Did it matter then, she asked herself, that she must inevitably cease* to exist completely; all this must go on without her; that somehow in the streets of London, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part of the trees at home; of the house there; part of people she'd never met.

But what was she dreaming as she looked into Hatchards' shop window?

She read in the book spread open:

day in day out every day
for instance for example
break with him finish her relationship with Peter

omnibus (old word) bus
unspeakably terribly
absorbing fully taking one's attention
cease stop

Mrs Dalloway

Fear no more the heat o' the sun
Nor the furious winter's rages.*

There were a lot of books, but none that seemed exactly right to take to Evelyn Whitbread in her nursing home; nothing that would amuse her.

Clarissa turned and walked back towards Bond Street, annoyed, because it was silly to have other reasons for doing things. She'd have preferred to be like Richard, who did things for themselves, but half the time she did things to make people think this or that.

Bond Street early in the morning fascinated* her; its shops. She paused for a moment at the window of a glove shop. She had a passion for gloves; but her own daughter Elizabeth didn't care at all for them.

Elizabeth really cared for her dog Grizzle most of all. Still, that was better than Miss Kilman! Richard said it might be only a phase which all girls go through. It might be falling in love. But why with Miss Kilman? (She *had* been badly treated, of course). Anyhow they were inseparable. Every year Miss Kilman wore that green mackintosh coat*; she perspired*; she always made you feel her superiority, your inferiority; how poor she was; how rich you were. No doubt in another life, she'd have loved Miss Kilman! But not in this world.

Nonsense, nonsense! She cried to herself, as she entered Mulberry's, the florist's – to be greeted at once by button-faced Miss Pym, whose hands were always bright red, as if they'd been stood in cold water with the flowers. (She looked older this year.)

There were delphiniums, sweet peas, bunches of lilac; and carnations, masses of carnations. There were roses; there were irises. Clarissa breathed in the earthy garden sweet smell as she stood

“**Fear no more ... winter's rages**” a funeral song for Imogen in Shakespeare's play Cymbeline

fascinate attract the strong attention and interest of someone

mackintosh coat raincoat

perspire sweat

Virginia Woolf

talking to Miss Pym. While she began to go with her from jar to jar, choosing, she said, 'Nonsense, nonsense,' to herself, more and more gently when — oh! A pistol shot in the street outside!

'Dear, those motor cars,' said Miss Pym, going to the window to look, and coming back and smiling apologetically*, as if those tyres of motor cars were all HER fault.

The violent explosion which made Mrs Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologise came from a motor car which had pulled up precisely opposite Mulberry's shop window. Passers-by stopped and stared and had just enough time to see a *very* important face against the dove-grey upholstery*, before a male hand drew the blind* and there was nothing more to be seen.

Yet rumours were at once in circulation: was it the Prince of Wales's, the Queen's, the Prime Minister's? Whose face was it? Nobody knew.

Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, with hazel* eyes, beak-nosed*, wearing brown shoes and a shabby* overcoat, found himself unable to pass.

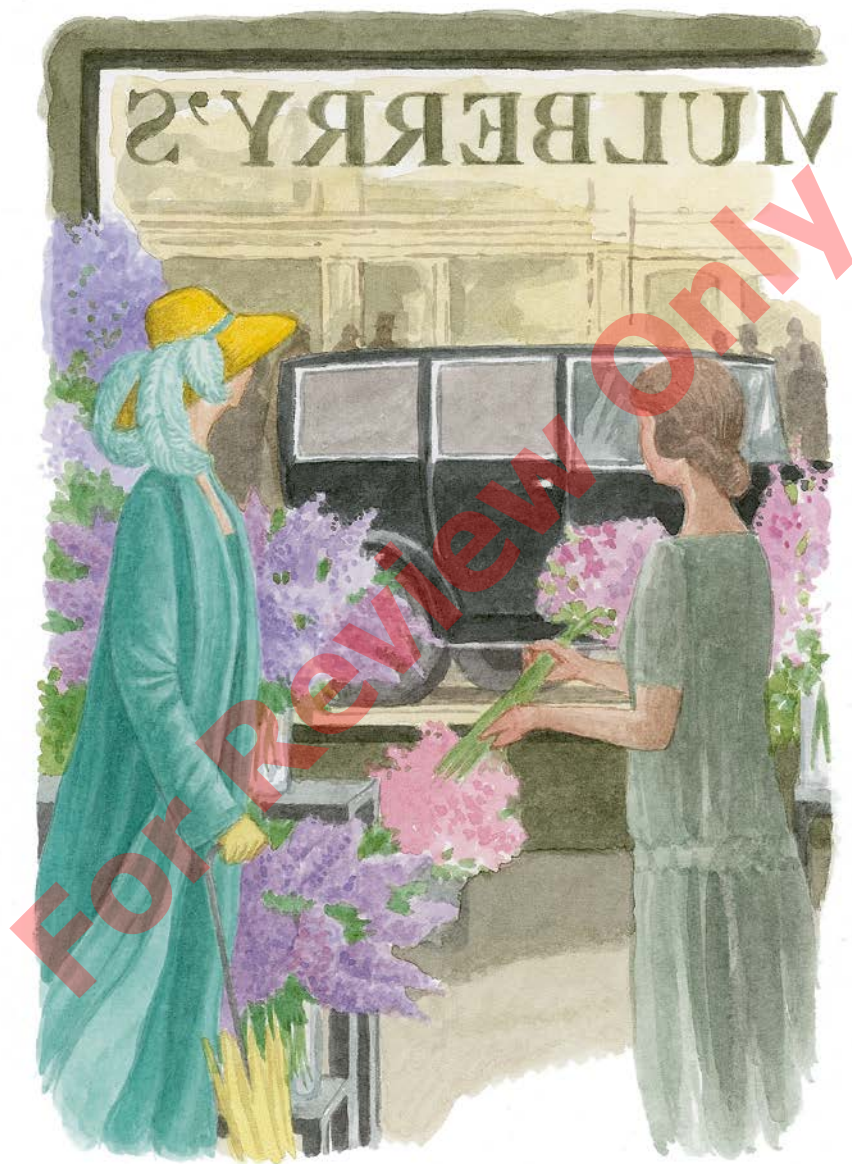
Everything *had* come to a standstill. The motor car had stopped outside Mulberry's shop window; Mrs Dalloway, with her arms full of sweet peas, looked out. Everyone looked at the motor car. Septimus looked; I'm blocking the way, he thought.

'Let's go on, Septimus,' said his wife, a little Italian woman with large eyes and a pointed face.

Lucrezia herself couldn't help looking at the motor car. Was it the Queen in there — the Queen going shopping?

apologetically as if to say sorry
upholstery leather seats (inside the car)
blind (n) window cover

hazel light brown
beak-nosed with a pointed nose (like a bird's mouth)
shabby dirty, old



Clarissa buying flowers and looking
at the car that has stopped.



‘Come on,’ said Lucrezia; but her husband (for they’d been married four, five years now) jumped and said, ‘All right!’ angrily, as if she’d interrupted him.

People must notice, she thought, looking at the crowd staring at the motor car. Septimus had said, ‘I’ll kill myself’; suppose they’d heard him? Help, help! She wanted to cry out.

‘Now we’ll cross the road,’ said Lucrezia – so simple, so impulsive*, only twenty-four, without friends in England; she who’d left Italy for his sake.*

The motor car with its blinds drawn proceeded towards Piccadilly. The face itself had been seen only once by three people for a few seconds. But greatness was definitely seated inside; greatness was passing, hidden, down Bond Street. It’s probably the Queen, thought Mrs Dalloway, coming out of Mulberry’s with her flowers.

The traffic was terrible for the time of day; the Queen herself unable to pass. The chauffeur said or showed something to the policeman, who saluted*, and the car passed through, slowly and very silently. Clarissa guessed; she’d seen something white, magical, circular, in the footman’s hand, a disc inscribed with a name – the Queen’s, the Prince of Wales’s, the Prime Minister’s.

Gliding* across Piccadilly, the car turned down St. James’s Street. A small crowd meanwhile had gathered at the gates of Buckingham Palace. The Prince lived at St. James’s; but he might come along in the morning to visit his mother.

So Sarah Bletchley said, with her baby in her arms, while Emily Coates looked at the Palace windows and thought of all the housemaids, all the bedrooms. The crowd increased. Little Mr Bowley

impulsive acting suddenly without thinking
sake benefit

salute when a soldier puts his right hand to his forehead as a sign of respect
glide move smoothly

Mrs Dalloway

actually had tears in his eyes. He raised his hat as the car turned into the Mall and held it high as the car approached.

Suddenly Mrs Coates looked up into the sky. An aeroplane was coming over the trees, letting out white smoke from behind, making letters in the sky! Everyone looked up.

What letters? A C was it? An E, then an L? For a moment they lay still; then they melted in the sky, and the aeroplane shot further away and again, in a fresh space of sky, and began writing a K, an E, a Y perhaps?

‘Glaxo,’ said Mrs Coates, looking straight up, and her baby, lying in her arms, gazed straight up.

‘Kreemo,’ murmured* Mrs Bletchley. With his hat held out perfectly still in his hand, Mr Bowley gazed straight up. As they looked, the whole world became perfectly silent, and a flight of gulls* crossed the sky, and in this extraordinary silence and peace, bells struck eleven times, the sound fading up there among the gulls.

The aeroplane turned and swooped* exactly where it liked –

‘That’s an E,’ said Mrs Bletchley –

‘It’s toffee,’ murmured Mr Bowley – (and the car went in at the Palace gates and nobody looked at it).

The plane shut off the smoke and rushed away. It’d gone. There was no sound. The clouds to which the letters E, G, or L had attached themselves moved freely. Then suddenly, as a train comes out of a tunnel, the aeroplane rushed out of the clouds again, soared* up and wrote one letter after another – but what word was it writing?

Lucrezia Warren Smith, sitting by her husband’s side on a seat in Regent’s Park, looked up.

murmur say something in a low, indistinct voice

a flight of gulls a group of seagulls (birds)

swoop move down suddenly

soar fly or rise high in the air

After-Reading Activities • Chapter One

Reading Comprehension

1 Are these statements true (T) or false (F)?

	T	F
1 The story of <i>Mrs Dalloway</i> takes place in late summer.	☐	☐
2 Clarissa Dalloway is forty years old.	☐	☐
3 Clarissa lives in one of London's central districts.	☐	☐
4 Clarissa is thankful that she didn't get married to her old friend Peter Walsh.	☐	☐
5 Hugh Whitbread meets Clarissa in St James's Park.	☐	☐
6 Someone fires a gun outside Mulberry's the florist's.	☐	☐
7 Septimus Warren Smith is a well-dressed veteran of the First World War.	☐	☐
8 Septimus's wife Rezia is unhappy to have left her native Italy.	☐	☐

Grammar C1 Advanced

2 Complete this part of Chapter One with one word for each space.

On the day of her party in Westminster, Clarissa Dalloway had decided to go to the florist's to choose the flowers (1)
As she was walking through the streets, she remembered a happy time at her family home when she was eighteen, and she (2) thought about her old friend Peter Walsh, whom she'd refused to marry. In St James's Park, Clarissa was surprised to meet another old friend, Hugh Whitbread, (3) assured her that he and his wife (4) be at the party. While she was looking at the flowers in the shop, Clarissa heard a loud noise outside; a large motor-car had stopped opposite and seemed to (5) carrying a very important passenger. Eventually the car drove away and went towards St James's. Meanwhile, Septimus Warren Smith and his Italian wife Rezia, who'd seen the car, went to sit in Regent's Park. Rezia was unhappy because her husband just stared (6) of him and didn't talk to her; she also realised that she missed her homeland. They and other people watched a plane flying (7) them, which was pouring (8) white smoke to publicise a toffee product.

Text Analysis

3 Can you identify who's speaking?

1 'What a surprise to see you here!'

2 'What about some sweet peas for the tables, Mrs Dalloway?'

3 'You're always interrupting!'

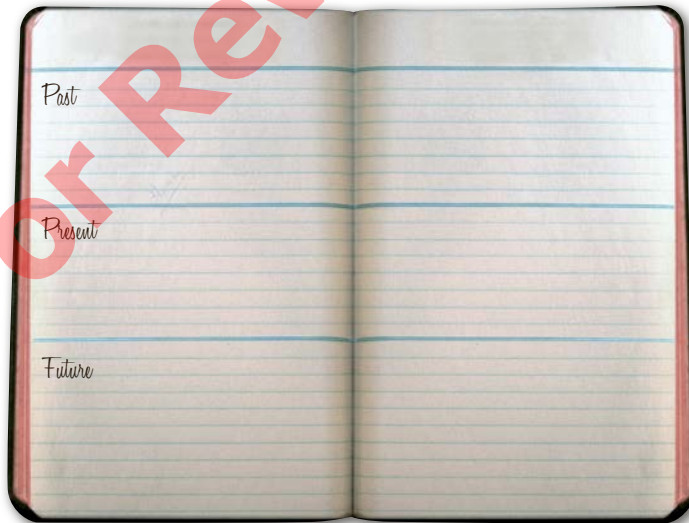
4 'Please be assured, we'll be at the party tonight.'

5 'Well, that couple I've just spoken to is VERY strange!'

6 'I don't recognise him anymore... and I can't talk to anyone!'

Note-taking

4 In this chapter, we read **Clarissa Dalloway's** thoughts about her past, her present and her future. Write in her notebook below.



Making Sense – Grammar

5 What do these sentences from the text mean? Rewrite them, using your own words and including the word in brackets.

- 1

'Septimus had said, 'I will kill myself'; suppose they'd heard him?'
Rezia was worried (announce).....
.....
- 2

'Dr Holmes had told her to make her husband take an interest in things outside himself.'
Dr Holmes wanted Rezia (encourage).....
.....
- 3

'She'd have preferred to be like Richard, who did things for themselves.'
Clarissa really wanted (attitude).....
.....
- 4

'Did it matter then, she asked herself, that she must inevitably cease to exist completely; all this must go on without her?'
Clarissa wondered whether (die)
.....

Reading Comprehension

6 Focus on Septimus Warren Smith. How does he compare with Clarissa?

Make notes for the categories in the chart below.

	Marriage	Love	Life and Death	Character
Septimus				
Clarissa				

Speaking

21st Century Skills

7 Think about the difference between Clarissa's marriage to Richard and Septimus's to Rezia. Are there any similarities or parallels? Discuss your ideas.



Writing

- 8 Imagine that you're Clarissa writing in your diary about your thoughts and what happened during the visit to Mulberry's the florist's. Use the first-person 'I' form.

Pre-Reading Activities • Chapter Two

Speaking

21st Century Skills

- 9 In Chapter Two, Clarissa receives an unexpected visit from someone from her past. Who do you think this might be, and what effect will it have on her?

.....

.....

.....

.....



Reading Comprehension

- 10 Guess if these statements from Chapter Two are True (T) or False (F), then check your answers.

	T	F
1 Clarissa used to sit on the floor smoking cigarettes with Sally Seton.	☐	☐
2 Clarissa was excited for Richard about his lunch appointment at Lady Bruton's.	☐	☐
3 Elizabeth Dalloway interrupted her mother's conversation with Peter Walsh.	☐	☐
4 Peter Walsh thought that Clarissa didn't look any older than when he last saw her.	☐	☐
5 Clarissa admitted to herself that she'd had strong feelings for Sally at Bourton.	☐	☐
6 Clarissa was surprised when her maid Lucy told her about Mr Dalloway's lunch appointment.	☐	☐
7 Peter felt relaxed about seeing Clarissa again.	☐	☐
8 Clarissa thought that Peter had lost weight.	☐	☐