



## 8th Grade English Writing: Module 1: Lesson 1

Writing Literary Texts

Reading Sample: Literary Text

**Instructions:** Read each part as instructed in the lesson. Mouse over bold words to see their definitions as you read.

### The Boys by Anton Chekhov



Source: Stepanov 006, Alexei Stepanov, Wikimedia

#### PART 1

- (1) “Volodya's come!” someone shouted in the yard.
- (2) “Master Volodya's here!” bawled Natalya the cook, running into the dining-room. “Oh, my goodness!”
- (3) The whole Korolyov family, who had been expecting their Volodya from hour to hour, rushed to the windows. At the front door stood a wide sledge, with three white horses in a cloud of steam. The **sledge** was empty, for Volodya was already in the hall, untying his hood with red and chilly fingers. His school overcoat, his cap, his snowboots, and the hair on his temples were all white with frost, and his whole figure from head to foot diffused such a pleasant, fresh smell of the snow that the very sight of him made one want to shiver and say “brrr!”
- (4) His mother and aunt ran to kiss and hug him. Natalya plumped down at his feet and began pulling off his snowboots, his sisters shrieked with delight, the doors creaked and banged, and Volodya's father, in his waistcoat and shirt-sleeves, ran out into the hall with scissors in his hand, and cried out in alarm:
- (5) “We were expecting you all yesterday? Did you come all right? Had a good journey? Mercy on us! you might let him say 'how do you do' to his father! I am his father after all!”
- (6) “Bow-wow!” barked the huge black dog, Milord, in a deep bass, tapping with his tail on the walls and furniture.
- (7) For two minutes there was nothing but a general hubbub of joy.



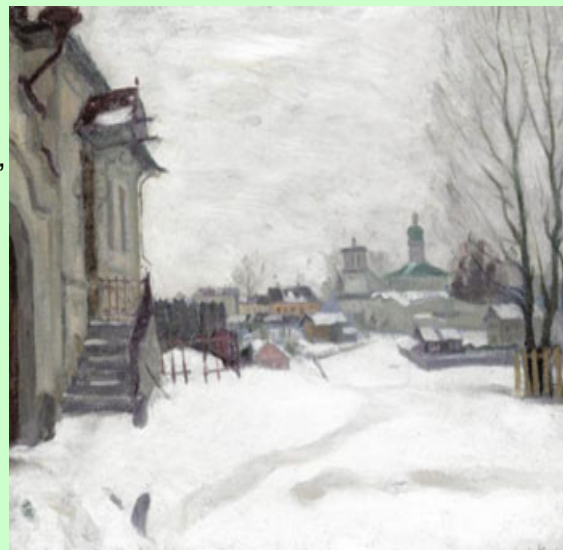
## PART 2

(8) First to Perm . . .” Lentilov said, in an undertone, “from there to Tiumen, then Tomsk . . . then . . . then . . . Kamchatka. There the Samoyedes take one over Behring's Straits in boats . . . And then we are in America. . . . There are lots of furry animals there. . . .”

(9) “And California?” asked Volodya.

(10) “California is lower down. . . . We've only to get to America and California is not far off. . . . And one can get a living by hunting and plunder.”

(11) All day long Lentilov avoided the little girls, and seemed to look at them with suspicion. In the evening he happened to be left alone with them for five minutes or so. It was awkward to be silent.



Source: Russian winter, Arnold Lakhovsky, Wikimedia

(12) He cleared his throat morosely, rubbed his left hand against his right, looked sullenly at Katya and asked:

(13) Have you read **Mayne Reid**?”

(14) “No, I haven't. . . . I say, can you skate?”

(15) Absorbed in his own reflections, Lentilov made no reply to this question; he simply puffed out his cheeks, and gave a long sigh as though he were very hot. He looked up at Katya once more and said:

(16) “When a herd of bisons stampedes across the prairie the earth trembles, and the frightened mustangs kick and neigh.”

(17) He smiled impressively and added: “And the Indians attack the trains, too. But worst of all are the mosquitoes and the termites.”

(18) “Why, what's that?”

(19) “They're something like ants, but with wings. They bite fearfully. Do you know who I am?”

(20) “Mr. Lentilov.”

(21) “No, I am Montehomo, the Hawk's Claw, Chief of the Ever Victorious.”  
Masha, the youngest, looked at him, then into the darkness out of window and said, wondering:

(22) “And we had lentils for supper yesterday.”

(23) Lentilov's **incomprehensible** utterances, and the way he was always whispering with Volodya, and the way Volodya seemed now to be always thinking about something instead of playing . . . all this was strange and mysterious. And the two elder girls, Katya and Sonya, began to keep a sharp look-out on the boys. At night, when the boys had gone to bed, the girls crept to their bedroom door, and listened to what they were saying. Ah, what they discovered! The boys were planning to run away to America to dig for gold: they had everything ready for the journey, a pistol, two knives, biscuits, a burning glass to serve instead of matches, a compass, and four **roubles** in cash. They learned that the boys would have to walk some thousands of miles, and would have to fight tigers and savages on the road: then they would get gold and ivory, slay their enemies, become pirates, drink gin, and finally marry beautiful maidens, and make a plantation.

(24) The boys interrupted each other in their excitement. Throughout the conversation, Lentilov called himself “Montehomo, the Hawk's Claw,” and Volodya was “my pale-face brother!”

(25) “Mind you don't tell mamma,” said Katya, as they went back to bed. “Volodya will bring us gold and ivory from America, but if you tell mamma he won't be allowed to go.”

(26) The day before Christmas Eve, Lentilov spent the whole day poring over the map of Asia and making notes, while Volodya, with a languid and swollen face that looked as though it had been stung by a bee, walked about the rooms and ate nothing. And once he stood still before the holy image in the nursery, crossed himself, and said:

(27) “Lord, forgive me a sinner; Lord, have pity on my poor unhappy mamma!”



Source: Ryabushkin - Winter morning. 1903, Andre Ryabushkin, Wikimedia



Source: Ivan Constantinovich Aivazovsky - Winter Scene in Little Russia, Ivan Aivazovsky, Wikimedia

(28) In the evening he burst out crying. On saying good-night he gave his father a long hug, and then hugged his mother and sisters. Katya and Sonya knew what was the matter, but little Masha was puzzled, completely puzzled. Every time she looked at Lentilov she grew thoughtful and said with a sigh:

(29) "When Lent comes, nurse says we shall have to eat peas and lentils."

(30) Early in the morning of Christmas Eve, Katya and Sonya slipped quietly out of bed, and went to find out how the boys meant to run away to America. They crept to their door.

(31) "Then you don't mean to go?" Lentilov was saying angrily. "Speak out: aren't you going?"

(32) "Oh dear," Volodya wept softly. "How can I go? I feel so unhappy about mamma."

(33) "My pale-face brother, I pray you, let us set off. You declared you were going, you egged me on, and now the time comes, you funk it!"

(34) "I . . . I . . . I'm not funking it, but I . . . I . . . I'm sorry for mamma."

(35) "Say once and for all, are you going or are you not?"

(36) "I am going, only . . . wait a little . . . I want to be at home a little."

(37) "In that case I will go by myself," Lentilov declared. "I can get on without you. And you wanted to hunt tigers and fight! Since that's how it is, give me back my cartridges!"

(38) At this Volodya cried so bitterly that his sisters could not help crying too. Silence followed.

(39) "So you are not coming?" Lentilov began again.

(40) "I . . . I . . . I am coming!"

(41) "Well, put on your things, then."

(42) And Lentilov tried to cheer Volodya up by singing the praises of America, growling like a tiger, pretending to be a steamer, scolding him, and promising to give him all the ivory and lions' and tigers' skins.



(43) And this thin, dark boy, with his freckles and his bristling shock of hair, impressed the little girls as an extraordinary remarkable person. He was a hero, a determined character, who knew no fear, and he growled so ferociously, that, standing at the door, they really might imagine there was a tiger or lion inside. When the little girls went back to their room and dressed, Katya's eyes were full of tears, and she said:

(44) “Oh, I feel so frightened!”



Source: Тройка - Василий Григорьевич Перов (1866), Vasily Perov, Wikimedia

**PART 3**

- (45) Everything was as usual till two o'clock, when they sat down to dinner. Then it appeared that the boys were not in the house. They sent to the servants' quarters, to the stables, to the bailiff's cottage. They were not to be found. They sent into the village—they were not there.
- (46) At tea, too, the boys were still absent, and by supper-time Volodya's mother was dreadfully uneasy, and even shed tears.
- (47) Late in the evening they sent again to the village, they searched everywhere, and walked along the river bank with lanterns. Heavens! what a fuss there was!
- (48) Next day the police officer came, and a paper of some sort was written out in the dining-room. Their mother cried. . . .
- (49) All of a sudden a sledge stopped at the door, with three white horses in a cloud of steam.
- (50) "Volodya's come," someone shouted in the yard.



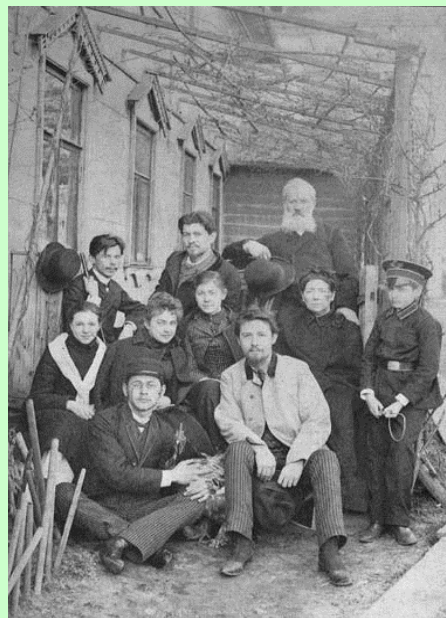
Source: Baikal sledging, TWAM, Wikimedia

- (51) "Master Volodya's here!" bawled Natalya, running into the dining-room. And Milord barked his deep bass, "bow-wow."
- (52) It seemed that the boys had been stopped in the Arcade, where they had gone from shop to shop asking where they could get gunpowder.

- (53) Volodya burst into sobs as soon as he came into the hall, and flung himself on his mother's neck. The little girls, trembling, wondered with terror what would happen next. They saw their father take Volodya and Lentilov into his study, and there he talked to them a long while.



- (54) “Is this a proper thing to do?” their father said to them. “I only pray they won't hear of it at school, you would both be expelled. You ought to be ashamed, Mr. Lentilov, really. not at all the thing to do! You began it, and I hope you will be punished by your parents. How could you? Where did you spend the night?”
- (55) “At the station,” Lentilov answered proudly.
- (56) Then Volodya went to bed, and had a compress, steeped in vinegar, on his forehead. A telegram was sent off, and next day a lady, Lentilov's mother, made her appearance and bore off her son.
- (57) Lentilov looked morose and haughty to the end, and he did not utter a single word at taking leave of the little girls. But he took Katya's book and wrote in it as a souvenir: “Montehomo, the Hawk's Claw, Chief of the Ever Victorious.”



Source: Chekhov with family and friends 1890, Wikimedia