

## READING CIRCLES & SHORT STORIES RESOURCE PACK

Catering for Learner Diversity in English Language  
Learning for Secondary Teachers of English  
BWP047 PDP – TES

## BACKGROUND OF LEARNERS

- + S3 students
- + Band 1 EMI School
- + High achievers
- + Average learners
- + Low achievers

## OBJECTIVES

- + To enhance students' understanding of the major elements of short stories
- + To equip students with the four skills of English through reading circles
- + To prepare students for the SBA assessment and learn through peer and self assessment
- + To develop students' critical thinking and communication skills
- + To foster students' positive values

## MATERIALS ADAPTED

- + Simplified role sheets from reading circles
- + Short stories selected online
- + You tube videos
- + A modified assessment form from EDB materials

## MATERIALS DEVELOPED

- + Tailor-made scripts of stories for learners of different abilities
- + Tailor-made role sheets for learners of diverse abilities

## LESSON PLAN

- + Lesson 1:
  - Pre activities (10-15 mins)
  - Reading Time (5 mins)
  - Explanations of roles of reading circles and individual tasks (15 -20 mins)
  - Brief explanation of peer and self assessment (5 mins)
- + Lesson 2 & 3:
  - Preparation of role sheets (20 mins)
  - Reading circles in groups (20 mins)
  - Class reading circle (15 mins)
  - Peer and self assessment (10 mins)
  - Teacher evaluation and sample answers (10 mins)
  - Explanation of the consolidation writing task: a story review (5 mins)
- + Estimated time: 3 lessons: 120 mins

### THE FOUR WIVES

- + Pre-activities
  - Video play: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f9O2P20hPk>
  - Listening and jotting down notes about the story
  - Brainstorming: Short stories and value education
    - × What messages can you get from the stories you have read before?

### WHAT ARE READING CIRCLES?

- + "Reading Circles are small reading and discussion groups in which students meet to talk about stories they have read. Participants will read the same book but will each play a different role in the discussion."
- + "Reading Circles incorporate the four language skills in a natural way. You will read stories (reading skills), make notes for the discussion (writing skills), listen to what other participants have to say (listening skills) and present your own arguments or opinions (speaking skills). The six roles help develop critical thinking."

(The Standard)

### ROLES OF READING CIRCLES

- + Summarizer (for low achievers)
- + Passage Person (for average learners)
- + Connector (for average learners)
- + Discussion Leader (for high achievers)
- + Optional: Word Master (for low achievers or average learners)
- + Optional: Culture Collector (for high achievers)

### EXPLANATIONS OF ROLES

- + Summarizer: key characters and events, a concise summary (plot pyramid) in present tense
- + Passage Person: choose the paragraph or the lines you like most and explain why. (language patterns, dialogue, plot development, themes, etc.)

### EXPLANATIONS OF ROLES

- + Connector: connect one of the key ideas in the story to your real life experience; tell what you have learnt from it
- + Discussion Leader: ask a few questions (factual or open-ended questions according to the ability of the group); yes-no questions vs wh-questions; creative questions; inspirational or motivational questions

### READING TIME

- + [The story script for low achievers](#)
- + [The story script for average learners](#)
- + [The story script for high achievers](#)

### ROLE SHEETS

- + Tailor-made role sheets for students of diverse abilities

### ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

- + Assessment form

### THE READING CIRCLE

- + Individual groups of 4 students

### THE READING CIRCLE

- + Class Reading Circle – randomly select four students of different roles from different groups
- + Other students as peer assessments seated in a big circle
- + Class recording

### ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

- + Self assessment
- + Peer assessment
- + Teacher assessment

### SAMPLE ANSWERS

- + Sample answers of role sheets



### WRITING TASK

- + Write a story review in around 200 words including a short summary, a passage you like most, a connection to your real life experience and an open ended question about the story "The Four Wives". At least one positive value or message should be expressed.

### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- + A differentiated classroom: instructions, tailor-made story scripts, worksheets, roles of reading circles for a diverse group: high achievers, average learners and low achievers
- + Minimize the possibility of labeling
- + Cater for the needs, intelligence and interests of different learners – a funny video and an interesting story

### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- + Integrate the four skills of learning English and modify existing materials available
- + Assessment for learning: self, peer and teacher – reduce the possibility of labeling
- + Differentiated assessment: Because of the difference in the difficulty of the four roles, the assessment criteria are also different. Low achievers can still be praised and motivated.

THE END

### The Four Wives (for low achievers)

There was a rich merchant who had 4 wives. He loved the 4th wife the most and adorned (裝飾) her with rich robes (禮服) and treated her to 1. delicacies (佳肴). He took great care of her and gave her nothing but the best.

He also loved the 3rd wife very much. He's very proud of her and always wanted to show off her to his friends. However, the merchant is always in great fear that she might run away with some other men.

He too, loved his 2nd wife. She is a very considerate (為他人着想的) person, always patient (有耐心的) and in fact is the merchant's confidante (知己女友). Whenever the merchant faced some problems, he always turned to his 2nd wife and she would always help him out and tide him through difficult times (度過難關).

Now, the merchant's 1st wife is a very loyal partner and has made great contributions (貢獻) in maintaining (保持) his wealth and business as well as taking care of the household. However, the merchant did not love the first wife and although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her.

One day, the merchant fell ill. Before long, he knew that he was going to die soon. He thought of his 2. luxurious (奢侈的) life and told himself, "Now I have 4 wives with me. But when I die, I'll be alone. How lonely I'll be!"

Thus, he asked the 4th wife, "I loved you most, endowed (賦予) you with the finest clothing and showered (大量地給予) great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company (陪伴)?" "No way!" replied the 4th wife and she walked away without another word.

The answer cut like a sharp knife right into the merchant's heart. The sad merchant then asked the 3rd wife, "I have loved you so much for all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No!" replied the 3rd wife. "Life is so good over here! I'm going to remarry when you die!" The merchant's heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked the 2nd wife, "I always turned to you for help and you've always helped me out. Now I need your help again. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?" "I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!" replied the 2nd wife. "At the very most, I can only send

you to your grave (墳墓)." The answer came like a bolt of thunder and the merchant was 3. devastated (身心交瘁的:極為震驚的).

Then a voice called out: "I'll leave with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go." The merchant looked up and there was his first wife. She was so skinny, almost like she suffered from 4. malnutrition (營養不足). Greatly 5. grieved (悲痛), the merchant said, "I should have taken much better care of you while I could have !"

Actually, we all have 4 wives in our lives

a. The 4th wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we 6. lavish (浪費;揮霍) in making it look good, it'll leave us when we die.

b. Our 3rd wife ? Our possessions (財產), status(地位)and wealth. When we die, they all go to others.

c. The 2nd wife is our family and friends. No matter how close they had been there for us when we're alive, the furthest they can stay by us is up to the grave.

d. The 1st wife is in fact our soul, often neglected (忽視) in our pursuit (追求) of material(物質的), wealth and sensual (感官的) pleasure (快樂).

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1. de-li-ca-cies	2. con-fi-dan-te	3. lu-xu-ri-ou-s	4. de-va-s-ta-ted
5. mal-nu-tri-tion	6. gri-eved	7. la-vi-sh	8. pur-suit

### The Four Wives (for high achievers)

There was a rich merchant who had 4 wives. He loved the 4th wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to 1. delicacies. He took great care of her and gave her nothing but the best.

He also loved the 3rd wife very much. He's very proud of her and always wanted to show off her to his friends. However, the merchant is always in great fear that she might run away with some other men.

He too, loved his 2nd wife. She is a very considerate person, always patient and in fact is the merchant's confidante. Whenever the merchant faced some problems, he always turned to his 2nd wife and she would always help him out and tide him through difficult times.

Now, the merchant's 1st wife is a very loyal partner and has made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and business as well as taking care of the household. However, the merchant did not love the first wife and although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her.

One day, the merchant fell ill. Before long, he knew that he was going to die soon. He thought of his 2. luxurious life and told himself, "Now I have 4 wives with me. But when I die, I'll be alone. How lonely I'll be!"

Thus, he asked the 4th wife, "I loved you most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No way!" replied the 4th wife and she walked away without another word.

The answer cut like a sharp knife right into the merchant's heart. The sad merchant then asked the 3rd wife, "I have loved you so much for all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No!" replied the 3rd wife. "Life is so good over here! I'm going to remarry when you die!" The merchant's heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked the 2nd wife, "I always turned to you for help and you've always helped me out. Now I need your help again. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?" "I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!" replied the 2nd wife. "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave." The answer came like a bolt of thunder and the merchant was 3. devastated.

Then a voice called out : "I'll leave with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go." The merchant looked up and there was his first wife. She was so skinny, almost like she suffered from 4. malnutrition Greatly 5. grieved, the merchant said, "I should have taken much better care of you while I could have !"

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The Four Wives (for average learners)
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## **Self / Teacher / Peer Evaluation Form for Reading Circles**

**Your / Teacher's / Peer's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ (S ) ( )

**Story:** \_\_\_\_\_

## I. Marking Scale

Rate your / your students' / your peers' performances on each point below by using this scale:

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7

## II. Assessing during the Reading Circle

Student's Name & Class No:						
Criteria	Discussion Leader	Summarizer	Connector	Passage Person	Word Master	Culture Connector
Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy to understand</li> <li>Informative</li> <li>coherent</li> </ul>						
Language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurate</li> <li>Having a variety of sentence structures</li> <li>Having a range of vocabulary</li> </ul>						
Delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making good eye contact</li> <li>Having good pronunciation and fluency</li> <li>Confident</li> </ul>						
Overall						

### **III. General Comments after the Reading Circle**

- **What did you like most about their performance? Why?**
- **What could they have done better?**

**Discussion Leader:**

**Summarizer:**

**Connector:**

**Passage Person:**

**Word Master:**

**Culture Collector:**

**Other Comments:**

## **Summarizer**

**Use present tense and summarize the story in around 140 words.**

A rich merchant has \_\_\_\_\_ wives. He loves the \_\_\_\_\_ wife most and  
\_\_\_\_\_. He loves the \_\_\_\_\_  
wife a lot as \_\_\_\_\_. He loves the  
\_\_\_\_\_ wife as \_\_\_\_\_. Yet he  
doesn't love his \_\_\_\_\_ wife although  
\_\_\_\_\_. One  
day, he falls ill and is going to die. He asks his wives to accompany him as he is so  
afraid of \_\_\_\_\_. Yet, the fourth wife  
\_\_\_\_\_. The third  
wife says \_\_\_\_\_. The second wife  
says \_\_\_\_\_. It is only  
the first wife who \_\_\_\_\_. The  
merchant regrets having treated her so badly.

(\_\_\_\_\_ words)



### **Passage Person**

**Read aloud the paragraph you like most in the story and explain why you like it so much in about 100 words.**

Paragraph: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason why you like the paragraph:

(I like this paragraph most because of \_\_\_\_\_ reasons. First, )

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\_\_\_\_\_(Second, )

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( \_\_\_\_\_ words)

[illegible]

## **Discussion Leader**

**Ask two open-ended questions and discuss them with your group members. The first question has been given to you. You have to think of the second question. Write at least 70 words for each answer of the question.**

Question 1: Will you choose to spend more time with your family and friends or on a career that can allow you to gain wealth and status? Why?

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(\_\_\_\_\_ words)

Question 2:

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(\_\_\_\_\_ words)

### **Summarizer**

**Use present tense and summarize the story in around 150 words.**

A rich merchant has four wives. He loves the fourth wife most and gives her the best things. He loves the third wife a lot and he wants to show off her to others. He loves the second wife as she helps solve all his problems. Yet he doesn't love his first wife although she can keep his wealth, business and family. One day, he falls ill and is going to die. He asks his wives to accompany him as he is so afraid of being alone. Yet, the fourth wife leaves without saying a word. The third wife says she's going to marry another man. The second wife says she can at most send him to the grave. It is only the first wife who is willing to stay with him. The merchant regrets having treated her so badly.

(140 words)

### **Passage Person**

**Read aloud the paragraph you like most in the story and explain why you like it so much in about 100 words.**

Paragraph: 7

Reason why you like the paragraph:

I like this paragraph most because of two reasons. First, the language patterns are beautiful and useful to me. I particularly like “cut like a sharp knife right into the merchant’s heart” and “The merchant’s heart sank and turned cold”. These two lines tell us the feeling of the merchant despite his love for his third wife. Second, I have mixed feelings whether the third wife should marry another man after the merchant dies. In the traditional Chinese society, wives would not remarry. But in modern society, it is quite common that wives would remarry another man and they think that they should enjoy life as before. I am quite sure that I would also remarry especially when I am still young.

(122 words)

### **Connector**

**Talk about one of the ideas you find interesting in the story and associate it with your real life experiences. Write about 100 words.**

Like the fourth wife in the story, people in Hong Kong like pursuing a perfect body shape. They spend a lot of time and money losing their weight. Some even go for plastic surgery. I couldn't agree more with the writer that a perfect, beautiful appearance can never last forever. In fact, when you get old, health is a lot more important and you can never keep your wrinkles away. To be happy and content is the key to good health. Therefore, how to keep our soul peaceful and how to stay happy will be more important than wealth and status.

(101 words)



## **Discussion Leader**

**Ask two open-ended questions and discuss them with your group members. The first question has been given to you. You have to think of the second question. Write at least 70 words for each answer of the question.**

Question 1: Will you choose to spend more time with your family and friends or on a career that can allow you to gain wealth and status? Why?

I really want to spend more time with my family and friends. But it is really hard as I am occupied with lots of school work every day. You know, I have to do English dictations, news reports, grammar exercises, TV news practice and listening tests every week. It drives me crazy. But I still want to score high marks in the exam so that I can get a good job in the future.

(74 words)

Question 2: Can you suggest some ways to strengthen your soul and be happy?

It is not easy to be happy and content, I would say. I myself like listening to classical music and some energetic pop songs when I feel unhappy and when I am under pressure. Reading my favourite comics and story books is another way to stay happy. Most important of all, to think positively and to chat more often with family and friends will be the key to a peaceful mind and a happy life.

(75 words)

