

## Literary Element (page 10)

### Flashback

#### The Open Window SAKI

Writers use flashback to present events that happened at an earlier time and to reveal additional information about the characters, events, or settings in the story. **Flashback** may be offered in the form of memories, dreams, or stories of the past told by characters. However, a true flashback is not a character simply recalling what happened; a true flashback takes the characters and the reader back in time to the event, so we all see the scene as it really was. To accomplish this, writers often use two primary literary devices: (1) description of the setting, the characters, and the events, and (2) dialogue. See how many of these devices you can incorporate into your writing below.

Pretend that you are the author of “The Open Window” and that you would like to write a sequel that would employ the flashback technique to give readers a better understanding of why Vera behaved as she did in the story. Use your imagination to write a flashback below (and on the back of this sheet) in the form of a dream sequence, to show readers more about Vera’s life, personality, and character.

### ACTIVITY

**Directions** Utilize the following as an organizational guide for your writing:

1. Beginning paragraphs: Present time
2. Middle paragraphs: A dream that takes readers back to a time when Vera was younger. It could be when she was much younger (a little girl), when she was an adolescent, or a more recent time.
3. Ending paragraphs: Back to present time

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## Reading Strategy (page 10)

### Identify Sequence

#### The Open Window SAKI

When reading stories, you should notice that events happen in a certain order, or **sequence**. Paying close attention to a story's sequence helps you better understand what you are reading.

### ACTIVITIES

**Directions** The sentences below are in the wrong order. Place the following events in the correct sequence by using the numbers 1–10.

1. Vera tells Framton Nuttel about a three-year-old tragedy that included the death of her uncle, Mr. Sappleton. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Framton explains his medical condition to Vera. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Framton presents himself at the home of Mrs. Sappleton. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Mr. Sappleton, his dog, and Mrs. Sappleton's brothers return. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Vera explains the significance of the open window. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Vera tells her aunt that Framton dashed away because of his intense fear of dogs. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Framton meets Mrs. Sappleton. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Vera finds out that Framton does not know anyone in the area. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Mr. Sappleton climbs through the window to enter the house. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Vera answers the door and greets Framton. \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions** Using the events from the story, fill in the chart below.

Scene	Characters	What Happened?
One	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Two	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Three	_____	_____
	_____	_____

## Selection Vocabulary Practice (page 10)

### The Open Window SAKI

#### Vocabulary

**self-possessed** *adj.* in control of oneself; composed

**duly** *adv.* rightfully; suitably

**infirmity** *n.* a weakness or ailment

**imminent** *adj.* likely to happen soon

#### EXERCISE A Practice with Context Clues

Write the word from the word list that completes each sentence.

- Hector was so \_\_\_\_\_ that he felt sure he would win his bid for class president.
- Debbie also planned to run for class officer but had to drop out because of a/an \_\_\_\_\_.
- Hector was very confident and thought that victory was \_\_\_\_\_.
- When Hector was sworn in as class president, his family and friends were \_\_\_\_\_ impressed.

#### EXERCISE B Applying Meanings

When in doubt about the meaning of an unfamiliar word, look around in the sentence for context clues. Is there (1) a definition, (2) a synonym, or (3) some words with the opposite meaning to help you unlock the word's meaning? Which kind of clue is provided in each of the following sentences?

- ... are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and **infirmities**...
- ... something which should **duly** flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come.

#### EXERCISE C Responding to the Selection

Pretend that you are Vera as she is portrayed in "The Open Window." On the back of this sheet, write a letter to your cousin explaining the events in the story. Remember to take her point of view. Use at least THREE vocabulary words in your answer.

## Vocabulary Strategy (page 10)

### Denotation and Connotation: Using a Semantic Chart

#### The Open Window SAKI

“I hope you don’t mind the open window,’ said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; ‘my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They’ve been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they’ll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you men-folk, isn’t it?’

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible.”

—Saki, “The Open Window”

**Connecting to Literature** In his short story “The Open Window,” Saki uses the connotations of words he selects to contrast Framton Nuttel’s nervous, odd behavior with the cheerful, normal behavior of other characters. The **denotation** of a word or phrase is its literal meaning; the **connotation** is its implied meaning. When Mrs. Sappleton *rattled on*, Nuttel was horrified, because he believed that Mrs. Sappleton’s husband and brothers were dead. Saki could have used the words *spoke* or *talked*, but he chose the phrase *rattled on* because it implies a carefree, untroubled attitude that is in stark contrast to Nuttel’s unsettled frame of mind.

### ACTIVITY

**Directions** Complete the semantic features chart below to analyze, or look more closely at, words from “The Open Window.” Consult a dictionary to find a definition, or denotation, for each word, and enter the definition in the second column. Record ideas, images, or feelings you associate with each word—its connotations—in the third column.

Word	Denotation	Connotation
imminent	likely to happen soon	threatening; hanging over one’s head

## Grammar Practice (page 10)

### Nouns: Concrete, Abstract, and Collective

#### The Open Window SAKI

A **noun** is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea. A **singular noun** names one person, place, thing, or idea, and a **plural noun** names more than one.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL		SINGULAR	PLURAL
<b>Person</b>	friend	friends	<b>Thing</b>	melody	melodies
<b>Place</b>	field	fields	<b>Idea</b>	freedom	freedoms

A **collective noun** names a group. A collective noun is singular when it refers to the group as a whole. A collective noun is plural when it refers to the individual members of a group.

The **committee** is studying the issue.  
(singular)

The **committee** have gone to lunch.  
(plural)

A **concrete noun** names an object that occupies space or can be recognized by any of the senses.

grass    apple    odor    stars    actor

An **abstract noun** names an idea, a quality, or a characteristic.

beauty    splendor    poverty    anger    success

## ACTIVITIES

**Directions** Write *s* above each singular noun and *pl.* above each plural noun. If a noun is a collective noun, also write *c* above it.

- The man, who was a bundle of nerves, went to the countryside for a rest.
- The team of doctors advised against any mental excitement or extreme physical exercise.
- A collection of letters from his sister introduced the stranger to his rural neighbors.
- The woman entered the room in a flurry of greetings and apologies for being late.

**Directions** Write *con.* above each concrete noun and *abst.* above each abstract noun.

- Framton Nuttel did not question the truthfulness of the story the niece told.
- The open window was a chilling reminder of the tragedy.
- As Mrs. Sappleton spoke cheerfully about birds and ducks, Mr. Nuttel was filled with horror.
- The woman complained about mud on her carpets, but her voice held no anger or resentment.

## Selection Quick Check *(page 10)*

### The Open Window SAKI

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions.

1. Why is Framton Nuttel visiting the countryside?

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2. What does Framton Nuttel receive from his sister?

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3. According to Vera, what is her aunt's great tragedy?

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4. Why does Framton Nuttel run out of the house?

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5. What does the narrator mean when he says, "Romance at short notice was [Vera's] specialty"?

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