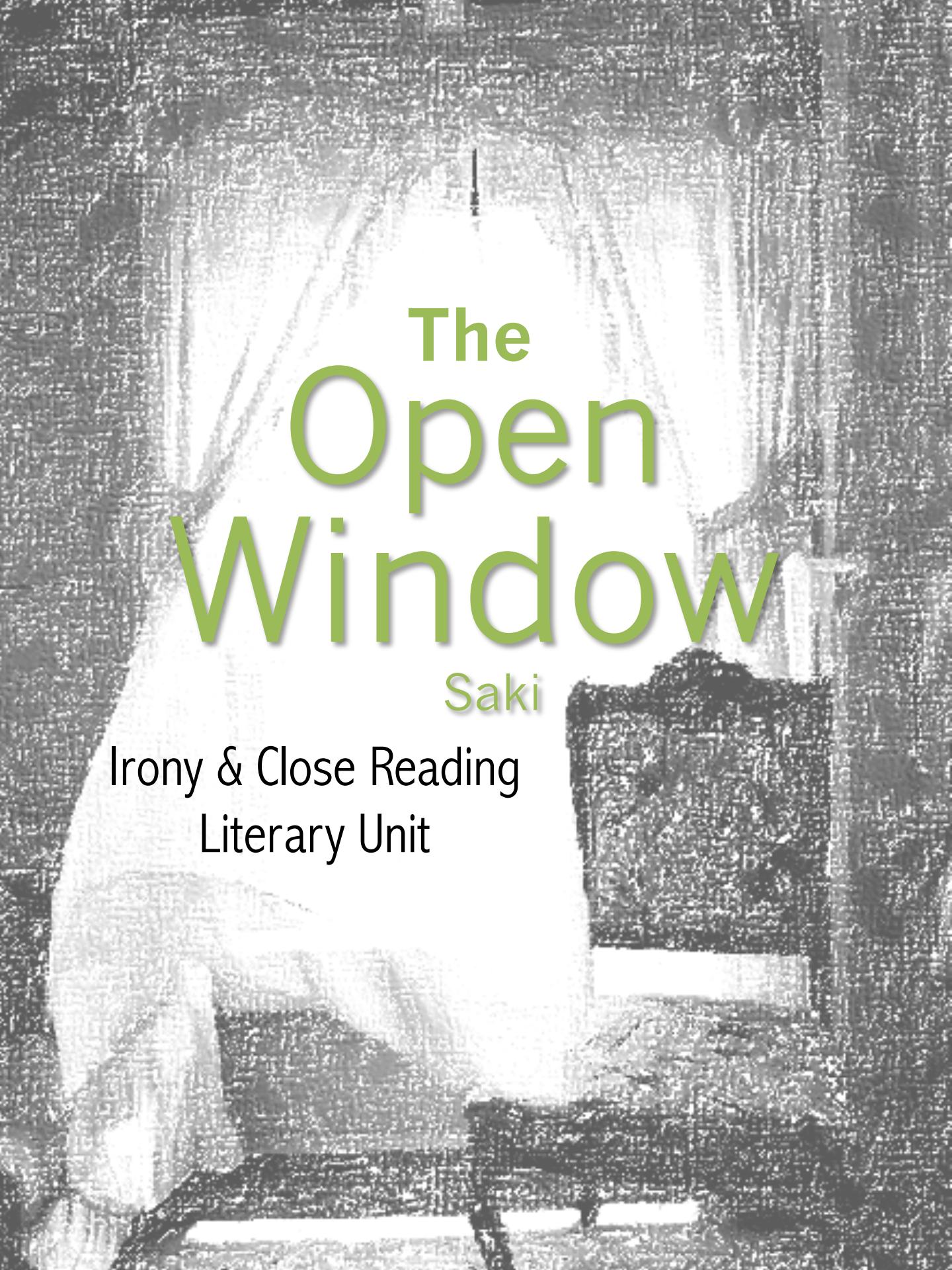




The Open Window

Saki

Irony & Close Reading
Literary Unit

OVERVIEW

“The Open Window”

Thank you for your purchase and for your support on TeachersPayTeachers! This resource can be used in whole or in part to help students connect to Saki’s masterpiece of irony, “The Open Window,” while practicing the skills necessary for mastery of several Common Core State Standards.

Understanding irony is so vital in appreciating literature—particularly the short story. Using this packet, students will do a close reading of Saki’s short story, identifying examples of irony and categorizing them by type—situational, verbal or dramatic. They will also work in groups to create and perform their own irony skits to include portrayals of each type. This is a fun, learning-filled activity that I have done for years in my classroom, and it has been a student favorite!

Contents

This close reading resource includes:

- **Detailed Close Reading Lesson Plan**—enabling students to read with a purpose, extract key concepts, and comprehend at a deeper level
- **Copy of the Story**—(public domain) so students can mark up the text as they read; includes definitions of challenging or antiquated terms for clearer comprehension
- **Irony Graphic Organizer**—to help students identify and analyze examples of irony in the story and categorize by type
- **Irony Skit Assignment and Graphic Organizer**—an assignment that allows students to have fun and show their creativity, all while learning about irony; includes a graphic organizer for them to brainstorm ideas for a skit they will write and perform
- **Study/Discussion Questions**—to help students comprehend key plot developments, make inferences and analyze deeper meanings within the story
- **Context Clues Vocabulary Activity**—students make predictions on the meanings of vocabulary words from the story, revising their responses when encountering the words in their reading and using clues from the text and a dictionary to determine final definitions
- **Plot Summary Chart**—students summarize key events in the plot, identifying where they belong in the classic story-telling arc.
- **Detailed Answer Keys**—to save you time and generally make your life easier

Objectives

Using the activities in this resource, students will be able to:

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and through inference
- Identify examples of irony throughout the story and classify by type
- Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis
- Determine or clarify the meaning of a word using context clues and verify findings
- Write clearly and coherently for a range of purposes and audiences
- Present information clearly, concisely and logically in a style appropriate to purpose/task

Common Core State Standards

This Common Core-aligned packet covers the following standards:

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1](#) Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2](#) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4](#)
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9](#) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4](#)
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4.A](#)
Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4.D](#)
Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4](#)
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CLOSE READING LESSON

Objectives: Using Saki’s classic short story, “The Open Window,” students will deeply process and comprehend a short but complex literary text through reading and rereading, coding the text to identify irony and the different types, as well as engaging in text analysis and creative reader response activities.

Materials:

- Copies of “The Open Window” by Saki
- Irony Graphic Organizer
- Irony Skit Brainstorm Worksheet

WARM-UP: JOURNAL PROMPTS

Choose one from below.

- As best you can, define in your own words the meaning of the word “irony.” Then, write about an ironic situation that you or someone that you know experienced. What made it ironic?
- Has anyone ever played a practical joke on you? Or have you played one on someone else? Write about your experience of fooling someone or being fooled yourself.
- Discuss.

MAIN ACTIVITY: CLOSE READING

Define and discuss the three types of irony—situational, verbal and dramatic (see handouts, or you may want to use the Irony PowerPoint available in my TPT store). Students will then do a close reading of “The Open Window.” They will mark and code the text as they read, underlining examples of irony and identifying their types in the margins.

Explain Text Coding: Explain to students that “The Open Window” is a short story filled with irony—situational, verbal as well as dramatic. Here, the main character makes a visit to the countryside to find serenity, but instead finds something entirely different.

Explain to students that they will:

- closely read the story and underline any examples of irony they find in the text
- identify the type of irony in the margin
- also make note in the margins about any questions or comments they may have about passages they find confusing or believe worthy of discussion

Model: “For example, in the opening paragraph, the text says:

“My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel,” said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; “in the meantime you must try and put up with me.”

“It seems a ‘very self-possessed young lady of fifteen,’ one who is confident and perhaps a bit self-absorbed, would more likely believe that she must put up with Mr. Nuttel, rather than the other way around. So I would underline this as an example of verbal irony—because she is saying the opposite of what she really means.”

Read Story. Read story slowly aloud while students mark text, or have them read silently.

Class Discussion: Invite students to discuss similarities and differences in text coding.

SMALL GROUP IRONY ANALYSIS

Using the “Irony” graphic organizer provided, students will work in groups of 3 and 4 to choose the best examples of irony they found while reading the story. They will discuss and take notes on their selections and why they represent the clearest examples of irony. After their discussion and note-taking, students will compare their notes with other groups and discuss as a class.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: IRONY SKITS

After discussing and comparing notes on their irony findings, students will work in small groups to create and perform 2-3 minute skits portraying each type of irony.

Explain to students that they should come up with a situation in which the audience has strong expectations, but instead the opposite happens. For example, a firehouse catches fire. They may use the “Irony Skit” graphic organizer to brainstorm their ideas. Afterwards, they will create, rehearse and perform their skits for the class.

Explain to students that you are looking for a well-crafted, easy to follow skit that clearly and accurately portrays each type of irony. You may also walk them through the provided rubric. Encourage them to have some fun and be creative!

As each group performs their skit, **ask the audience to take notes** on the examples of irony they could identify. Then ask the audience to **share** their findings after each performance.

Saki's

The Open Window



Instructions: Read the following short story closely, underlining any examples of irony you find in the text. Identify the type of irony in the margins. Additionally, make note of any questions or thoughts you have about any particular passages.

"MY aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

"I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice."

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction, came into the nice division.

"Do you know many of the people round here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

"Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory¹, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here."

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.

"Only her name and address," admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

"Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time."

"Her tragedy?" asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

"You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

"It is quite warm for the time of the year," said Framton; "but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?"

"Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe²-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog³. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?' as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window—"

¹rectory—a rector or clergyman's house, parsonage

²snipe—long-billed game bird

³bog—marshy ground, wetland

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"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 to-day, 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. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

"The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who laboured under the tolerably wide-spread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued.

"No?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention - but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?"

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive, and the front gate were dimly-noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid an imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh⁴, coming in through the window; "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

"A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her speciality.

⁴mackintosh—raincoat

IRONY



Irony is when the opposite of what is expected occurs. It is often used in literature and theater to bring about an interesting or humorous turn of events. There are three main types:

- **Situational irony:** something happens that directly contradicts strong expectations
- **Verbal irony:** words are used to say the opposite of what is meant
- **Dramatic irony:** the reader or audience knows something a character or speaker does not

Instructions: Closely read “The Open Window” by Saki. Underline any examples of irony you find in the text, annotating the type of irony in the margin along with any other thoughts or questions you might have. Then, provide the three best examples of irony you found below, explaining why each is ironic and including direct quotes from the text where possible. With each example, identify the type of irony.

Example of Irony	Type of Irony

What is the greatest situational irony of this story overall? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Write and Perform an Irony Skit

Working in small groups, write a 2-3 minute skit that includes at least one example of each type of irony:

- **Situational irony:** something happens that directly contradicts strong expectations
- **Verbal irony:** words are used to say the opposite of what is meant
- **Dramatic irony:** the reader or audience knows something a character or speaker does not.

Think about a situation in which the audience has strong expectations about what should happen, then consider what could happen that would be the complete opposite—a firehouse that catches fire, for example. Use the graphic organizer below to brainstorm your ideas. Then write, practice and perform your skit for the class.

Setting	Conflict	Characters
---------	----------	------------

Expected Outcome

Unexpected Outcome

SITUATIONAL IRONY

Details to Set Up Reader
for Expected Outcome

Hints that Could Explain
for Unexpected Outcome

DRAMATIC IRONY

What does the audience know that a character(s) does not?

What comment might one of the characters make about the situation, but mean the opposite?

VERBAL IRONY

Irony Skit

RUBRIC

Group Members: _____

	Master (4-5)	Apprentice (2-3)	Novice (0-1)	Total
Content	Skit clearly, accurately and creatively portrayed all three types of irony.	Skit accurately portrayed all three types of irony.	Skit may have incorrectly portrayed at least one type of irony or failed to portray it at all.	
Organization	Skit was clear, well-written and easy to follow.	Skit was mostly easy to follow.	Skit may have been difficult to follow in spots or overall.	
Presentation	Presenters were well-prepared, enthusiastic and engaging. Skit was clearly rehearsed.	Presenters were mostly engaging. Skit showed preparation.	Presenters may have lacked enthusiasm, seemed uninvolved or unprepared. Skit could have used more rehearsal.	
Collaboration	Group worked together seamlessly, with all members contributing evenly.	Group worked together, with all members contributing.	Group may have shown discord or a lack of involvement, or the group was carried by only one or two members.	
TOTAL:				

“The Open Window”

STUDY QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions citing evidence from the text to support your responses.



1. Describe Mr. Nuttel. Why is he visiting the Sappleton family?
2. Who greets him when he arrives? Describe this character.
3. Why does Vera ask Mr. Nuttel what he knows about her aunt and family?
4. Summarize the story Vera tells Mr. Nuttel which she says happened three years ago.
5. According to Vera, why is the window left open?
6. Why does Mr. Nuttel dash frantically from the house?
7. What is ironic about Mrs. Sappleton's response?
8. Explain the meaning of the last line, "Romance at short notice was her speciality."
9. Who, besides Mr. Nuttel, is the victim of Vera's hoax?
10. What are some possible themes of this story?

BONUS: Explain why the name of the antagonist in this story is ironic.

Name: _____ Period: _____

"The Open Window"
VOCABULARY

CONTEXT CLUES

Predict the meaning of each vocabulary word below from "The Open Window." As you encounter each word while you read, revise your definition based on the clues you find in the text. Write down the clue words that helped you determine the meaning of each word. Finally, after completing the reading, look up the actual definition of each word. How close were you to the correct meaning?

Word	Predicted Meaning	After Reading	Clues from Text	Definition
endeavored				
treacherous				
falteringly				
scarcity				
delusion				
infirmities				
imminent				
pariah				

Post Reading Activity:

Now, on a separate sheet of paper, summarize the text using at least four of the vocabulary words above.

Name: _____ Period: _____

“The Open Window”

PLOT SUMMARY

Instructions: Fill in the plot diagram below, citing the most important events from the story.

1

2

3

4

5

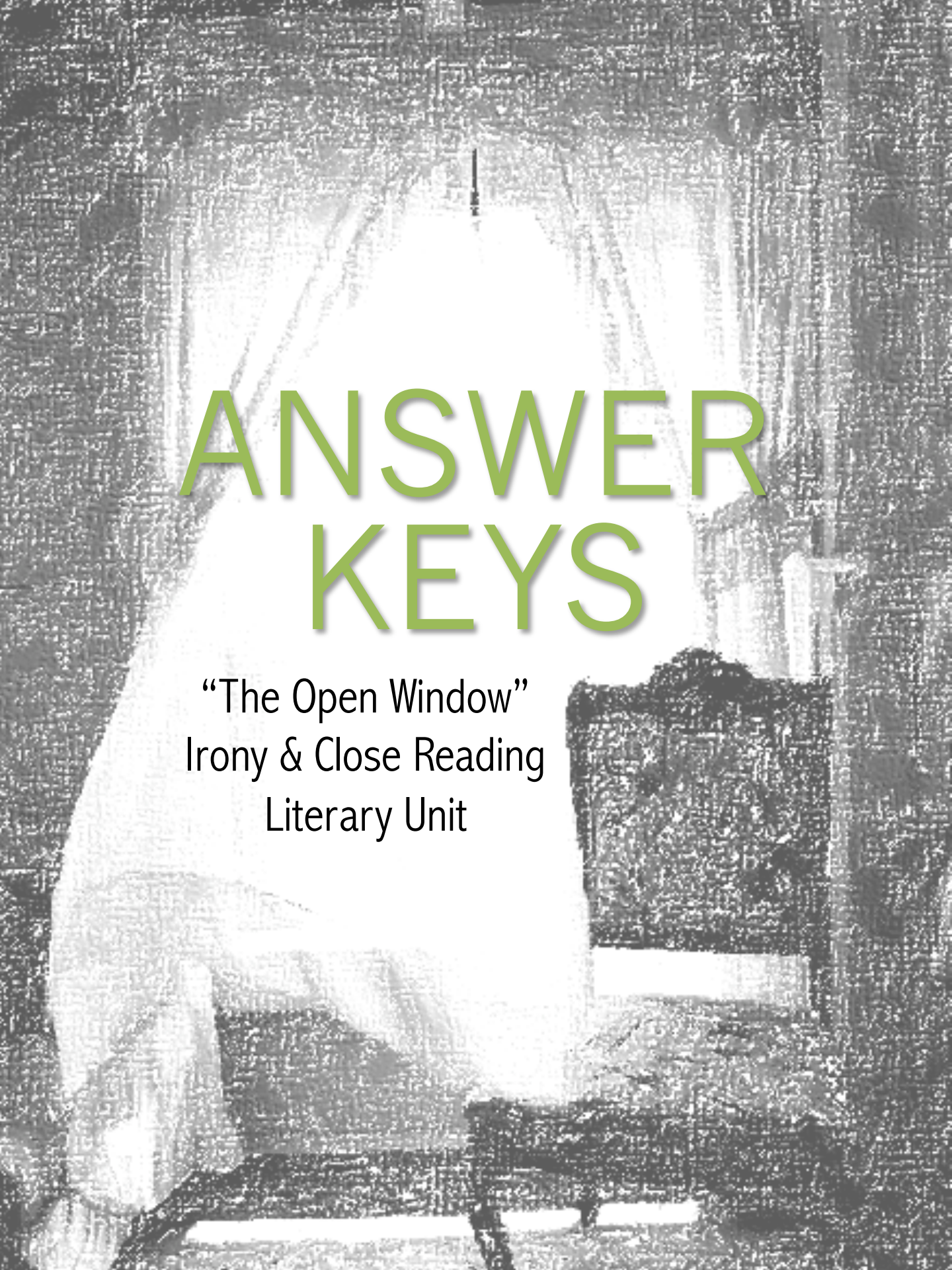
Exposition

Rising Action

Climax

Falling Action

Resolution



ANSWER KEYS

“The Open Window”
Irony & Close Reading
Literary Unit

Saki's

The Open Window



Instructions: Closely read the following short story, underlining any examples of irony you find in the text. Identify the type of irony in the margin. Additionally, annotate any questions or thoughts you have about any particular passages.

Verbal
irony-Vera
is very
sure of
herself
and would
more
likely
think her
presence
is a gift

"MY aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

"I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice."

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction, came into the nice division.

"Do you know many of the people round here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

"Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here."

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

Strange
question

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.

"Only her name and address," admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

"Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time."

"Her tragedy?" asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

"You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

"It is quite warm for the time of the year," said Framton; "but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?"

"Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?' as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window—"

Irony?

Vera's name is verbally ironic because it means "truth"

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"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 to-day, 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. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

"The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who laboured under the tolerably wide-spread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued.

"No?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention - but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?"

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive, and the front gate were dimly-noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid an imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window; "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

"A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her speciality.

Situational irony that Vera is being praised for her lies.

Dramatic irony—the aunt doesn't know Vera just told the story of the open window

Dramatic irony—unlike the aunt & uncle, we know Framton freaked out because of Vera's story and that her new story is also false

Verbal irony? Does he mean the opposite of "interesting"?

Situational irony—Framton actually thinks he saw a ghost. Could also be dramatic as the audience knows his reaction is due to Vera's story

IRONY



Irony is when the opposite of what is expected occurs. It is often used in literature and theater to bring about an interesting or humorous turn of events. There are three main types:

- **Situational irony:** something happens that directly contradicts strong expectations
- **Verbal irony:** words are used to say the opposite of what is meant
- **Dramatic irony:** the reader or audience knows something a character or speaker does not

Instructions: Closely read "The Open Window" by Saki. Underline any examples of irony you find in the text, annotating the type of irony in the margin along with any other thoughts or questions you might have. Then, provide the three best example of irony you found below, explaining why each is ironic and including direct quotes from the text where possible. With each example, identify the type of irony.

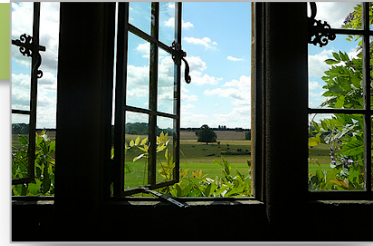
Example of Irony	Type of Irony
<i>At the opening of the story, Vera tells Framton that her aunt will soon be down, but "in the meantime you must try and put up with me." This is ironic because as a "self-possessed" teen, Vera would more likely believe that she must put up with Framton.</i>	<i>verbal</i>
<i>The name of the deceitful niece, Vera, in itself is ironic because it means "truth"—from the Greek root "ver."</i>	<i>verbal</i>
<i>When Mrs. Sappleton asks Framton if her niece has amused her, he replies, "She has been interesting." While not exactly opposite, his meaning was more likely that she has terrified him.</i>	<i>verbal</i>
<i>After Framton runs frantically out of the house, Mrs. Sappleton tells her husband, "One would think he had seen a ghost." This is ironic because Framton actually believes he did see the ghosts of Mr. Sappleton and his hunting party.</i>	<i>situational</i>
<i>The last line, "Romance at short notice was her speciality," is ironic because the narrator is essentially praising Vera's ability to lie.</i>	<i>situational</i>
<i>When Mrs. Sappleton walks in and asks Mr. Nuttel if Vera has been "amusing" him, she has no idea of the ghastly story her niece has told him.</i>	<i>dramatic</i>
<i>When her aunt and uncle ponder about why Framton ran out, Vera tells them a story about his "horror of dogs" arising from an attack he survived in the Ganges, after he spent the night in a "newly dug grave," adding that it was "enough to make anyone lose their nerve." This is ironic because, unlike her uncle and aunt, we know the actual reason Framton lost his nerve was because of her imaginary story.</i>	<i>dramatic</i>

What is the greatest situational irony of this story overall?

The overarching situational irony of "The Open Window" is that Framton Nuttel comes to visit the Sappleton house in search of the serenity needed to help his nerve/anxiety problem. Instead, he finds complete chaos and terror, making his nervous condition worse than ever.

"The Open Window"

STUDY QUESTIONS



Answer the following questions citing evidence from the text to support your responses.

1. Describe Mr. Nuttel. Why is he visiting the Sappleton family?

Mr. Nuttel is an anxious hypochondriac (he continually speaks of his ailments) who is visiting the Sappleton's "rural retreat" as part of a "nerve cure" he is undergoing.

2. Who greets him when he arrives? Describe this character.

Mrs. Sappleton's niece, Vera, greets Framton. She is a confident, "very self-possessed young lady of fifteen." She is also a habitual liar, as we find out later in the story after she tells more than one highly imaginative but false story to both Framton and her aunt.

3. Why does Vera ask Mr. Nuttel what he knows about her aunt and family?

Vera wants to ensure Framton "knows practically nothing about (her) aunt" before sharing the false story she has concocted about the open window and tragic death of her family members.

4. Summarize the story Vera tells Mr. Nuttel which she says happened three years ago.

Vera tells Framton that her aunt's husband, his two younger brothers, and their spaniel went hunting three years ago and "never came back." They were "engulfed in a piece of treacherous bog" during the wet summer, and "their bodies were never recovered."

5. According to Vera, why is the window left open?

Vera says that her "poor, dear aunt" is sadly deluded in thinking that the group will return some day through the open window as they had done so many times in the past.

6. Why does Mr. Nuttel dash frantically from the house?

Framton runs from the house because he is terrified after seeing "three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window." He believes they are the dead family members Vera has spoken of returning from the grave.

7. What is ironic about Mrs. Sappleton's response?

When asked by her husband why Framton came running so frantically out of the house, she responds, "One would think he had seen a ghost." This is ironic because Framton actually believes he saw a ghost.

8. Explain the meaning of the last line, "Romance at short notice was her speciality."

This statement tells us that Vera has a talent for creating falsified stories, or highly romanticized versions of reality, on the fly.

9. Who, besides Mr. Nuttel, is the victim of Vera's hoax?

Not only is Mr. Nuttel the victim of Vera's hoax, but we the readers are as well. We don't realize she is lying until after the hunting group returns, quite alive, and she concocts yet another tale to explain Framton's dash out of the house.

10. What are some possible themes of this story? Support with evidence from the text.

Answers will vary. One theme may be to not always believe what you hear. Another may be to distrust strangers. Another might be not to judge a book by its cover. Or to check the validity of a source before believing it. All answers are correct if supported.

BONUS: Explain why the name of the antagonist in this story is ironic.

Vera's name is ironic because it means "truth," stemming from the Greek root "ver" meaning truth. Clearly, Vera is far from truthful.

CONTEXT CLUES

Vocabulary Definitions:

Endeavored—tried to achieve a set goal

Treacherous—dangerous, hazardous

Falteringly—hesitatingly, brokenly

Scarcity—short supply, insufficiency

Ghastly—shockingly frightful or dreadful

Delusion—false belief or opinion

Infirmities—physical weaknesses or ailments

Imminent—about to occur

Pariah—outcast

PLOT SUMMARY

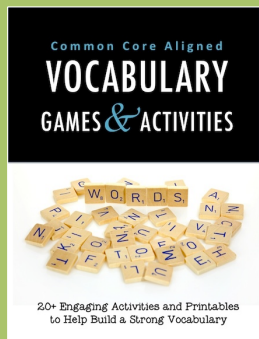
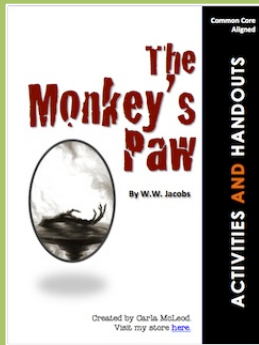
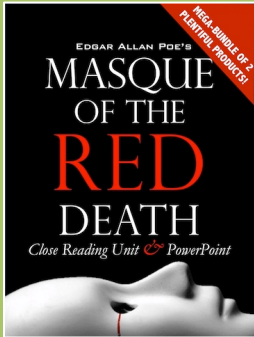
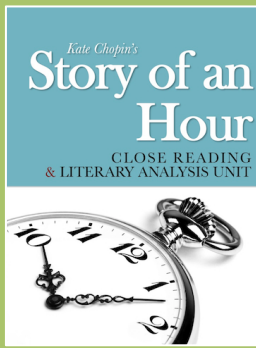
Exposition—Framton Nuttel, who is visiting the country in order to help calm his nervous condition, is greeted by “self-possessed” 15-year-old Vera, the niece of home’s owners, the Sappleton’s.

Rising Action—assured Framton knows nothing of her family, Vera tells him the “tragedy” of what occurred three years ago when her uncle, his brothers and their spaniel ventured out for a hunting trip, never returning. She says her deluded aunt has since kept the window open, hoping for their return.

Climax—Through the open window, Framton sees the hunting party returning. Horrified that he is seeing their ghosts, he dashes frantically from the house.

Falling Action—When her uncle asks why the man ran from the house, Vera fabricates yet another tale of Framton having been attacked by a pack of pariah dogs while in the Ganges.

Resolution—We learn that Vera is a habitual liar in the line: “Romance at short notice was her speciality.”



THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for purchasing this product. I hope you and your students find it fun and useful, and I truly appreciate your support on TeachersPayTeachers!

You may also like:

[“Story of an Hour” — Close Reading and Literary Analysis Unit](#)

[“Masque of the Red Death” Mega-Bundle](#) (Close Reading Unit & PPT)

[“The Monkey’s Paw” —CCSS-Aligned Activities and Printables](#)

[Julius Caesar Fun Five-Corners Pre-Reading Activity](#)

[“The Second Coming” —Symbolism Lesson \(can also be used with *Things Fall Apart*\)](#)

[Vocabulary Mega-Pack: Games, Activities, Printables and More](#)

For more great products for your middle and high school classroom, visit my store here:

[Mrs. McLeod’s Classroom](#)

Visit my [blog](#) and [Facebook page](#) for even more ideas, freebies and special offers.

Thanks again for your support!

Carla McLeod

