

Teaching Pack: *The Namesake*

Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010



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Contents

Introduction	4
Lesson plan – Set text animations	6
Teacher notes	8
Worksheet 1: Animation viewing sheet.....	9
Worksheet 2: Animation success criteria.....	11
Worksheet 3: Reflection	12
Worksheet 4: Text summary	14
Worksheet 5: Character summaries and quotations.....	17
Quiz	22
Quiz answers	24

Introduction

This *Teaching Pack* supports teachers and learners when studying Cambridge IGCSE / IGCSE (9–1) / O Level Literature in English set texts.

Set texts regularly rotate on the syllabus and may change from one year of examination to the next. Before you begin teaching, check the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.

Teachers may use this teaching pack to engage their learners when introducing a set text, or as a revision tool.

The content of these set text resources will need to be expanded on to cover what candidates are expected to know and be able to comment on in an examination.

To increase learners' understanding and appreciation of the set text we recommend learners to set up a **reading log**, which could include:

- brief synopses of chapters (in no more than a couple of sentences in their own words)
- a timeline of events (very useful when a narrative is arranged non-chronologically)
- a list or diagram of characters and their relationships with each other
- first impressions of main characters
- initial thoughts about the main themes or ideas in the text.

Animation videos

This *Teaching Pack* focuses on supporting learners to produce animations using the software *Video Scribe* www.videoscribe.co/en/, but a range of other alternative animation and storyboarding tools may equally be used:

- www.storyboardthat.com
Online digital storytelling tool – free and pay for subscriptions available
- <https://wonderunit.com/storyboarder/>
Storyboarding software – free to download, but does have to be installed
- www.powtoon.com/edu-home/
Online video and animation creation – free and pay for subscriptions
- www.animaker.com
Online animated video creator – free and pay for subscriptions
- https://goanimate4schools.com/public_index
Online storyboard, scene and video creation tool – pay for subscription
- <http://plasq.com/apps/comiclife/macwin/>
Downloadable and app-based tools for creating comic books
- www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html
A tool for creating multimedia presentations
- <https://products.office.com/en-gb/powerpoint>
Microsoft PowerPoint for simple presentations as well as more complex multimedia presentations.

The lesson in this pack aims to help learners to understand and think about the key events and themes of the text, key quotations and their meanings, the significance of character behaviour, relationships and actions and how characters are depicted in the set text being studied. The focus of this lesson may be adapted for use with other set texts.

The lesson plan gives you a suggestion for how animation or storyboarding can be used by your learners in the classroom. You can apply most of the lesson activities to any text that you are studying with your learners. Once your learners have an understanding of how to use the software you decide to use, they can create their own animations for whole or parts of the texts they are studying.

The lesson is designed for learners who have experience of, a little experience of or no experience of using animation tools and features.

It is expected that learners should already know and have read the narrative events of the novel.

In this pack we have included some useful lesson resources for you to use with your learners. You may ask your learners to create their own worksheets similar to these, around a text, which they are studying:

- **Worksheet 1:** Animation viewing sheet
- **Worksheet 2:** Animation success criteria
- **Worksheet 3:** Reflection
- **Worksheet 4:** Text summary
- **Worksheet 5:** Character summaries and quotations
- Quiz

Lesson plan – Set text animations



Resources

- Animation software
- Videos
- **Worksheet 1:** Animation viewing sheet
- **Worksheet 2:** Animation success criteria
- **Worksheet 3:** Reflection
- Class set of set text
- *Padlet* site <https://padlet.com/> (or similar platform)




Key words

- Animated frame: Each individual animated screen that the audience sees.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson:

- **all** learners should be able to present the key events of a chapter(s) from the text in a coherent and appropriate animation.
- **most** learners should be able to thoughtfully present the key events of a scene / chapter in a logical and imaginative way; using sound.
- **some** learners will be able to effectively present the key events of a scene /chapter and incorporate comments on the author's style of writing.

Timings	Activity
 <p>15 min</p>	<p>Starter/Introduction</p> <p>Before watching the first video, hand out the animation viewing sheet (Worksheet 1) to your learners.</p> <p>After watching the animation: in groups of three or four, learners complete and discuss Worksheet 1 to find out what they think about it.</p> <p>Extension activity: Learners identify which chapters the animation covers. They then consider what moments and quotations from the novel were left out of the animation that they feel should have been included? Learners give reasons for their ideas.</p> <p>Mini plenary: Class discussion to share learners' thoughts and ideas about the animation.</p>
 <p>20 min</p>	<p>Main lesson</p> <p>Share the success criteria for making an animation (Worksheet 2). Read through and discuss with the class to make sure they are clear about what makes a good animation. You may want to add some criteria to the list if there are any further suggestions.</p> <p>Learners work in pairs. Set each pair the task of animating the summary text of Video 1 (Worksheet 4). Emphasise that their animation should only last between 2–3 mins.</p> <p>Learners should use the success criteria as a guide to create their animations.</p> <p>Extension activity: Learners add further background animations to enhance the setting of their scenes and import an appropriate background song into their animation by using <i>YouTube</i>. Learners should justify why they selected the song to accompany their animation.</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>Learners write a short analysis of their animation. In this response, learners should treat their animation as their 'text' and explain the ideas they attempted to highlight to the audience.</p>
 <p>10 min</p>	<p>Plenary</p> <p><u>Each</u> learner completes the reflection sheet (Worksheet 3) and shares their thoughts with other learners. This will help them explain how they presented their episode, the characters, the key quotations, and the dramatic devices for the part they animated.</p> <p>Note: If the class need longer, continue with the activities in the main part of the lesson, and use the plenary as the starter activity of the next lesson.</p> <p>Suggested follow up activity to this lesson:</p> <p>When learners have finished their animations (and reflected on their work), they can upload their final animations on a <i>Padlet</i> site https://padlet.com/ (or similar platform) to share with the class.</p> <p>Learners discuss their ideas and explore differences and similarities.</p>



Teacher notes

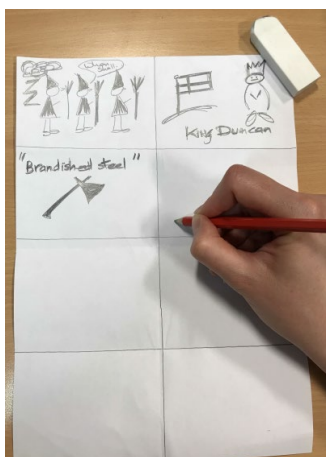
When to teach this lesson

This lesson could be used at the end of the first reading of the set text to help learners reflect and investigate important moments from the text, characterisation and the chronology of events.

Differentiation

Some parts of the text will be more complicated, detailed and significant than others. Therefore, think about how you will pair your learners up for the main task of creating an animation, and consider which scene or chapter would be best suited to which pairs. The learners' ability in their use of the software is also a factor in this.

Creating the animation digitally could be replaced by creating storyboards where learners draw on paper or cut out images from magazines to create their own visual representation of the text content.



Contingencies

Depending on your learners, you may find that this lesson extends into two, if your learners do not finish their animation in the time allocated. We suggest that no more than one and a half or two 50-minute lessons should be spent on this lesson plan.

It would be a good idea to show your learners the animation of the part of the text that they were animating after they have finished (as stated at the end of the lesson plan). This could be a good way to discuss the effects that learners were trying to create in their animations, compared to the events and effects depicted in the original animation. By relating all the ideas to the text, this should allow for some effective reflection on the content of the set text you are studying.

Worksheet 1: Animation viewing sheet



Make notes as you watch the animation. This will help you when you create your own animation.

1. Did you find it easy to understand and follow the story in the animation? Why? Why not?

2. What did you think about the choice of character animations? Was it clear who they were?

3. Was there anything in the animation that surprised you?

4. What did you enjoy or find useful about the animation?

5. What would you change or add to the content of the animation to make it clearer or more useful?

6. What text would you like to make an animation of?



Worksheet 2: Animation success criteria

Your animation should include:	Notes
1. a clear title at the beginning of your animation that states which part of the text you are presenting.	
2. suitable character animations, to portray the different characters from the text.	
3. appropriate props and background animations to depict the different settings of the text.	
4. at least two key quotations from the text in speech bubbles, or as text in the background, in your animated frames.	
5. pauses in time between the events that you animate so that the audience can see, follow and understand what is happening.	
6. text that helps highlight the use of any dramatic irony, symbolism, imagery or any other significant technique the writer has used.	

Worksheet 3: Reflection



Now you have completed your animation, use this sheet to reflect on the activity:

1. What do you think worked well in your animation? (Refer to the success criteria sheet.)

2. What did you find difficult or challenging when you created your animation?

3. What new things did you learn or notice about the content of the text as you created your animation?

4. What will you do differently when you create your next animation?

5. List three ways that your animation could help other learners understand and revise the text or part of the text you have animated.

6. What advice would you give about creating animations?

Worksheet 4: Text summary

Video 1

Chapter 1 1968	<p>Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli had an arranged marriage three weeks after they first met in Calcutta, India, and they now live in Cambridge, America, where Ashoke is an engineer. The novel begins with Ashima giving birth in hospital, feeling alone and terrified.</p> <p>There is a flashback to Ashoke's earlier life in India, including a train accident which nearly killed him. He was saved only by the fluttering pages of a book by the Russian writer Gogol, which alerted rescuers that someone was still alive in the wreckage.</p>
Chapter 2	<p>Their baby boy is born and Ashima is distraught that none of her family is there. They wait for a 'good name' for the baby to come from Ashima's grandmother in India, but the letter never arrives. As they have to register a name before leaving hospital, Ashoke calls him Gogol, intending this to be just his more informal 'pet name', but it is also a symbol of gratitude to the book which saved his life.</p> <p>Ashima finds it hard to cope at home, particularly after Ashoke returns to work, and she 'cries the whole day'. Slowly she adapts to her new life with a baby, who has given her a purpose and routine. The letter from her grandmother, who is now very ill, never arrives. The Gangulis have many Bengali friends and keep their traditional customs, but Ashima is upset that she is apart from her family. Before they return to India for the first time, her father dies suddenly. In the rush to leave, the baby's passport is made out in the name 'Gogol Ganguli'.</p>
Chapter 3 1971	<p>The Gangulis now live in a town outside Boston. Ashoke loves his job but Ashima is unhappy after leaving the city, feeling even more alone, but they buy a house and slowly get used to the new environment. When Gogol is five, he does not want to go to school, because he will have to use the 'good name', Nikhil, which his parents finally chose for him. So, against his parents' wishes, he is called 'Gogol' at his first school.</p> <p>Sonia (Sonali) is born and they visit India every few years. 'To a casual observer, the Gangulis appear no different from their neighbours', as they become more a part of the American way of life, while always trying to keep Bengali traditions alive.</p>

Video 2

Chapter 4 1982	<p>Gogol is fourteen and his father gives him a copy of '<i>The Short Stories of Nikolai Gogol</i>' but Gogol has no interest in it as he has never been told the origin of his name and has now started to actively dislike it. Ashoke tries to tell Gogol the truth but sees that this is not the right time.</p> <p>The family go to Calcutta for eight months; Gogol is angry about missing school and is relieved when they are back home. Their time in India is 'quickly shed' and 'irrelevant' to him. Back in school, the teacher tells the disturbing story of Nikolai Gogol's life, his 'lifelong unhappiness, his mental instability', and Gogol is acutely embarrassed about sharing his name.</p> <p>He goes to a party and, for the first time, tells a girl, Kim, that his name is Nikhil; immediately the evening improves and they kiss. It is as if he is no longer Gogol.</p>
Chapter 5	<p>At eighteen, Gogol changes his name legally to Nikhil. Studying at Yale, he ensures that everyone calls him Nikhil, including his girlfriend, Ruth, and he feels comfortable there.</p> <p>As he travels home, the train is delayed and his father, anxious and upset, finally tells him the story of his accident and the book that saved his life.</p>

Chapter 6 1994	<p>Gogol is now working as an architect in New York, known to everyone there as Nikhil. He meets Maxine Ratliff; she is casually sophisticated, living comfortably with her parents in a stunning house, filled with books and art. The house, meals and her parents all impress Gogol with their ease and simplicity. As he continues to date Maxine, he feels 'effortlessly incorporated into their lives', so different from what he was used to at home.</p> <p>After three months, Gogol moves into the Ratliffs' house and he quickly adopts their habits and way of life. He never phones or visits his parents, who are unaware he is living with Maxine, but eventually agrees to call in on their way to the Ratliffs' lake house, where they are going on holiday. He needs to say goodbye to his father, who is going to work away in Ohio for nine months. Although his parents try hard, the visit is not a success, as their formality now seems inappropriate to Gogol, who is annoyed and embarrassed, particularly when his father calls him Gogol. In contrast, their holiday at the lake house is a huge success – it is a 'paradise', natural and simple with relaxing days.</p>
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Video 3

Chapter 7	<p>Ashoke is now working in Ohio and Ashima is on her own. He only occasionally comes home and she struggles to fill the days. Ashoke phones to say that he is at the hospital and that it is nothing serious, but shortly afterwards Ashima learns that he has died of a heart attack. Gogol goes to Ohio to collect Ashoke's few belongings, then home, where he and Sonia stay with Ashima for weeks, following Bengali mourning customs.</p>
Chapter 8	<p>A year after his father's death, Gogol is still working in New York, but he has broken up with Maxine, who became tired of all the time he was spending with his mother and sister.</p> <p>Gogol falls in love with a girl, Moushumi, from a Bengali family he has known all his life. She is self-confident and independent. They enjoy each other's company, having a shared past and understanding of their culture, while also embracing being American.</p>
Chapter 9	<p>They soon marry, a Bengali wedding, though Moushumi has decided not to take his name, Ganguli, but keep her own. When they go to Paris, where Moushumi once lived, for her to attend a conference, the trip is not a success for Gogol. She is very much at home, she 'makes all the decisions, does all the talking' and is 'adored' by her friends. Gogol visits places in Paris on his own during the day, while Moushumi seems reluctant to join him and perhaps be 'mistaken for a tourist' in the city she partly wishes she had never left.</p> <p>In New York, they often have dinner with Moushumi's friends, Astrid and Donald. Gogol does not particularly like them, feeling like an outsider in their group of friends, and 'Moushumi's devotion to these people puzzles him.' Then she 'blurts out' to them that Gogol changed his name to Nikhil. He is 'stunned' but she is 'unaware of what she's done', 'too drunk to absorb his reproach' or recognise it as a betrayal.</p>

Video 4

Chapter 10 1999	<p>Gogol and Moushumi go for a meal to celebrate their first wedding anniversary, but nothing seems to go right. Increasingly, Moushumi is somehow dissatisfied with her married life, and, when she accidentally comes across a previous lover, Dimitri, she deliberately calls him and they start an affair. Gogol suspects nothing initially as she continues to deceive him and meet Dimitri frequently.</p>
Chapter 11	<p>Gogol becomes anxious that Moushumi is not happy with their marriage, but he is afraid to ask her.</p>
Chapter 12 2000	<p>Gogol learns of the affair when Moushumi says Dimitri's name by accident. She moves to Paris and they divorce.</p>

Meanwhile, Ashima has sold the house and will now spend half her time in Calcutta and half in Boston. Ashima, Gogol and Sonia celebrate Christmas together then have a farewell party with their Bengali friends.

Gogol finds the book of Nikolai Gogol's short stories given to him by his father in 1982, which he has never opened or read; he sees the inscription and understands then that his name was 'the first thing his father had given him.' He may be known as Nikhil now, but to his family he will always be Gogol.

Worksheet 5: Character summaries and quotations

Gogol Ganguli

The novel begins with Gogol's birth; the first suggestion of his character is when, aged 5, he is about to start school and is determined not to be called by his 'good name', Nikhil, but by the name which is used all the time at home, his 'pet name', Gogol. As he gets older, there is an ever-growing tension between the Bengali culture his parents try to instil in him and his need to be an American boy who is no different to his friends. When Gogol is 14 and his father tries to explain the significance of his name, he is not receptive and would rather listen to his music. He is already beginning to dislike his name and it is not helped by the 8-month stay in India, which he finds 'disturbing and unpleasant' at times; he is relieved to be back in America, with only a 'lingering sadness' at leaving their relatives. Finally, his opinion of his name is confirmed when his teacher in high school reveals the awful story of Nikolai Gogol's life. He does not want to be associated with such a man, ignorant of his father's meaningful connection to the name.

When Gogol meets Kim at a party and suddenly decides to tell her his name is Nikhil, his life changes. In his mind, his success with her is solely down to having a more acceptable name; he has almost become a different person. He changes his name legally as soon as possible, not understanding that, in fact, he is the only person who thinks that 'Gogol' is odd and choosing to forget that everyone he has known up to this point will still think of him by that name. Perhaps because of this, Gogol goes home from Yale infrequently, and starts seeing a white girlfriend who he knows his parents will disapprove of. However, when Ashoke finally tells him the story behind his name, Gogol is upset that he has not been told before.

Gogol meets Maxine while working as an architect in New York and she offers a way of life which is very different from the one he has experienced at home. Living with Maxine and her parents frees him to be himself and he quickly adopts their habits and style of living. Gogol realises that the holidays he spent with his parents as a child compare unfavourably with his idyllic stay at the Ratliffs' lake house, where he feels 'utterly disconnected from the world'. Their relationship does not survive the difficult time after Ashoke's death, as Gogol realises how much he valued his father and regrets how little time he had spent with him in recent years. The weeks spent with Ashima and Sonia are essential for him to grieve and he does not feel able to include Maxine in this at all.

When Gogol meets Moushumi, the daughter of Bengali friends, it seems as if he has found an ideal partner. They understand cultural expectations, but both are living independent lives in New York, building their careers. When they marry, Gogol is disappointed that she has not taken his name, Ganguli, not least because it would have been a 'tribute to his father', but otherwise he is very happy. Initially the marriage seems to work, but the trip to Paris, where she seems to exclude him, and the meals with her friends Astrid and Donald, who Gogol cannot bring himself to like, show the cracks beginning to appear. The final straw is the unfortunate anniversary meal and it is after this that Moushumi begins her affair with Dimitri, which spells the end of their marriage.

As Gogol spends a final Christmas in his childhood home with Ashima and Sonia, he looks back on and finally understands the 'string of accidents' in his life which have 'shaped him' into who he is. Finding the book of Nikolai Gogol's short stories with the inscription, given to him by his father, enables him to realise that his 'detested' name was actually Ashoke's first present to him. Furthermore, his name is the enduring link with his still-living and much-loved family and therefore profoundly precious to him. 'He had spent years maintaining distance from his origins' but he can now be at peace as both a Bengali and an American, as both 'Gogol' and 'Nikhil'.

Quotation	This suggests...
<p>The progression of Gogol's attitude to his name: 'To me and your mother, you will never be anyone but Gogol.'</p> <p>'Gogol doesn't mind his name (until he sees) ...unthinkable, obsolete names...'</p> <p>'...it is both absurd and obscure, it has nothing to do with who he is.'</p> <p>'He feels at once guilty and exhilarated, protected as if by an invisible shield.'</p> <p>Gogol feels 'like a prisoner set free.'</p> <p>'He still feels his old name, painfully and without warning ... like a tooth unbearably throbbing.'</p>	<p>As he starts school, his parents reassure Gogol, but he is unable to grasp the difference between 'pet' and 'good' names at such a young age.</p> <p>Gogol's school trip to a graveyard is the first time he views his name negatively, as he associates himself with the long-dead people there.</p> <p>Gogol is not interested, at 14, in hearing the story of his naming, and he now dislikes the name.</p> <p>The first time he uses Nikhil, the name feels like a screen that will keep him safe from ridicule.</p> <p>When Gogol changes his name, it is as if he has previously been locked-up and confined by it.</p> <p>Changing his name cannot erase 'Gogol' completely; it is still used by his family and he is beginning to realise it will always be a part of him, even if at this moment it is an unwelcome one.</p>
<p>'Quickly, he falls in love with Maxine, the house and Gerald and Lydia's manner of living.'</p> <p>'There is none of the exasperation he feels with his own parents. No sense of obligation.'</p> <p>'Maxine has never wished she were anyone other than herself.'</p>	<p>Gogol has been hugely attracted to the whole package which comes with loving Maxine. Her parents' lifestyle is a revelation in its simplicity. Maxine's confidence is liberating for him as he sees that she is free to act as she chooses rather than out of a sense of duty and tradition. He is aware that he is embarrassed by his background.</p>
<p>'Gogol has nothing to say to these people.'</p> <p>'He felt the chill of her secrecy numbing him, like a poison spreading quickly through his veins.... In the moment that his marriage was effectively severed he was on solid ground with her for the first time in months.'</p>	<p>Gogol can find no connection with or liking for Moushumi's friends – an early warning for him.</p> <p>As she admits her affair, it is her deceit which wounds him the most. He realises that his marriage was based on lies and, ironically, it is when she is finally truthful that the marriage dies.</p>

Ashoke Ganguli

Ashoke first appears as the shy, intelligent man who marries Ashima after just three weeks and takes her to America, where he is studying for a Ph.D. in fiber optics. When their son is born, it is Ashoke who names him 'Gogol', symbolising how his rescue from the train accident was the first miracle in his life and the safe birth of his child is the second. The description of Ashoke's early life and the crash are crucial to understanding his character. The place where he nearly died and his long recovery left him scarred both physically and mentally; he decided that he had to do his best to escape from this awful memory. However, Ashoke always credits the writer, Nikolai Gogol, with saving his life and so the name stays highly significant for him.

Ashoke continues his successful career as a university lecturer, a job he loves, but he is not always sensitive to Ashima's difficulties and loneliness, wrapped up as he is in his own satisfying work. At home, he attempts to fit in with their neighbours at the same time as enjoying his Bengali heritage and friends. His first attempt to share with Gogol the traumatic but ultimately moving story of his accident does not go well; Gogol is almost rude, but Ashoke is calm and simply leaves the book, wisely recognising that his son's birthday is perhaps 'a day to honor life, not brushes with death'. Ashoke himself admits that the memory of his accident 'no longer lurks persistently in his mind.... darkening his life without warning'.

Eventually, Ashoke tells him the story of the train crash. Gogol recognises that for years his father has 'suffered in an inconceivable way'. Ashoke explains that Gogol does not remind him of the horror of that night but of 'everything that followed', his survival and the joy brought by his family. There is finally a true connection between father and son, and Gogol now sees Ashoke in a new light. Unfortunately, this comes too late for Gogol to fully appreciate his father, as Ashoke dies suddenly while working away from home.

Ashoke's last act was trying to prevent Ashima from worrying about him; he is a sensitive and caring man, devoted to his family to the last.

Quotation	This suggests...
'He imagined ... walking away, as far as he could from the place ... in which he had nearly died.'	In the long months of being unable to walk after the accident, Ashoke remembers Ghosh's advice and he applies to study abroad.
'The job is everything Ashoke has ever dreamed of. What a thrill.... what a sense of accomplishment...'	Ashoke is completely fulfilled professionally and fills his time at the university enjoying his classes, the library and the campus.
'Ashoke and Ashima slip into bolder, less complicated versions of themselves, their voices louder, their smiles wider, revealing a confidence Gogol and Sonia never see on Pemberton Road.'	When they visit India, the instant change shows the effect of being in a place they clearly feel at home; they can behave more naturally, without any self-doubt, fully at ease with the environment.

Ashima Ganguli

Ashima is the character who both starts and finishes the novel: the opening pages describe how she is in hospital giving birth, alone but needing her husband, and this comes full circle as, near the end, she is packing up to return to India, alone again and missing Ashoke. The flashback to the details of her arranged marriage shows her to be an intelligent and thoughtful woman, studying English at college, but she has no real choices. Her parents and prospective husband will decide her future. When her baby is born, she feels completely isolated, desperately wanting to be surrounded by her family, as would happen in India. She is 'terrified to raise a child ... where she knows so little'. When they go home to the tiny apartment, it is 'suddenly unbearable' for Ashima, who yearns for the support of her family and servants in the large house she was used to.

When they move to the suburbs outside Boston, Ashima is unhappy and even lonelier in the quiet neighbourhood, particularly as Ashoke seems so contented. Gradually, they build a life, living as Bengalis at home while doing their best to fit in with those around them. Ashima's attempts to ensure that the children appreciate their Bengali roots are not always successful; she finds it hard to watch them increasingly adopt aspects of their friends' American lifestyle. Her visits to India are infrequent highlights, but the huge distance is a cruel blow when her father dies unexpectedly. In India she can become 'Monu' again and 'weeps with relief' at being home and carefree.

Ashoke's move to Ohio is traumatic for her, particularly as his visits are so short. Living alone most of the time, she passes her days aimlessly, working a little at the library. Her way of life at this time is completely alien to what she is used to, with 'no one to feed or entertain or talk to for weeks at a time'. Her purpose in life seems to have been taken away from her and she is unable to replace it with anything meaningful; she feels too old to 'learn the skill' of living alone. The distressing phone call telling her of Ashoke's sudden death shocks her to the core.

Six years later, she has decided to sell her house and split her time equally between India and America. There is a moving description of her preparing 'a final celebratory meal' for her children and Bengali friends, the first since Ashoke's funeral. Ashima is happy that Sonia is marrying Ben, a non-Bengali, and also accepts that it was right for Gogol and Moushumi to divorce; her Bengali notion of 'duty' has given way to 'American common sense'. While packing up the house, the last thing Ashima removes is the photograph of her husband who had given her an 'unexpected life' in Pemberton Road which has, surprisingly, become just as much a home as Calcutta. Ashima, whose name significantly means 'she who is limitless, without borders', has finally found peace with being both Indian and American.

Quotation	This suggests...
<p>'Her grandmother ... was the only person to predict, rightly, that Ashima would never change.'</p> <p>'Being a foreigner ... is a sort of lifelong pregnancy... a continuous feeling out of sorts.'</p> <p>'Even those family members who continue to live seem dead somehow, always invisible, impossible to touch.'</p>	<p>Ashima is never really able to adjust to life in America to the same extent as Ashoke.</p> <p>When they move away from the city, Ashima feels even more out of place, never able to 'give birth' to feeling settled and at ease.</p> <p>Some of her family in India die but, for Ashima, even those still living might as well be dead too, as they are unreachable and unable to help her.</p>
<p>'He was teaching me how to live alone.'</p> <p>'...thinner, her hair gray... (she) spends evenings alone in her bed, unable to sleep, watching TV without sound.'</p>	<p>After his death, Ashima finds comfort in staying near to where her husband made his life and, perhaps illogically, believes that this was his purpose in going to Ohio.</p> <p>A year later, however, Ashima is still deeply mourning Ashoke's death and unable to make a life on her own with any purpose to it.</p>
<p>'She has learned to do things on her own...she is not the same Ashima who had once lived in Calcutta.'</p>	<p>Six years later, she has learned to cope, perhaps because Sonia is living with her. She recognises that time passing has allowed her to change.</p>

Quotation	This suggests...
<p>'Ashima feels lonely suddenly, permanently alone...she sobs for her husband.'</p> <p>'She will miss the country in which she had grown to know and love her husband.'</p>	<p>However, Ashima can never let the memory of her husband fade and feels 'indifferent' about her future because it is without him. America will always be important to her because it was where their life together took place.</p>

Now create your own character summaries:

Quotation	This suggests...

Quotation	This suggests...

Quotation	This suggests...

Quiz

1. Ashima is attracted to Ashoke when they first meet because:

- A) He is good-looking
- B) He will have a very good job after he finishes his studies
- C) She likes the look and feel of his shoes
- D) He speaks to her kindly and with interest

2. Who is Gogol's first girlfriend at Yale?

- A) Kim
- B) Ruth
- C) Maxine
- D) Bridget

3. Which of the following statements about Ashoke's train accident is false?

- A) The man who shares his compartment tells him to travel as much as he can
- B) Ashoke is haunted by memories of the long wait to be rescued
- C) He has to lie flat on his back for a year afterwards
- D) After recovering from the accident, Ashoke is anxious to stay close to home

4. Early in their relationship, what does Gogol secretly buy as a surprise for Moushumi?

- A) Leather gloves
- B) A book she has looked at
- C) A hat
- D) A silk scarf

5. Which of the following places is Ashima angry that Gogol visited on a school trip?

- A) A graveyard
- B) A church
- C) A fast-food restaurant
- D) A theatre

6. Which of the following statements about Maxine is false?

- A) She lives on the top floor of her parents' house
- B) She has a dog called Silas
- C) She works for a publisher of art books
- D) She keeps her room extremely tidy

7. What is one of the reasons why Gogol and Moushumi's anniversary dinner turns out so badly?

- A) The shawl Gogol gives her spoils her dress
- B) The restaurant is too hot and over-crowded
- C) The waiter is quite rude and unhelpful
- D) They arrive late and have to rush their meal

8. Which of the following statements about the trip to Paris is false?

- A) Gogol does not go to listen to Moushumi's presentation at the conference
- B) Moushumi will not allow Gogol to take photos of her
- C) Gogol tries to practise his French with Moushumi's friends
- D) Gogol spends the days sightseeing on his own

9. When Gogol and Maxine visit his parents for lunch, which of these statements is true?

- A) Maxine takes flowers and chocolates for his parents
- B) They must not kiss or touch each other
- C) They drink an expensive wine with their lunch
- D) Maxine is only the second girl he has ever taken home to meet his parents

10. When the judge asks Gogol why he wants to change his name, Gogol says it is because:

- A) He doesn't like Nikolai Gogol's stories
- B) Some people have laughed at his name
- C) He wants a less childish name now that he is an adult
- D) He has always hated it

Quiz answers

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