Extract from Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*. Chapter One.

‘*Mrs Dalloway said that she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumplemeyer’s men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning - fresh as if issued to children on a beach.*

*What a lark! What a plunge!* For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little *squeak* of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, ‘*Musing among the vegetables?*’ - was that it? - ‘I prefer men to cauliflowers’ - was that it? He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out onto the terrace - Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull; it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished - how strange it was! - A few sayings like this about cabbages.

*She stiffened a little on the kerb*, waiting for Durtnall’s van to pass. A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. *There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright.*’
Vocabulary Exercise

Look at the bolded words in the text. In pairs, try to match the words with their meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Words</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. lark</td>
<td>1. edge of pavement</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. plunge</td>
<td>2. lean on (usually a bird)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. hinge</td>
<td>3. think about</td>
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<td>d. kerb</td>
<td>4. high-pitched cry</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. perch</td>
<td>5. joy/excitement</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. muse</td>
<td>6. dive into the water</td>
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<td>g. squeak</td>
<td>7. joint in a door frame</td>
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Discussion Questions

1. What kind of narrator can you find in this extract?

2. Knowing what the stream of consciousness technique is, why do you think this is the best choice for a narrator?

3. This novel starts in media res. What does it mean?

4. The opening sentence “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself” could be connected with Virginia Woolf’s ideas about women’s roles in society. Why?

5. There is a flash back in paragraph 2. What is it? What is the intention in using this device?

6. When talking about Peter Walsh (one of Mrs. Dalloway’s main characters) Clarissa Dalloway uses a paradox* to express her feelings towards him. Which one is it?

7. In this short extract, Virginia Woolf not only enters into Mrs Dalloway’s thoughts but also into another character’s mind. Who is it?

8. This side character depicts the differences between the former Clarissa Dalloway and the present one. What does he think about the two Clarissas?
*The term **Paradox** is from the Greek word “paradoxon” that means *contrary to expectations, existing belief or perceived opinion*. It is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory or silly but may include a latent truth. It is also used to illustrate an opinion or statement contrary to accepted traditional ideas. A paradox is often used to make a reader think over an idea in innovative way.

**Examples of Paradox**

- Your enemy’s friend is your enemy.
- I am nobody.
- “What a pity that youth must be wasted on the young.” – George Bernard Shaw
- Wise fool
- Truth is honey which is bitter.
- “I can resist anything but temptation.” – Oscar Wilde

**STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS EXERCISE**

- All you need are your pen and exercise book
- Write the title ‘Stream of Consciousness’
- Do your hand exercises to prepare
- Free your mind of all that has happened
- When I say, you will write, non-stop, for 4 minutes. I will tell you when to start and when to stop. Do NOT stop writing or allow your pen to leave the paper during that time
- Do not worry about spelling and Grammar or what you are writing – just let your thoughts flow onto the page

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TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

➢ Provide each line of students in the class with a topic that triggers their ideas. They CANNOT show their topic to the rest.

➢ After the allotted time, each line of students will have to change their writings with the person sitting next to them. They will have to read it out loud and think about the topic they were writing about.

➢ TOPICS:

➢ A recent or recurring dream
➢ A morning walk
➢ A busy market
➢ Lying on a beach
➢ Swimming in the sea
➢ About to start an important exam
➢ A relaxing feeling