

Exploiting Books for Different Purposes: Ch. 1, Orange Is The New Black. My Time in a Women's Prison, a memoir by Piper Kerman, 2010 - (Abacus, 2013, 344 pages)
Worksheet prepared by MF

We can use literature to learn English, review “grammar”, learn to write... Here is an example, so you can select some items as you read. Don't be thorough, just select a few, and from those few, just jot down a few in one sitting or other! Otherwise, you will not enjoy the story.

Chapter 1

Wr – Learn to write!; also Descriptions, also Narratives
Gr – Grammar (meaning, language items in use)
*V – vocabulary, collocations * W – wording * C – culture*

US English: theater, learned, scheduled (pron.), cell phones, store (shop)

Travel Vocabulary

Baggage claim

Carousels circling endlessly

To switch planes

To take a short flight to

rollie (case)

Grammar

(adv, -ing) Lisa and I drove *nonstop* from ... to..., *taking turns sleeping and driving*.

(could, emphasis+comparat) I *could* see that Nora trusted him *far more than* she cared for me.

(Indirect questions) I wondered *what the hell I was doing*

(emphasis+inversions) *neither did I have* an alternate plan

(it-subject, as if, by + -ing) It was *as if by revealing* her secrets to me, Nora had bound me to her

(passive struct. have sth/sb ppart.; n. mod) Someone who could probably *have me killed* with a simple phone call

(passive, it-subject) *it was* were the drugs *were flown*.

(passive, such) I *was sent* on one *such* errand in Jakarta

(passive) Nora *was not to be trusted*

(passives, adv) (she) *had been paid handsomely* for her work

(passives) *Had* my bag *been detected*?

(perfect modals) I *assumed* something *must have gotten* lost in translation

(perfect modals) I *should have ordered*...

(phrasals) Were the authorities *closing in* on me?

(subject-less cl!!) And *as has always been true*, I respond to people...

(tenses in complex cl.) I *didn't breathe* until we *had pulled away* from the airport

(would, purpose inf., indir questions) She *would* call at odd hours of the night from the other side of the globe *to see how the kitties were*

(n. mod) I was *dodging* (avoiding, ducking) questions from my *already-curious* friends

(passive/v) I was *entranced* (spellbound, fascinated) by the illicit adventure Nora represented.

Textual Matters

Wr/Descriptions – objects:

(n. mod: adj order; emphasis: ever) I bought a pair of spidery and beautiful black crochet stockings *to go with* my Doc Martens and miniskirt. I didn't care if I *ever left* Paris. I was in heaven, all alone.

(n. mod: adj order) Beautiful handmade black suede heels

(n. mod: adj order) Black silk pants

Wr/Descriptions – people:

(n. mod) a raspy-voiced midwesterner named... who had a mop of curly Sandy-brown hair ... Everything about her was droll (amusing, funny, witty, entertaining, humorous) – her (drawling, wisecracking husky voice), the way she..., even the way she... She had a ...

(n. mod) her partner in crime, a *goateed* guy named Jack

I was a well-educated Young lady from Boston with a thirst of bohemian counterculture and no clear plan.

I was surprised to see my former brewery coworker Billy waiting for me, towering above the Indonesians with a big grin on his freckled face.

Wr/Descriptions – places:

sun-dappled quad

the sprawling city (that spreads, that expands)

Wr/Narrative:

(meditations - transitions) It was true, the January winds were making western Massachusetts uninviting.

Wr/Narratives – actions & Descriptions – objects: I packed one small L.L. Bean duffel bag with a pair of black silk pants, a tank dress, blue-jean cutoffs, three T-shirts, a red silk shirt, a black miniskirt, my running gear, and a pair of black cowboy boots. I was so excited, I forgot to pack a bathing suit.

Wr/Narratives – actions:

(tenses, -ing) I gathered all of my physical strength and flung myself off the rock and into the air, *shrieking as I plunged* deep into the green gorge below.

(tenses, -ing) I went to a Street market to buy ..., bartered for ... , and walked ... talking to the friendly locals.

(tenses, complex causes, verbs) I *had never been out of* the United States. *Although I was supposed to* begin my new life in California, the prospect was irresistible.

(tenses, complex cl) I moped (hung) around Zurich alone, while Nora and Jack schemed.

(tenses, complex cl) I would roam the streets of strange cities all alone. I felt disconnected from the world even as I was seeing it, a person without purpose or place. This was not the adventure I craved.

(tenses, connectors/transitions, adv rel cl, could, emphasis: ever –ing, so+adj) *In the middle of the night we pulled into* a rest stop to sleep, *where* we awoke to see the incredible Golden Eastern Montana dawn. I *could* not remember *ever being* so happy.

(tenses, connectors/transitions) As I drove out of Northampton *headed* west with my buddy Lisa, *I felt as if* I were finally embarking on my life. I felt ready for anything

(tenses, connectors/transitions) I enjoyed everything ... I ran ..., learned how to ..., indulged in ..., and journeyed to ... When winter set in, I began to

(tenses, emphasis: *I alone*) ..., yet I never placed that call. I thought I had to *tough it out* on my own. *I alone* had *signed up for* this misadventure, and I alone would navigate it to some conclusion, although I was now petrified that it might be a very dismal end.

(tenses, it-subject, -ed/-ing adj, superlat) She dumped the cash on the bed and rolled around in it, naked and giggling. It was her biggest payout (payoff, payment) yet.

(tenses, non-def rel cl) We *stopped to eat lunch by* a beautiful river pool at the top of a towering waterfall. After a skinny-dip, Nora dared me – double-dog-dared me, to be precise – to jump off the falls, which were at least thirty-five feet high.

(tenses, reflexives) He took my wet coat, sat me down in his chair, and *gave me hot tea and a haircut*. He was curious but gentle when I balked at explaining myself or my presence in his salon.

(tenses, reflexives) When cash *ran low*, I *would* be sent off to *retrieve* money wires from Alaji at various banks – a crime *itself, although* I did not realize.

(tenses, seem) but mercifully the drugs she wanted me to carry never showed up, and I narrowly avoided becoming a drug courier. It seemed like it was only a matter of time before disaster would strike, and I was in way over my head. I knew I had to escape.

(transitions) Upon arrival in Paris

(transitions) When winter set in,

(transitions) *From my little room* I *could* see the rooftops of Paris.

(transitions) In Europe things took a darker turn.

(transitions) things went downhill rapidly.

(transitions) When I arrived in Belgium

(v of mov, tenses) I staggered dripping into a tiny salon, the fifth I had tried.

Deep down I felt that I had signed up for this situation and could not say no.

My friend Lisa B. *and I had been saving our tips and decided* that we *would* quit our jobs at the brewery and *take off for* San Francisco *at the end of* the summer.

Wr/Narratives – situation+action: (connectors, complex clauses) *Despite* (or perhaps *because of*) the bizarre romantic situation with Nora, *I knew I needed to* get out of N. And do something.

Wr/Narratives: (v of mov, adv) I scurried from one to another, desperately trying

Wording

(emphasis: *just*) ... a terrible heroin problem here. You see people *just* lying in the streets

bored out of his mind

I had majored in theater

I had no idea how to reach Nora

I'm stranded in Paris

lived off campus* (see Pro/Con article)

mangled high school French

my *pent-up longing* for adventure

(repressed yearning for)

taking everything in

The days of cell phones and e-mail were still in the future

Vocabulary

a *clique* of impossibly stylish and cool lesbians (an elite, a group)

a *killer* stereo (de la hostia)

a thrift store (charity, secondhand shop)

as scheduled

bacchanalia

chafed (bothered, vexed, annoyed)

compound (cluster of buildings in an enclosure, having a shared purpose)

Euros and Aussies

giddy affection (lightheaded, also dizzy)

greyhounds (dogs)

gridlock (congestion, holdup, jam)
grow uneasy
human strata
I bonded with
ivy (hiedra, yedra)
jettisoned (dumped)
kingpin (key player, linchpin, superstar, ace)
lecherous (lusty, lascivious)
lingering (somewhere)
lug (an awkward, clumsy fellow, a blockhead)
newsstand (newspaper stall, kiosk)
nubile (French, marriageable, lolita)
plush (hotel) (luxurious, posh)
prepster (a person who dresses or behaves in a way thought characteristic of such a student)
rebuffed their questions (didn't answer, discouraged)
reckless chances (wild)
relentless tension (unyielding, persistent)
sarong (skirt)

Culture

a beggar lay in the street *asking for alms* (begging)
Doc Martens (boots)
mortarboard (hat)
loafers (shoes)

Miata (car)

Dum Dum (a stupid person; a kind of bullet)
Eartha Kitt: cabaret star (hit: C'est Si Bon)
Lenny Kravitz: "Are you gonna go my way?"
<http://youtu.be/8LhCd1W2V0Q>

MC Hammer: rapper

We *blew off steam* in Bali beach clubs, Jakarta military *pool halls*, and nightclubs ... that were borderline brothels. **Idiom: let/blow off steam** (informal): to give vent to one's repressed emotions, especially by talking or behaving in an unrestrained manner.

Don't take her remarks too seriously—she was just blowing off steam.

Wiccan: a follower of Wicca, a polytheistic Neo-Pagan nature religion inspired by various pre-Christian western European beliefs, whose central deity is a mother goddess and which includes the use of herbal magic and benign witchcraft.

Lived off campus – read on!

sewn into the linings
sidle over to (creep)
skinny-dipping (nude swimming)
sledding (tobogganing)
snide (mean, sarcastic, malicious, unkind)
stark poverty
stately (splendid, elegant)
superhip (super fashionable, stylish, trendy)
tantalizing (alluring, tempting, enticing)
tape deck
the fallout of my parents' divorce (consequence)
trelliswork (kind of pattern: Interlacing strips of wood or metal forming a trellis or lattice)
trinkets (ornaments, knickknacks)
were more my speed than
What a dump (hotel)
wry (ironic, dry, cynical, droll)
zipping around (in that Miata)

