Unit 6 — Contemporary Short Fiction — Teacher copy

Track E · Klasse 10 · Niveau E

Niveau E

1. Reading

Read the text and use it for the activities below.

Reading — *Late Bus, Cold Bench* (extract)

Walking home through the empty plaza, she heard the bus pull away two minutes early. The shelter was empty except for an old man drinking from a paper cup. She sat down, pulled her coat over her knees, and admitted, silently, that the universe had designed this evening for her. The man, having noticed her sitting, slid the paper cup toward her without speaking. The cup was full of warm tea.

Grammar — participle clauses (concise narrative)

Replace one full clause with an *-ing* or *-ed* phrase to keep narrative momentum.

-ing (active):

- *She walked home. She thought about the day. → Walking home, she thought about the day.*

-ed (passive / completed):

- *Tired by the day, she sat down.*

Having + past participle (sequence):

- *Having noticed her, the man slid the cup toward her.*

2. Practise

Niveau E — controlled

1. Build a participle clause: *(walk home / she / hear)* → ___ ; *(tire by the day / she / sit)* → ___ .
2. Match: -ing → active; -ed → passive / completed; having + pp → sequence.

Niveau E — productive

3. Rewrite 4 short sentences using participle clauses.

3. Your turn

Literary essay, 250 words. Read the extract. Answer: *Who is the narrator? What is the conflict? What is the theme? Which one move does the most work?* Use 3 participle clauses + 1 direct quote + 1 *whereas*.

Sample

Walking home through the empty plaza in the opening lines of Late Bus, Cold Bench, the narrator is already framed as a person who notices her own loneliness without dramatising it. Tired by the day, she sits down on a cold bench and admits silently that the universe has, indeed, arranged this evening for her. Whereas a more sentimental story would linger here, the author tightens immediately: an old man, having noticed her sitting, slides his paper cup of warm tea toward her without speaking. The stylistic move doing the most work is the absence of speech. Words would overexplain it. The cup is the argument. The conflict is small — a missed bus, a cold bench — but the theme is older and deeper: the kindness that occurs between strangers when no one is performing, and the way that small, deliberate wordlessness can communicate more than dialogue. *'She admitted, silently, that the universe had designed this evening for her,'* the narrator tells us. The *silently* matters. By the time the warm cup moves across the bench, that silence has been earned. The story trusts that we will hear it.

4. Further reading / listening

- The New Yorker — *The Writer's Voice* podcast.
- Granta — short fiction archive.

5. Teacher answer key

Controlled. 1. *Walking home, she heard. Tired by the day, she sat.*

2. all true.

Productive. 3. Open.

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