Unit 4 — Short Stories and Style — Teacher copy

Track E · Klasse 11 · Niveau E (Basisfach / Leistungsfach)

Niveau E

1. Reading

Read the text and use it for the activities below.

Reading — *The Hour Before* (extract)

The hour before is the only one I remember. The kettle was on, whose whistle had not yet started; the cat was asleep, of whom I was, in the worst way, jealous; the corridor in which my mother stood was lit by the standing lamp, which she had bought in the year I learned to read. None of this is important. All of it is the only material I have.

Grammar — wider relative-clause toolkit

whose — possession (people / things / animals): *the kettle, whose whistle had not yet started.* **of whom / of which** — formal: *the cat, of whom I was jealous.* **in which** — formal: *the corridor in which my mother stood.*

Defining vs. non-defining still applies. Use the wider toolkit deliberately — it lifts register.

2. Practise

Niveau E — controlled

1. Choose: *whose / of whom / in which*: the corridor ___ my mother stood; the cat ___ I was jealous; the kettle ___ whistle had not yet started.
2. T or F: *of which* is informal; *whose* can refer to things; *in which* is more formal than *where*.

Niveau E — productive

3. Build 4 sentences using each of *whose / of whom / of which / in which*.

3. Your turn

Stylistic-analysis essay, 300 words. Read the extract. Identify three stylistic moves. Use 3 wider-toolkit relative clauses + 1 cleft + 2 academic discourse markers.

Sample

Three stylistic moves do most of the work in The Hour Before. The first is the deliberate weight of the relative clauses — *the kettle, whose whistle had not yet started; the cat, of whom I was jealous;*

the corridor in which my mother stood. The cumulative effect is incantatory: each domestic object earns a subordinate clause, as if the narrator were unable to let any of them go. Accordingly, what the prose refuses to do is move forward; the hour stretches by way of relative clauses rather than action. The second move is the narrator's flat self-correction — *None of this is important. All of it is the only material I have.* It is the contradiction, more than either statement, that does the work. By contrast with a more transparent narrator, this voice insists on simultaneously dismissing and elevating the domestic detail. The third move is the absence of the larger event. Whatever happens after the hour before is kept entirely off-stage; the prose gives us no help. In this regard, the story is doing something quite specific to short fiction: pressing on a narrow window of attention until the window becomes the subject. The reader's task is to feel the weight of the cat, the kettle, the corridor, and to register, slowly, that the absent event is not the point. The point is the pressure that absence exerts on what remains.

4. Further reading / listening

- Granta, The New Yorker, The Paris Review — short fiction archives.
- James Wood, *How Fiction Works* — accessible chapter samples.

5. Teacher answer key

Controlled. 1. in which / of whom / whose.

2. F (formal), T, T.

Productive. 3. Open.