

Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)
2024-2025 Set Pieces for Asia Division

Monologue
Born in 2006-2008

Choice A
Time Limit:
5 minutes

Vanity Fair

By William Makepeace Thackeray (An adapted version)

(It's the year 1815. Becky Sharp and her much richer, more ladylike friend, Amelia Sedley, are leaving Miss Pinkerton's Academy for Young Ladies. Amelia, loved and popular will be sadly missed. Becky has always been troublesome. She was taken on as an 'articled pupil' to speak French with the students to receive her board and lodging. In this scene, the girls are in the carriage, on their way to Amelia's family.)

BECKY: So much for the Dixionary; and thank God I'm out of Chiswick... Why, what's the matter, Amelia? Do you think Miss Pinkerton will come out and order me back to the black hole? ... I hate the whole house. I hope I may never set my eyes on it again. I wish it were in the bottom of the Thames, I do; and if Miss Pinkerton were there, I wouldn't pick her out, that I wouldn't. O how I should like to see her floating in the water yonder, turban and all, with her train streaming after her, and her nose like the beak of a wherry... Hush, indeed, Amelia! Why, hush? Will the black footman tell tales? He may go back and tell Miss Pinkerton that I hate her with all my soul, and I wish he would; and I wish I had a means of proving it, too. For two years I have only had insults and outrage from her. I have been treated worse than any servant in the kitchen.

I have never had a friend, or a kind word, except from you. I have been made to tend the little girls in the lower schoolroom, and to talk French to the Misses, until I grew sick of my mother-tongue. But that talking French to Miss Pinkerton was capital fun, wasn't it? She doesn't know a word of French, and was too proud to confess it. I believe it was that which made her part with me; and so thank heaven for French. Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur! Vive Bonaparte! It is of no matter to me, Amelia, whether you think I should not dare to have such wicked, revengeful thoughts! Revenge maybe wicked, but it's natural... and I'm no angel. I am most certainly not!

- The End-

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Choice B
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Sherlock Holmes

By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (An adapted version)

(The detective SHERLOCK HOLMES, his friend Dr Watson and Inspector Lestrade are investigating the mysterious death of a man, McCarthy, at Boscombe Valley. Holmes is examining the scene of the crime.)

SHERLOCK HOLMES: What did you go in the pool for, Lestrade? No, don't answer that. I have no time. That left foot of yours with its inward twist is all over the place. A mole could trace it. There it vanishes among the reeds. Oh, how simple it would all have been had I been here before they came like a herd of buffalo and trampled all over it.

Here is where the party with the lodge-keeper came, and they have covered all tracks for 6 or 8 feet around the body. But here are 3 separate tracks of the same feet. These are young McCarthy's feet. Twice he was walking, and once he ran swiftly. The soles are deeply marked and the heels hardly visible. That bears out his story. He ran when he saw his father on the ground. Then here are the father's feet as he paced up and down. What is this, then? It is the butt-end of the gun as the son stood listening. And this? Ha, ha! What have we here? Tiptoes! Tiptoes! Square too, quite unusual boots! They come, they go, they come again. Of course, that was for the cloak. Now where did they come from?

Ha! It has been a case of considerable interest. By the way, Lestrade, this may interest you. The murder was done with it. Although there are no marks on it, I know that it had only lain there for a few days. The grass was growing under it. It matches the injuries. There is no sign of any other weapon... The murderer? He is a tall man. Left-handed. Limp with the right leg. Wears thick-soled boots and a grey cloak. Smokes Indian cigars. Uses a cigar-holder. Carries a blunt pen-knife in his pocket. There are several other indications., but these may be enough to aid us in our search. I know you are sceptical, Lestrade. But you work your own method, and I shall work mine.

- The End-