

The Shadow and the Flash

By Jack London

Part 1

Author: Daniel Barber

Level: Advanced

Age: Young adults / Adults

Aims: In this lesson the students will:

1. explore the theme of rivalry;
2. identify contrastive stress;
3. practise making contrastive stress;
4. predict how the rivals will be competitive;
5. listen for gist;
6. predict the rest of the story.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (an extract), Track 2 (sentences from Track 1), Track 3 (the rest of Part 1), Track 4 (full audio for Part 1) downloaded from onestopenglish; one copy of the full transcript per student

Summary: The story is about two competitive scientists who take different routes to achieving invisibility, with tragic results. It is told in five parts. In Part 1, we are told of the fierce rivalry between Lloyd and Paul that continues through their childhood and time at university.

Activity 1

Aim: to engage in the theme of rivalry

1. Explain that the students are going to listen to a story about the competitive behaviour of two longstanding rivals, Lloyd and Paul. You may want to check students understand the words *rival* and *rivalry* by asking for synonyms (e.g. *competitors*, *opponents*).

2. Hand out the worksheet. Ask students to work in pairs and answer the three questions in Activity 1. In whole-class feedback afterwards, encourage discussion and examples.

Here are some examples for question 1 if ideas are scarce: Microsoft v Apple; Coca-Cola v Pepsi; Manchester United v Manchester City (many other local football teams also have longstanding rivalries); Rafa Nadal v Roger Federer.

Activity 2

Aims: to familiarize the students with the narrator's voice; to introduce the characters

Tell the students that they are going to listen to the first part of the story. Ask them to answer the questions on the worksheet. Play Track 1.

Key: 1. *They are very similar in appearance except for colouring; in character they are identical.*; 2. *The third person is the 'I' of the story, or first-person narrator. He is Paul and Lloyd's friend.*; 3. *Ostensibly, Paul and Lloyd are friends, but they are always fighting. The narrator describes himself as 'peacemaker'.*

Activity 3

Aims: to raise awareness of, and practise, contrastive stress

1. Ask students to look at the example in Activity 3a on the worksheet. Point out the contrastive relationship between the words *First* and *then*. Elicit the other pair of words that contrast in the example (*dark* and *blond*). Track 2 includes all the sentences from Activity 3. Play just the sentences from the example so that the students can hear the contrastive stress.

2. Have them underline other contrasting pairs of words in the other sentences.

Key:

1. *black; blue;*
2. *olive; crimson;*
3. *Paul and Lloyd; I*

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3. Now play all of Track 2 for learners to check their answers. Don't rely solely on the audio to clarify the answers because other words in the text are stressed for reasons other than contrast (namely, the regular tonic stress of each phrase, emphatic stress, and the use of stress to highlight new information).

4. Point to the first dialogue in Activity 3b. Elicit the contrasting information (*Paul* and *Lloyd*). Check understanding by asking volunteers to practise saying the dialogue with contrastive stress.

5. Put students in pairs. Get them to practise the other sentences.

Key: 1. *Lloyd*; 2. *dark*; 3. *tall*

Activity 4

Aim: to listen for gist

1. Draw the class's attention to Activity 4 on the worksheet. Ask them to discuss in pairs how the four phrases may be significant. You will probably need to clarify that a 'swimming hole' is a place in a river or similar natural body of water deep enough for people to swim in.

2. Ask the students to listen to the story, and make notes about the significance of the words on the worksheet. Play Track 3.

Key:

a poem called Marmion – *Lloyd and Paul compete by memorizing the poem; the swimming hole* – *They compete to see which of them can hold their breath for longest (and almost die in the process!); chemistry* – *They both study this at university and try hard to be better than the other; Doris Van Benschoten* – *Both try to win her heart (in the end she chooses neither).*

3. In feedback afterwards, encourage students to provide as much detail as they can.

4. Hand out the full transcript for Part 1. Ask the students to add to their notes with further details.

Activity 5

Aim: to predict the tragic end of Lloyd and Paul!

1. Explain that the story ends tragically for Paul and Lloyd. Elicit a few ideas of how the students think the story continues. If there is a shortage of ideas, you could offer an example such as: they each decide to become the first to climb Mount Everest and both die in a fight metres from the summit.

2. Put the students in small groups of two to four. Ask them to come up with a tragic ending.

3. As a whole class, have the groups share their ideas and vote on:
the most likely (given the story so far);
the most tragic;
the most comical.

Follow-up tasks

1. Students read the transcript for Part 1, then write a brief summary.

2. Ask students to choose one of the pairs of famous rivals mentioned in Activity 1 and research the history and development of the rivalry. Next lesson, ask students to present their findings.

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Part 1

Activity 1

Ask and answer these questions with a partner.

1. Can you think of any famous rivalries between the following?
companies sports personalities teams people you know
2. Can you think of any benefits of competition and rivalry? What about problems that they create?
3. Would you say you are a competitive person? What makes you say this?

Activity 2

Listen to the first part of the story. Answer the questions.

1. How are Paul and Lloyd similar, and how do they differ?
2. Who is the third person in the story?
3. What's their relationship?

Activity 3

a. Underline pairs of words in the extracts that are stressed to emphasize a contrast.

E.g. *First*, there was Lloyd Inwood, tall, slender, and finely knit, nervous and dark. And *then* Paul Tichlorne, tall, slender, and finely knit, nervous and blond.

1. Lloyd's eyes were black; Paul's were blue.
2. Under stress of excitement, the blood coursed olive in the face of Lloyd, crimson in the face of Paul.
3. Paul and Lloyd seemed born to rivalry with each other, and I to be peacemaker between them.

b. Work in pairs. Decide where the contrastive stress lies in these dialogues. Practise saying them.

1. Paul was tall, slender, nervous and dark.
No, Lloyd was tall, slender, nervous and dark.
2. Lloyd was tall, slender, nervous and blond.
No, Lloyd was tall, slender, nervous and dark.
3. Lloyd was short, slender, nervous and dark.
No, Lloyd was tall, slender, nervous and dark.

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Part 1

When I look back, I realize what a peculiar friendship it was. First, there was Lloyd Inwood, tall, slender, and finely knit, nervous and dark. And then Paul Tichlorne, tall, slender, and finely knit, nervous and blond. Each was the replica of the other in everything except color. Lloyd's eyes were black; Paul's were blue. Under stress of excitement, the blood coursed olive in the face of Lloyd, crimson in the face of Paul. But outside this matter of coloring they were as like as two peas. Both were high-strung, prone to excessive tension and endurance, and they lived at concert pitch.

Track 1

Track 2

But there was a trio involved in this remarkable friendship, and the third was short, and fat, and chunky, and lazy, and, loath to say, it was I. Paul and Lloyd seemed born to rivalry with each other, and I to be peacemaker between them. We grew up together, the three of us, and full often have I received the angry blows each intended for the other. They were always competing, striving to **outdo** each other, and when entered upon some such struggle there was no limit either to their endeavors or passions.

Track 3

This intense spirit of rivalry obtained in their studies and their games. If Paul memorized one **canto** of "Marmion," Lloyd memorized two cantos, Paul came back with three, and Lloyd again with four, till each **knew** the whole poem **by heart**. I remember an incident that occurred at the swimming hole--an incident tragically significant of the life-struggle between them. The boys had a game of diving to the bottom of a ten-foot pool and holding on by submerged roots to see who could stay under the longest. Paul and Lloyd allowed themselves to be **bantered** into making the descent together. When I saw their faces, set and determined, disappear in the water as they sank swiftly down, I felt a **foreboding** of something dreadful. The moments sped, the ripples died away, the face of the pool grew placid and untroubled, and neither black nor golden head broke surface in **quest** of air. We above grew anxious. The longest record of the longest-winded boy had been exceeded, and still there was no sign. Air bubbles trickled slowly upward, showing that the breath had been expelled from their lungs, and after that the bubbles ceased to trickle upward. Each second became interminable, and, unable longer to endure the suspense, I plunged into the water.

I found them down at the bottom, clutching tight to the roots, their heads not a foot apart, their eyes wide open, each glaring fixedly at the other. They were suffering frightful torment, writhing and twisting in the pangs of voluntary suffocation; for neither would let go and acknowledge himself beaten. I tried to break Paul's hold on the root, but he resisted me fiercely. Then I lost my breath and came to the surface, badly scared. I quickly explained the situation, and half a dozen of us went down and by main strength tore them loose. By the time we got them out, both were unconscious, and it was only after much barrel-rolling and rubbing and pounding that they finally came to their senses. They would have drowned there, had no one rescued them.

When Paul Tichlorne entered college, he let it be generally understood that he was going in for the social sciences. Lloyd Inwood, entering at the same time, elected to take the same course. But Paul had had it secretly in mind all the time to study the natural sciences, specializing in chemistry, and at the last moment he switched over. Though Lloyd had already arranged his year's work and attended the first lectures, he at once

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followed Paul's lead and went in for the natural sciences and especially for chemistry. Their rivalry soon became a noted thing throughout the university. Each was a **spur** to the other, and they went into chemistry deeper than did ever students before--so deep, in fact, that **ere** they **took their sheepskins** they could have stumped any chemistry or "**cow college**" professor in the institution, save "old" Moss, head of the department, and even him they puzzled and **edified** more than once. Lloyd's discovery of the "death **bacillus**" of the sea toad, and his experiments on it with potassium cyanide, sent his name and that of his university ringing round the world; nor was Paul a **whit** behind when he succeeded in producing laboratory colloids exhibiting amoeba-like activities, and when he cast new light upon the processes of fertilization through his startling experiments with simple sodium chlorides and magnesium solutions on low forms of marine life.

It was in their undergraduate days, however, in the midst of their profoundest plunges into the mysteries of organic chemistry, that Doris Van Benschoten entered into their lives. Lloyd met her first, but within twenty-four hours Paul saw to it that he also made her acquaintance. Of course, they fell in love with her, and she became the only thing in life worth living for. They **wooded** her with equal **ardor** and fire, and so intense became their struggle for her that half the student-body took to **wagering** wildly on the result. Even "old" Moss, one day, after an astounding demonstration in his private laboratory by Paul, was guilty to the extent of a month's salary of backing him to become the bridegroom of Doris Van Benschoten.

In the end she solved the problem in her own way, to everybody's satisfaction except Paul's and Lloyd's. Getting them together, she said that she really could not choose between them because she loved them both equally well; and that, unfortunately, since **polyandry** was not permitted in the United States she would be compelled to **forego** the honor and happiness of marrying either of them. Each blamed the other for this lamentable outcome, and the bitterness between them grew more bitter.

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Glossary

outdo be better than someone else at doing something

canto a section of a long poem

know by heart remember all the words without any help

bantered persuaded

foreboding an unpleasant feeling that something bad is going to happen

quest (mainly literary) a long difficult search

spur something that encourages someone to do something

ere (old-fashioned) before

take one's sheepskins (old-fashioned) graduate (Degree certificates were originally printed on sheepskin.)

cow college (American) provincial college or university

edify (formal) to teach someone something that increases their knowledge

bacillus a type of bacteria

not / nor a whit (old-fashioned) not at all

woo (old-fashioned) try to start a romantic relationship

ardor (literary) very strong feelings of love; British spelling: *ardour*

wager (formal) bet

polyandry the custom of having more than one husband

forego (formal) decide not to do or have something