

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Worksheet

PART 1

The Otis family has arrived at Canterville Chase

‘Welcome to Canterville Chase,’ said the housekeeper, Mrs Umney. They followed her through the dark wooden hall into the library. Tea was ready for them.

Suddenly Mrs Otis saw a dark red stain on the floor by the fireplace.

‘What’s that mark?’ she asked.

‘It’s blood,’ replied the old housekeeper.

‘How horrible!’ said Mrs Otis. ‘I don’t like bloodstain in the sitting room. Please remove it.’

Mrs Umney smiled.

‘It’s the blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville. Her husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, murdered her in that exact place in 1575. Sir Simon disappeared nine years later and nobody has ever found his body. But his guilty spirit still haunts Canterville Chase. And nobody can remove the stain.’

‘Nonsense!’ cried Washington in a loud voice. “‘Pinkerson’s Champion Cleaner” will clean it away. It’s the latest American stain remover.’¹

He knelt down and rubbed² the floor with the ‘Champion Cleaner’. In a few moments the blood had disappeared.

‘I knew “Pinkerton’s” would do it,’ he said triumphantly.

At that moment, there was a great flash of lightning and a boom of thunder³.

They jumped to their feet, and Mrs Umney fainted.

‘What a terrible climate,’ said Mr Otis calmly, lighting a cigar. ‘I’m not surprised that people want to emigrate.’

(from Part One, The Stain)

1 **stain remover** : a liquid which takes away marks.

2 **rubbed** : cleaned by moving the cleaner back and forward

3 **thunder** : loud noise in the sky during a storm.

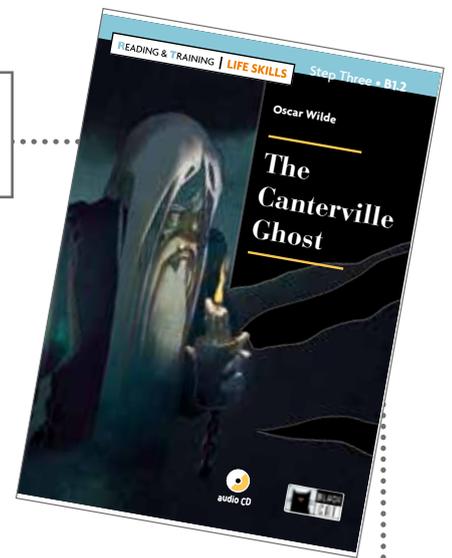


LESSON PLAN
4/5**ACTIVITY 1 – COMPREHENSION**

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

1. The Otis family was going to have dinner in the library. T F
2. Mrs Otis asked the housekeeper to remove the bloodstain. T F
3. The bloodstain belonged to Sir Simon's wife, Lady Eleanore. T F
4. Sir Simon de Canterville disappeared in 1575. T F
5. Washington removed the stain with an American stain remover. T F
6. That evening it was snowing outside. T F
7. Mr Otis complained about the weather. T F



**PART 2****THEME: USA vs UK: More Modern or More traditional?**

A lot of the humour in *The Canterville Ghost* comes from what the Americans say or do when they meet English traditions—for example, the Ghost! The American family doesn't believe in ghosts, but the owner of Canterville Chase and Mrs Umney certainly do!

Being modern or being traditional depends a lot on the history of the country. England has a very long and interesting history, and therefore the English are proud of their traditions. England has had many kings and queens, and still has Queen Elizabeth II! But America has never had a king or a queen. Americans have had Presidents.

America is a young country that became an independent nation in 1776, after the American Revolution. The American continent was practically unexplored until the early 1800s! The explorers and pioneers who settled in these areas found that everything was new—*there were no traditions!* So their way of thinking and doing had to be new, too! Therefore, these Americans did not have old traditions to respect. Everything in America was and *still is* new and modern!

Divide the class into two groups, A and B. These are the instructions for each group.

GROUP A: What does being modern mean to you? Think of five words that describe a modern person or place and explain why.

GROUP B: What does being traditional mean to you? Think of five words that describe a traditional person or place and explain why.

Now compare your notes and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being either modern or traditional.

What are **you** like? Modern or traditional?

What's your best friend like? Modern or traditional?

