Windows of the Mind

Aim

- **To stimulate students to read the book.**

1 Tell students that *Windows of the Mind* is a collection of short stories. Ask students to say whether they prefer to read short stories or novels and why. Write the pros and cons of the short story versus the novel onto the board.

   Suggested responses might include: the short story can be read in a short amount of time, whereas the novel is a bigger commitment; you can get more involved with the characters in a novel, etc.

2 Ask students to read Extracts 1–5 (next page). Working in pairs, ask them to discuss what common theme or subject links the five stories. They are each about one of the five senses: Extract 1, sense of taste, Extract 2, sense of smell, Extract 3, hearing, Extract 4, sight and Extract 5, touch. Students report back to the whole class. From the brief extracts, ask students (in the same pairs) to discuss which they think portrays the subject most vividly and why. Has the writer used any particularly vivid adjectives, or is it the events or the information we are given that makes the sense vivid? Students report back to the whole class. Ask students to say which story they most want to read at this stage and why.

3 Ask students to read Extract 1 (from *A Fine Wine*) again. Ask them whether they have come across wine-tasting before (e.g. on television or perhaps during a visit to a vineyard), and whether they are familiar with such 'flowery' language to describe tastes. Tell them they are going to try to describe some smells (and/or tastes) in the style of Daniel Appleby, the wine-taster in Extract 1. Write up a list of smells and/or tastes onto the board (e.g. spring, baking bread, wet soil in the sunshine, a busy wet road, a crowd in a small space, barbecued burgers, manure). Alternatively you could ask students to think of their own. Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to describe the smells and/or tastes to each other. When students have all had a go at this, invite those who wish to do so to share their descriptions with the whole class.

   Optional extras: If time and facilities allow, the teacher could bring in some sample drinks and foods for students to taste. Students could be blindfolded to aid concentration whilst describing the taste. Alternatively, the class could be divided into two teams and each team could take it in turns to describe tastes or smells suggested by the other team. The teacher could award points to make it into a competition.

4 Ask students to read Extracts 6, 7 and 8, which give character information about Daniel Appleby (from *A Fine Wine*), Desiree (from *A Nose for a Story*) and Kathy (from *Open Doors*). Working in different pairs to before, ask them to discuss the three characters. What sort of people are they? Ask students to choose at least three adjectives or phrases to describe each. Write the adjectives on the board.

   Suggested answers: Daniel Appleby – vain, powerful, cruel, arrogant, unpleasant, horrible; Desiree – ruthless, scheming, false, a good actress, sexy; Kathy – clever, kind, honest, determined.

   Ask students if they think the characters are very different or whether there are any similarities between them (e.g. they may think that they are all ruthless and determined to get what they want in their own ways).

5 Organise students into groups of three. Ask the groups to discuss how Daniel Appleby, Desiree and Kathy would get on together if they met. Would they like each other or would they argue? What would they talk about? Next give all the students a number, 1, 2 or 3, and tell them that if they are 1 they are Daniel Appleby, 2, Desiree and 3, Kathy. Ask them to role-play conversations between firstly Daniel Appleby and Desiree, then Kathy and Desiree, and lastly Daniel and Kathy. If any group is brave enough, they could perform their role plays in front of the whole class.

6 Ask students to read Extract 9, which is from the blurb on the back of the book, and match the descriptions to the characters in Extracts 6, 7 and 8.

   Answers: The well-known broadcaster is Kathy from *Open Doors*, the war hero is Arlo from *Arlo's War*, the wine-taster is Daniel Appleby from *A Fine Wine*, the university lecturer who learns Tai Chi is Jamie from *A Gentle Touch* and the magazine journalist is Desiree from *A Nose for a Story*.

7 Tell students that all the five stories in *Windows of the Mind* have a 'twist'. Explain that a story has a twist if just before the end it changes in some way because of something that happens, and this gives us a surprise ending. Working on their own and using the small amount of information given in the blurb, ask students to think what the twists might be for the five stories in the book. Students share their ideas with the whole class. Are they all completely different, or have some students come up with similar ideas? Take care not to respond too positively if students produce the correct twists.

8 Write the words wine, needle, snake, radio and sewage up onto the board. Tell students that these are important words in the five stories. Ask them to think of a story (or just a short passage) that includes all five words and to write it down. (If you think it would help to have more than five words, you could also write up the words supermarket, magazine, toy, interview and power.) When they have finished writing, divide students up into small groups and ask them to read their stories to each other. How different are they?

9 Ask students whether they like the title of the book. If not, ask them for suggestions for an alternative title.

10 If there are enough copies of the book, students could begin to read *Windows of the Mind*.

Windows of the Mind

Extract 1

'This wine is truly a fine example of a great wine, full of fruit and with excellent body. It is, to wine, what a Picasso painting is to art – a true masterpiece. One cannot taste a wine like this and not feel that one has tasted greatness.'

Extract 2

Later that morning Gopal Singh went out to change the flowers for fresh ones from the garden. The house needed the sweet smell. It had not been joined to the sewage system – it was an old house and still had no modern pipes. Waste was collected every month from a cesspit some distance away in the large garden.

Extract 3

Arlo liked living at the edge of town. He had to drive to work and it took him over an hour each way. It was noisy and hot, but at least he had quiet when he got home. Quiet was very important to Arlo. As a young man he had been a soldier and fought in a war. His mind had been damaged by the noise of loud and terrible explosions and he had to be sent to a hospital to recover.

Extract 4

What Kathy enjoyed most was seeing the pleasing effects shapes and colours produced. She would see ordinary things as objects of great beauty – the black and white squares on a chess board, the shape of a hand, the colours of a flower.

Extract 5

The touch of Mr Lo's needle felt gentle as a feather as it was stuck into Jamie's right ear. Jamie was surprised that he felt no pain, only a little itch.

Extract 6

Daniel Appleby played with his glass as he spoke, admiring the rich dark colour of the wine as he held it up to the light from the window. He was used to moments like this, and enjoyed them almost as much as the fine wines he loved.

'My terms are the terms Happimart offers to all the smaller vineyards it does business with. We like to see fine wines made, but we are realistic about today's market. We offer to buy your vineyard from you and take the responsibility from your hands, while employing you to be in charge of wine production . . .'

'But Monsieur . . . ?' Monsieur Colbert did not like the sound of the idea.

'Well, naturally we wouldn't expect you to produce the wine by yourself! Our expert production staff would work under your direction. That way you have the best of everything – you continue to make wine but you have the money from the sale of your vineyard and a contract from Happimart, too. A very fine offer, I think you'll agree . . .'

What Appleby didn't mention was that once the 'production staff' had learned everything about Colbert's ways of producing his wine, Happimart would find some reason to get rid of him.

Extract 7

She recognised Patel coming towards her. He was quite old, well over sixty – Desiree preferred younger men – and was dressed in an expensive white suit. He was smiling and holding a gin and tonic. Desiree knew that older men were attracted to her. It was useful, though it could be risky if she stayed too long and they became too interested. She could see already that Patel's eyes were attracted by the necklace that sat above the low neckline of her dress. But she could handle herself all right. This guy would be no problem, she could tell. Patel came up to her and smiled.

'Miss Malpen, if I'm not mistaken . . . ?'

Desiree held out her hand as she welcomed him. She was expecting a handshake but Patel took it and gave it a kiss instead. It felt wet.

'They didn't tell me you were so handsome, Mr Patel!'

Extract 8

Kathy would be kind to guests who were not used to being the centre of attention. For example, she understood the natural shyness of an old lady who had been given a prize for her work with the poor. But if she thought a guest was lying she would not stop questioning until she had discovered the truth. If a lie had been told she always made sure her listeners knew it.

Extract 9

We meet a well-known broadcaster whose blindness is her power, a war hero who hates noise and wants silence, a wine-taster who has an accident, a university lecturer who learns Tai Chi, and a magazine journalist who smells scandal and will do anything for a good story.