

The Interlopers

Based on Saki's classic story of bitter rivalry and cruel irony

About the Story

Lexile: 1080L (captions)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:

to examine events and literary devices in a play in order to analyze a central theme of the work

Key Skills:

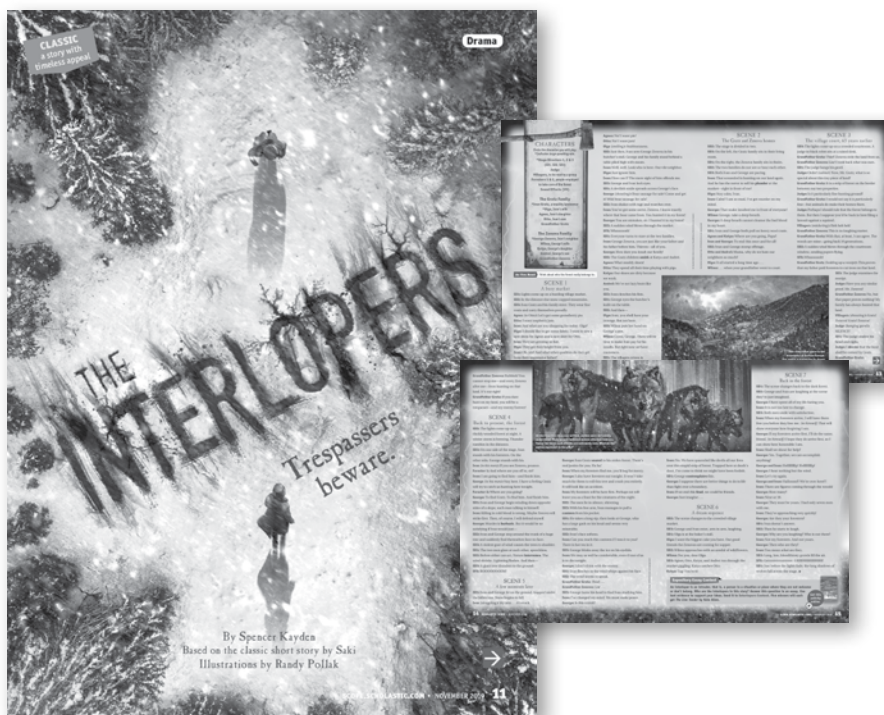
text evidence, character, tone, author's craft, interpreting text, mood, symbolism, situational irony, theme

Essential Questions:

- How can conflict be resolved?
- How can we make friends out of our enemies?
- Can—and should—people have control over nature?

Standards:

The texts and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: **R.1, R.3, R.4, R.6, R.10, W.1, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6.** For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at
scope.scholastic.com.

Video: Situational Irony

Audio:

- Vocabulary
- Character pronunciation guide

Literature Connections: Ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Skill Builders to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Preparing to Write: Who Are the Interlopers?
- Quiz*
- **Core Skills Workout:** Mood*
- **Literary Elements:** Theme Anticipation Guide, Character Thinking Tool
- Contest Entry Form

* Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Do-Now: Theme Anticipation Guide

(3 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project the **Theme Anticipation Guide**. As students enter the classroom, have them write down whether they agree or disagree with each statement. Then ask volunteers to briefly explain their responses.

Preview vocabulary.

(7 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Highlighted words: *barbaric, canteen, contemplates, decree, feud, intervenes, plunder, smirk, snared*

Watch a video about situational irony.

(7 minutes, video online)

Go to Scope Online and watch the video “Is It Ironic?” as a class. Briefly discuss the examples of situational irony posed in the video. Ask students to give more examples of irony from their imaginations, real life, or books and movies.

2 Reading and Discussing

(30 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Read aloud the As You Read box on page 12.
- Assign parts and read the play as a class. Finish by reading the image captions aloud.
- Discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions in groups.

Close-Reading Questions

In Scene 1, Olga says Ivan is stubborn.

What evidence in the play supports her statement? (text evidence, character) *It's clear that Ivan is stubborn because he has*

maintained a rivalry with George his entire life. He stubbornly refuses to allow George to hunt on his land.

In Scene 1, George tells Ivan, “You are mistaken, sir. I hunted it in *my* forest.”

What is George's tone in this line? (tone) *George's tone is sarcastic—his politeness is false and is meant to irritate Ivan.*

In Scene 2, you see what's happening in the Gratz home and in the Zenova home simultaneously. By structuring the scene this way, what does the playwright reveal about the two families? (author's craft) *By displaying the families side by side, the playwright shows that they are remarkably similar. The similarities between the families make their intense rivalry seem ridiculous.*

Scene 3 is a flashback. Why do you think the author chose to present the backstory this way, rather than simply having the characters talk about what happened in court? (author's craft) *By showing the court scene as it happened, the author brings it to life in a way that wouldn't be possible if the characters simply recounted it. From the judge's joke to the whooshing of the wind, this event establishes the start of the rivalry and is more engaging presented as its own scene.*

In Scene 4, both George and Ivan are talking to themselves as they go looking for each other. What do their words tell you about what they really want? (interpreting text, character) *Each man says he wants to kill the other. But each also suggests he'd prefer to kill in self-defense. Both seem to want their actions to be justifiable—perhaps because they know killing is wrong.*

▶ **Think about the moments in which the wind blows. What do these moments have in common? (Think about what happens before each one.) How does the wind contribute to the mood?** (mood, symbolism) *The wind blows after a Gratz or a Zenova claims that the land belongs to him. The wind contributes to an ominous mood, as if nature is angry and refuting the men's claims.*

▶ **Explain the irony of the play's ending.** (situational irony) *The ending of the play is ironic because the two men have just agreed to end the generations-long rivalry between their families, so what is expected is for their lives to become more peaceful and enjoyable. But what happens is the opposite of that: The last lines of the play imply that they will be killed by wolves before they can begin the new and better chapter of their lives.*

▶ **At the end of the play, why does Ivan laugh?** (character) *You can infer that Ivan laughs because he recognizes the cruel irony of what is about to happen. After all their fighting, he and George have finally made peace, and no one will ever know.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

▶ **After George and Ivan become trapped under the tree, it doesn't take long for them to make peace. Why do you think this is?** *Trapped together and in great pain, the men find it easy to see each other as regular people rather than as sworn enemies. A small strip of forest suddenly seems like a very silly thing to fight over.*

▶ **What do the wolves in the play symbolize?** *Answers will vary. Some students might say that the wolves symbolize nature itself—and that nature has come to take back the forest. Others may say that the wolves symbolize fate; George and Ivan are both determined to have control of the forest, then fate steps in to show them that they ultimately have no control over the forest.*

3 Skill Building: Theme

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Who Are the Interlopers?** This theme activity will prepare students to respond to the writing prompt on page 15. *For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.*

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers

George and Ivan end up in a terrible situation. In a well-written paragraph, explain who you think is to blame and why. Use text evidence to support your ideas.

For Advanced Readers

Read the original short story by Saki. In a well-organized essay, compare the original story to the play adaptation you just read. Use text evidence to support your analysis.

For Playwrights

Write an epilogue in which Olga Gratz and Wilma Zenova discuss the past and future of the relationship between their families.

For Animal Lovers

Write an essay reflecting on the events in *The Interlopers* from the perspective of one or more of the animals in the forest. Think about the animals' reaction to humans claiming ownership of the land.