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Escaping Reality: Nostalgia in Music and Film

When do people want to escape reality? Give 2 examples.

1. Listen to the song "I hate it here" by Taylor Swift and discuss the questions.

1. Why does the narrator want to escape her current situation?
2. What kinds of worlds or places does she imagine?
3. How would you describe her attitude towards reality?
4. Do you agree with the statement below? Explain your opinion.

Stories set in the past are a form of escapism rather than an accurate representation of history.

Quick, quick
Tell me something awful
Like you are a poet trapped inside the body of a finance guy
Tell me all your secrets
All you'll ever be is
My eternal consolation prize
You see I was a debutant in another life but
Now I seem to be scared to go outside
If comfort is a construct
I don't believe in good luck
Now that I know what's what

I hate it here so I will go to
secret gardens in my mind
People need a key to get to
The only one is mine
I read about it in a book when I was a precocious child
No mid-sized city hopes and small town fears
I'm there most of the year
Cause I hate it here
I hate it here

My friends used to play a game where
We would pick a decade
We wished we could live in instead of this
I'd say the 1830s but without all the racists
and getting married off for the highest bid

Everyone would look down
Cause it wasn't fun now
Seems like it was never even fun back then
Nostalgia is a mind's trick
If I'd been there, I'd hate it
It was freezing in the palace

I hate it here so I will go to
Lunar valleys in my mind
When they found a better planet
Only the gentle survived
I dreamed about it in the dark
The night I felt like I might die
No mid-sized city hopes and small town fears
I'm there most of the year
Cause I hate it here
I hate it here

I'm lonely but I'm good
I'm bitter but I swear I'm fine
I'll save all my romanticism for my inner life and I'll get lost on purpose
This place made me feel worthless
Lucid dreams like electricity, the current flies through me,
and in my fantasies I rise above it
And way up there, I actually love it

I hate it here so I will go to
Secret gardens in my mind
People need a key to get to
The only one is mine
I read about it in a book when I was a precocious child
No mid-sized city hopes and small town fears
I'm there most of the year
Cause I hate it here
I hate it here

Quick quick
Tell me something awful
Like you are a poet trapped inside the body of a finance guy

Vocabulary

2. Match the words with the definitions.

1. escapism ___	A. a limitation or restriction
2. dissatisfaction ___	B. the way something is understood or interpreted
3. idealised ___	C. the act of avoiding reality
4. constraint ___	D. feeling unhappy or not content
5.perception ___	E. presented as better than reality

Use 2 of the words in your own sentence.

_____

_____

About the film: Midnight in Paris (2011)

Midnight in Paris is a romantic fantasy film about a modern-day writer visiting Paris. During his stay, he mysteriously finds himself transported back in time to the 1920s, where he meets famous artists, writers, and historical figures. Through his time-travel experiences, the film explores the idea of nostalgia and how people often believe that the past was a better, more beautiful time.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cITCH0yYRIM

3. Watch the video clip from the film and discuss the questions below.

1. What does Adriana say about the 1920s? Why does she find it disappointing?

_____

_____

2. Which time period does Adriana wish she could live in? What is Gil's reaction to it?

_____

_____

3. Why is it significant that Adriana – someone from Gil's "golden age" – also dreams of a different time?

_____

_____

4. What's the message behind Taylor Swift's line "Nostalgia is a mind's trick / If I'd been there, I'd hate it"? How does this relate to Gil's experience in Midnight in Paris?

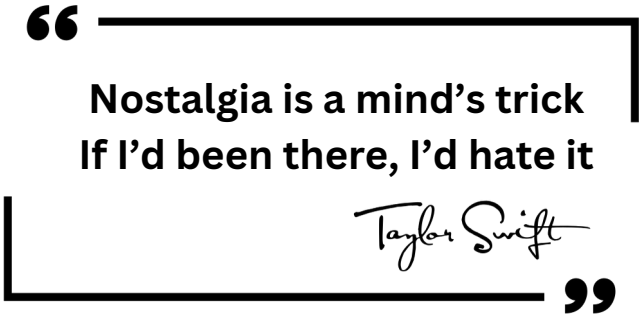
_____

_____

5. What do you think the film is trying to say about happiness and the idea of escaping time?

_____

_____



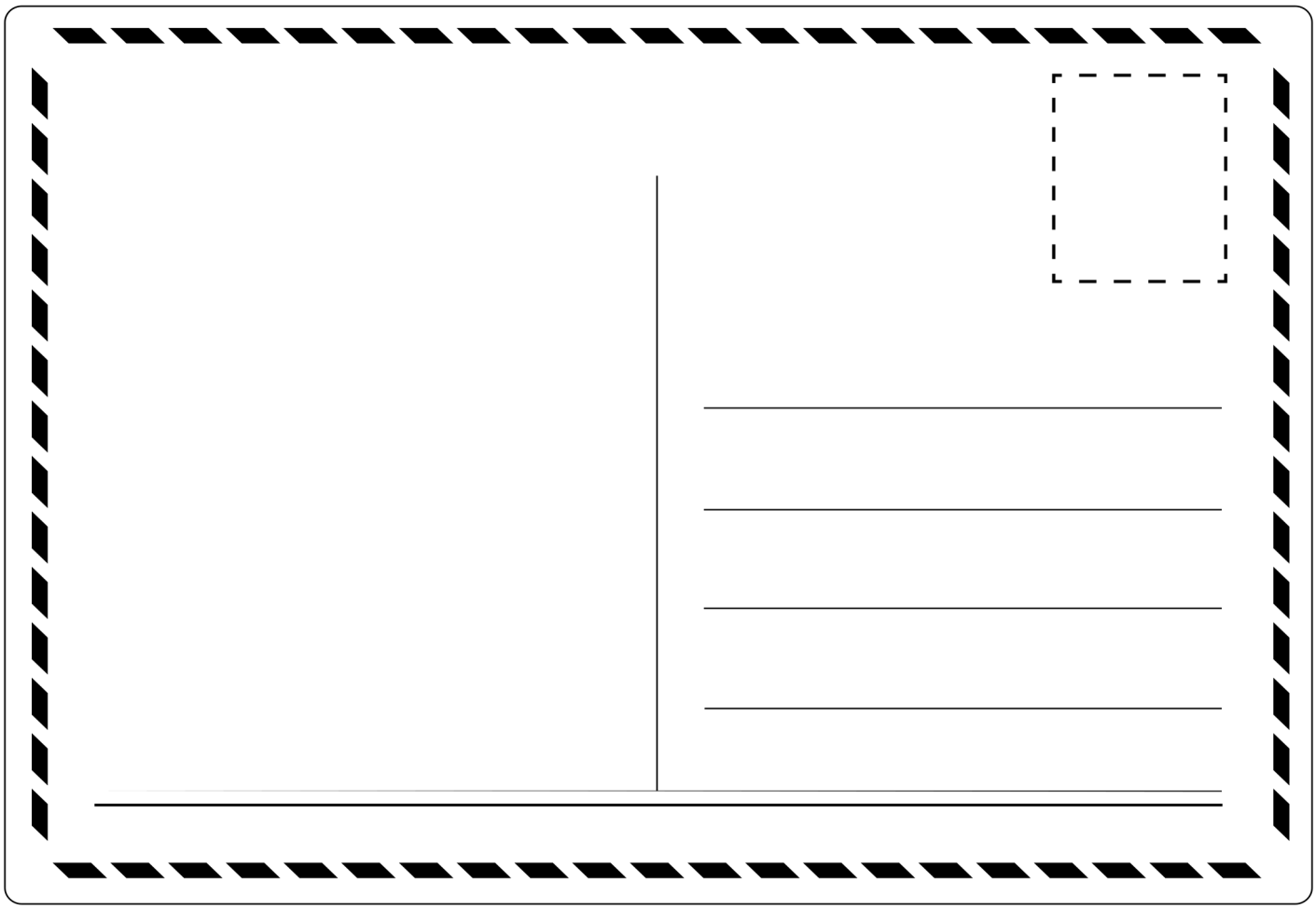
4. Writing task: Time Travel Postcard

Imagine you have travelled back in time to a historical period of your choice.
Write a short postcard from the past to your classmates.

Include the following details:

- Where you are (place and time)
- What you see around you
- Who you have met
- One thing you wish you could bring back to the present

Write 4–6 sentences. Try to use past tenses and expressions like *I wish..., If I could...*, or *It would be amazing to...*



Self-assessment checklist

□ I used the past tense correctly
□ I used “wish” or “if” in my writing
□ I included details about the time, place, and person
□ I was creative and original

Peer review

Exchange your postcard with a classmate. Read their postcard carefully.

Answer the following two questions about your partner’s postcard:

1. What did you like most about this postcard?

_____

2. Was anything unclear or confusing?

_____

Key:

1. Listen to the song “I hate it here” by Taylor Swift and discuss the questions.

Possible answers:

1. She feels disappointed with reality, she feels misunderstood, she feels trapped, she is searching for comfort.
2. She imagines secret gardens, fictional places, the Moon, historical periods, imaginary worlds.
3. She is frustrated, disillusioned, nostalgic, imaginative, hopeful, isolated.

2. Match the words with the definitions.

1. C, 2. D, 3. E, 4. A, 5. B

3. Watch the video clip from the film and discuss the questions below.

1. She believes the 1920s are disappointing because they are not as magical as she imagined.
2. She dreams of living during the Belle Epoque. Gil is surprised because he idealises the 1920s, while Adriana idealises an even earlier period.
3. Everyone believes another era was better. Nobody is fully satisfied with their own time.
4. Nostalgie creates an unrealistic image of the past. Every historical period has problems and people often overlook historical realities.