

TEXT	<i>THE INVISIBLE MAN</i> (1897)
AUTHOR	H. G. Wells
THEMES	Extreme weather (unit 4), the future (unit 9), cooking (unit 14)
VOCABULARY	Ways of moving and looking, winter weather, colours
WRITING	Students write an imaginative description of a situation.
SPEAKING	Students convert the text into a short dramatic scene.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Herbert George Wells (1866–1946) was an English writer of fiction and non-fiction, rightly considered (along with Jules Verne and Hugo Gernsback) as the father of the science fiction genre (see portrait on the Worksheet). Many of his books have been made into films – *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*, for example, the latter also achieving fame through Orson Welles' radio version broadcast in 1938 which many listeners took to be a real invasion of alien beings and panicked. H. G. Wells' importance as a science fiction writer often obscures his deeply-held political views and belief in social justice. He was a socialist, pacifist and a prophetic social critic with a progressive view of human evolution.

WARMER

Find some covers of books by H. G. Wells online with visual images (for example, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The First Men in the Moon*, *The Sleeper Wakes*); if it's possible to crop the images so that the title isn't showing, even better.

ABOUT YOU

Ask students to predict what they think these stories are about and say whether they would be interested in reading them. Students might need some help with ideas for the first question – elicit examples or situations: someone who is in disguise; a famous person who doesn't want to be recognised; someone who thinks their face might scare people, etc.

The further two questions are personal responses – get students to compare their feeling about people's eyes and what we notice about others.

Go through the introduction – you might want to discuss the idea that science fiction is a genre that sometimes accurately predicts the future – going to the moon, for example. You could ask students if, on the other hand, we will ever be able to travel to the past and the future.

1

Possible answers

Colours might include: white (the snow); red/yellow (the fire); blue (glasses); grey or black (stone); grey/black (the hat and coat – it's winter). The colour of eggs and bacon – white plate? The tablecloth – white or patterned?

2

Possible answers

- 1 Because he's very cold but also because he is invisible. If the clothes don't cover his body people won't see him or see something very strange.
- 2 He stands very still when he's in the parlour and talking to Mrs Hall but when she leaves he moves very quickly. He looks away all the time.
- 3 Probably because he knows he looks very strange and he wants to avoid making her suspicious.
- 4 He's strange, why doesn't he take off his wet clothes? Where has he come from? What is he doing here?
- 5 This is an open question – ask for suggestions. To see someone? To escape from something?

VOCABULARY

3

Answers

- 1 wintry 2 tablecloth 3 parlour 4 tips

4

Answers

- 1 stamped 2 staggered 3 stared 4 emphasis

WRITING

5

Students work in pairs. Encourage them to think about both the advantages and disadvantages of being invisible in these situations. Give them some time to discuss the situations but at some point, insist they choose one to write about. Monitor and help with vocabulary.

MIXED ABILITY

For the writing activity, make pairs of weaker and stronger students. Stronger students can choose which to write about and work on their own ideas. For the weaker pairs, assign them a topic, for example 'School', and give them a list of words they must include in their written text – *class, teacher, laugh, English, exam, friends, nervous*, etc.

SPEAKING

6

The text lends itself to being performed as a short dramatic presentation. Two students play the parts of the stranger and Mrs Hall and say their lines whilst the others read the rest of the narrative. Stress the importance of the movements and body language of the two protagonists – remind them of the vocabulary words *stagger, stare* and *stamp*. Encourage them to add other details they think could make the scene effective.