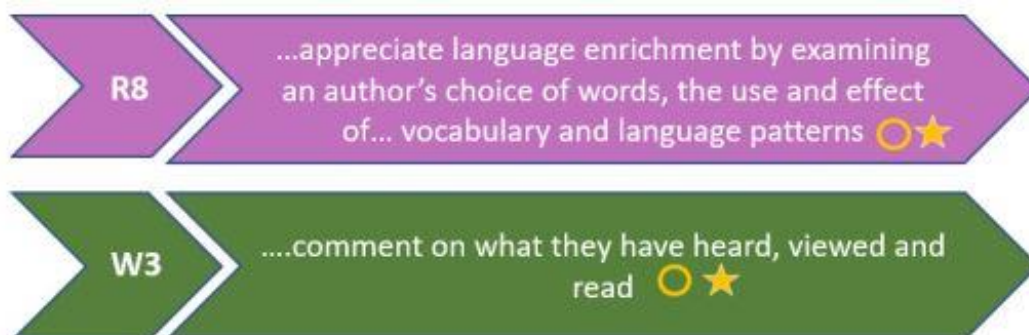


Read and Respond *Hombre* by Elmore Leonard



Aspects of Junior Cycle Level 3 Learning Outcomes in Focus:



Background to the text:

Hombre is a Western. John Russell has been raised as an Apache. Now he's on his way to live as a white man. But when the stagecoach passengers learn who he is, they want nothing to do with him. That is, until outlaws ride down on them, and they must rely on Russell's guns and his ability to lead them out of the desert.

Read the following extract from *Hombre*:

As we stood there seeing these three riders coming towards the adobe with the dust rising behind them, Mr. Mendez said to me, "Take a good look at Russell. You will never see another one like him as long as you live."

I will swear to the truth of that right now. Though it was not just his appearance.

The three riders came on, but giving the feeling that they were holding back some, not anxious to ride right up until they made sure everything was keno.

When Russell pulled up, the two White Mountain Apaches with him slowed to a walk and came up on either side of him. Not close, out a ways, as if giving themselves room to move around in. All three of them were armed; I mean armed, with revolvers, with cartridge belts over their shoulder and carbines, which looked like Springfields at first.

As he sat there, that's when I got my first real look at John Russell.

Picture the belt down across the chest with the sun glinting on the bullets that filled



most of the loops. Picture a stained, dirty looking straight-brim hat worn almost Indian-fashion, that is, uncreased and not cocked to either side, except his brim was curled some and there was a little dent down the crown.

Picture his face half shadowed by the hat. First you just saw how dark it was. Dark as his arms with the sleeves rolled above his elbows. Dark - I swear - as the faces of the two White Mountain boys. Then you saw how long his hair was, almost covering his ears, and how clean shaved looking his face was. Right then you suspected he was more to those Apaches than a friend or a boss. I mean he could be a blood relation, no matter what his name was, and nobody in the world would bet he wasn't. When Mr. Mendez spoke to him you believed it all the more. He stepped closer to John Russell's roan horse, and I remember the first thing he said. He said "Hombre."

Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons or as part of a unit of learning.
- Students may wish to complete some tasks individually or in pairs/groups.
- Tasks might be completed orally and/or in written format.
- Students may also wish to engage in a think, pair, share activity for some tasks.

1. **Task:** Summarise the initial impressions of the three riders.

Instructions: Write a summary of the three riders' approach and the atmosphere described as they approached the adobe.

2. **Task:** Infer the relationship between John Russell and the two White Mountain Apaches.

Instructions: Based on the information provided, speculate on the possible nature of the relationship between John Russell and the White Mountain Apaches.

3. **Task:** Examine the significance of John Russell's appearance and its impact on the narrator.

Instructions: Discuss how the narrator perceives John Russell's appearance and speculate on its potential importance to the storyline.

4. **Task:** Create a character profile for John Russell.

Instructions: Combine the details mentioned in the extract to create a detailed character profile for John Russell, including physical appearance, clothing, and potential relationships.

5. **Task:** Assess the mood and tone of the extract.

Instructions: Analyse the language and descriptions used in the extract to determine the mood and tone. Discuss how these elements contribute to the overall atmosphere of the scene.