

# A Summer's Reading



By Bernard Malamud

## Basic Understanding (Part I)

### Vocabulary Practice

1. Translate the following words into Hebrew, using the Word bank:

1. in the mood for		9. mop	
2. can't stand		10. on an impulse	
3. carpentry		11. occasional	
4. dissatisfied		12. quit	
5. get on one's nerves		13. register	
6. hang out		14. resemble	
7. iron railing		15. sultry	
8. have time on one's hand		16. worthwhile	

במצב הרוח המתאים ל-, משתלם, להידמות ל, לעזוב, מתוך דחף רגעי, להיות פנוי, "להסתובב", חסר שביעות-רצון,  
לא יכול לסבול, חם ולח, לרשום, מקרי, מקל לשטיפת רצפה/ סחבה, מעקה ברזל, להרגיז מישהו, נגרות

2. Choose synonyms from the box to replace the words in bold in the following

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ashamed, sidewalks, on an impulse, mop, dissatisfied, quit, carpentry

- a). The **pavements**/ \_\_\_\_\_ in George's neighborhood were ugly and broken.
- b). George was **not at all happy**/ \_\_\_\_\_ with his life.
- c). George was **not proud**/ \_\_\_\_\_ of the fact that he had not finished school.
- d). George often made decisions **without thinking things through**/ \_\_\_\_\_,  
such as **leaving**/ \_\_\_\_\_ school before he finished.

3. Choose words from the box to complete the following sentences. You may change the form of the word. (There are more words than you need).

register, iron railing, wander, resemble, get on one's nerves, worthwhile, respect

- a). George wanted people to \_\_\_\_\_ him.
- b). George \_\_\_\_\_ around the neighborhood because he had nothing else to do.
- c). George did not have any books he felt \_\_\_\_\_ reading.
- d). Sophie \_\_\_\_\_ her brother George.

*Understanding the story*

Answer the questions:

1. Why doesn't George go back to school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why can't George ask a girl out on a date? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What kinds of things do George and Sophie like to read? Are they the same?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why do you think George saves the park till the last? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Find three facts about George and his family.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What did George do to avoid being bored? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. In which city does the story take place?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Name TWO things George would like to have in the future.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Vocabulary Practice:

Match the words with their definitions:

1	allowance	_____	a)	having been given up and left alone
2	approach		b)	a gracious, friendly, or obliging act that is freely granted
3	approval		c)	marked by or showing deep sincerity or seriousness
4	deserted		d)	to discover, understand or decide
5	embarrassed		e)	a porch, platform, entrance stairway, or small veranda at a house door
6	favor		f)	try earnestly or persistently to persuade
7	earnestly		g)	to come near or nearer to
8	figure		h)	to utter a shrill clear sound by blowing or drawing air through the puckered lips
9	stoop		i)	amount of something, especially money allowed or given regularly.
10	urge		j)	feeling nervous and uncomfortable and worrying about what people think of you
11	whistle		k)	feeling or showing or saying that one thinks something is good or acceptable

Complete the summary of Part II using the words from the Word bank. Make any necessary changes.

whistle, embarrassed, approval, appreciate, urge, hesitate, wonder, earnestly, drunk, figure

George met Mr. Cattanzara, a man who sometimes got 1. \_\_\_\_\_ in the evenings after work. When he asked George what he was doing for the summer, George didn't really know what to say, so he 2. \_\_\_\_\_ before he answered, saying he was going to read a lot of books from the library. He said this very 3 \_\_\_\_\_ and Mr. Cattanzara seemed impressed.

George ignored the 4 \_\_\_\_\_ to do something different, but when he went around the neighborhood, people were kind to him and he 5 \_\_\_\_\_ if Mr. Cattanzara had told them about his plans to read. He no longer felt 6 \_\_\_\_\_ and he enjoyed the sense of 7 \_\_\_\_\_ he felt from everyone around him. He began to 8 \_\_\_\_\_ life more.

Main Characters of the story.

**George**

He was 16 when he \_\_\_\_\_  
Now he nearly \_\_\_\_\_  
He stays home and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
In the evenings, he sits \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and wishes  
for \_\_\_\_\_  
He tells Mr. Cattanzara that he is  
reading \_\_\_\_\_  
He sees that people in the neighborhood  
\_\_\_\_\_  
and feels \_\_\_\_\_  
He doesn't walk past Mr. Cattanzara's  
house because \_\_\_\_\_

**Mr. Cattanzara**

He works as \_\_\_\_\_  
At night he sits \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_  
Once in a while he comes home \_\_\_\_\_  
He asks George what \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and George feels  
embarrassed.  
He starts a rumor that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Answer the questions:

1. Why is it significant that Mr. Cattanzara reads the *New York Times*?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you think that Mr. Cattanzara is satisfied with his life? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How is Mr. Cattanzara different from other people in the neighborhood?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How does George feel about people in his neighborhood?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What lie does George tell Mr. Cattanzara?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why did people's attitude toward George change?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How does Sophie's attitude toward George change?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What does George do to avoid meeting Mr. Cattanzara in the street?

1. Choose words from the box to complete the following sentences. You may change the form of the word. (There are more words than you need).

confidence, disgrace, accidentally, figure, inward, wilted, tremble

1. George felt so ashamed of himself that he walked away from people with a sense of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. People were still being kind to George so he \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Cattanzara had forgotten their conversation.
3. When his neighbor complimented him on finishing his reading, George was more \_\_\_\_\_.
4. His third meeting with Mr. Cattanzara was not planned, it was \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When George went into the library he was \_\_\_\_\_ with excitement.

2. Match A and B to form phrases from the story:

	A		B	Phrases
1	narrow	a)	ice	_____
2	lemon	b)	apart	_____
3	smile	c)	money	_____
4	crumble	d)	slyly	_____
5	hard -earned	e)	escape	_____

*Understanding the story.*

Answer the questions:

1. Why did George decide to stay away from Mr. Cattanzara?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why doesn't George read any of his soft back books?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why isn't George worried when he sees Mr. Cattanzara coming toward him in the street?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What does Mr. Cattanzara ask George?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What does George answer?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How does this meeting with Mr. Cattanzara affect George?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How does Sophie's attitude toward George change?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What does George discover when he leaves his room and walks in the neighborhood.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How does the story end?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Complete the chart:

Character	What We Know
George	1. He thinks Mr. Cattanzara won't notice him because the change maker is _____. 2. He is embarrassed because Mr. Cattanzara asks him to _____ 3. He stays in his room for _____ 4. He runs to the _____ and counts off a hundred books.
Mr. Cattanzara	1. He gives George a nickel and tells him to buy _____ 2. He tells George not to _____ 3. He starts a new rumor that George has _____
Sophie	1. She is angry at George and tells him to get a _____ 2. She begs George to _____
George's father	He _____ when George won't come out of his room.

*By Bernard Malamud*

### Analysis and Interpretation

The **protagonist** is the main character in the story who needs to overcome something in order to reach his or her goal. *George is the protagonist in the story.*

1. What are George's goals?

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2. What forces must George overcome in order to reach his goals? Consider George's personality, his family and his environment.

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**Symbolism** is the use of concrete image(symbol) to represent an abstract idea.  
*Mr. Cattanzara is a "change maker".*

Explain both the literal and symbolic meaning.

Literal meaning \_\_\_\_\_

Symbolic meaning \_\_\_\_\_

**Characterization** is the way a writer presents characters in a story. This may include the characters' appearance, actions, words, thoughts and the way the other characters relate to them.

Characters	Information we are given	What it tells us about the character
George	_____	_____
Sophie	_____	_____
Mr. Cattanzara	_____	_____

**Comparing and Contrasting** means:

- ❖ Finding similarities between two or more things (comparing).
- ❖ Finding differences between two or more things (contrasting).
- ❖ Drawing conclusions based on these similarities and differences.

Compare and contrast the two main characters in the story. Complete the graphic organizer using the words from the list:

accepting ashamed caring dissatisfied encouraging hard-working immature impulsive intelligent kind lazy lonely proud sensitive wise

George	Both	Mr. Cattanzara
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Predicting** means using the available information to guess what the content or the outcome (ending) of the text will be, either before or while reading it.

Based on what you know about the character of *George*, do you think he will succeed in achieving his goals in life? Explain the reasons for your prediction.

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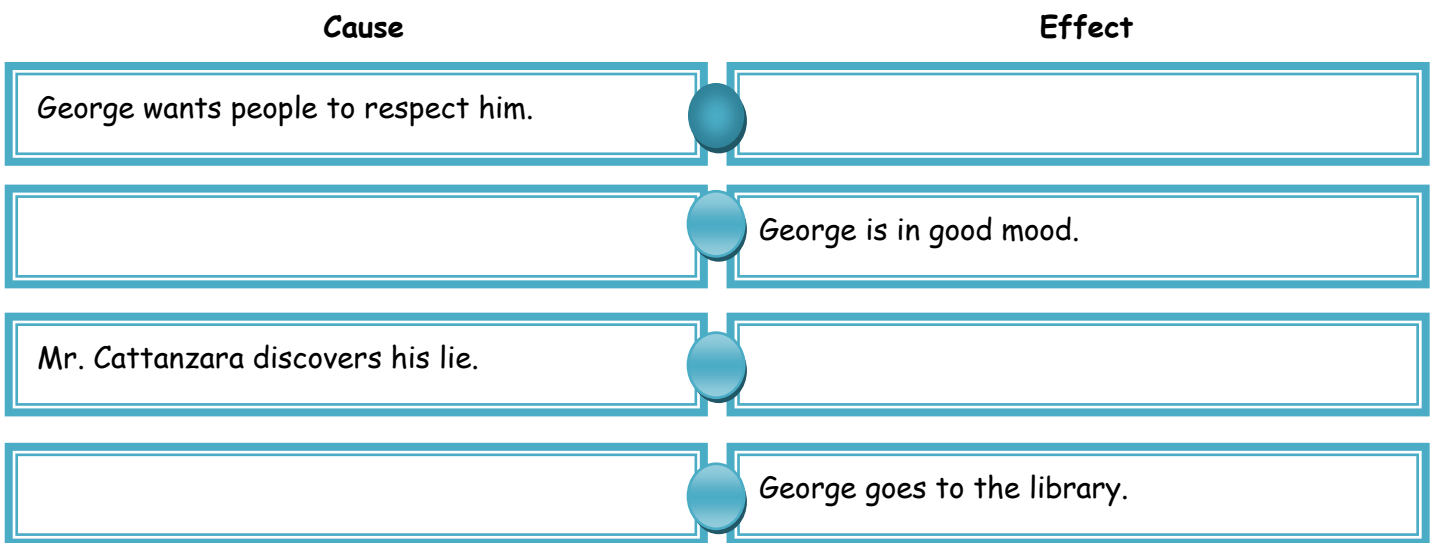
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**Explaining Cause and Effect** means:

- identifying the reasons why things happen (**cause**).
- identifying and describing the result(**effect**) of specific actions and circumstances.
- explaining the connection between the two.

1. Complete the graphic organizer using Explaining Cause and Effect.



2. Explain the following line from the story. Say what has happened to make *George* feel this way. (Use the HOTS of Explaining Cause and Effect)

"George knew he looked passable on outside, but inside he was crumbling apart."

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**Uncovering Motives** means:

- identifying motives (reasons) for the character's behavior.
- supporting this with evidence from the text.



Identify the reasons for the character's behavior using the HOTS of Uncovering Motives.

1. Why did George drop out of school?

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2. Why does George tell Mr. Cattanzara's that he is going to read a hundred books?

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3. Why does George avoid walking past Mr. Cattanzara's house?

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4. What does Mr. Cattanzara mean when he says: "George, don't do what I did"? What motivated him to say this?

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5. When he finally came out after locking himself in his room, George discovered that the neighbors were still friendly. He understood that Mr. Cattanzara had started a new rumor: that George had finished reading all the books. What possible motive could Mr. Cattanzara have had for starting such a rumor? (Consider how it affected George.)

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**Making Connections** means:

- finding connections between different aspects of the text.

Answer the questions about the story. Use HOTS of Making Connections.

1. What is the connection between George's plan to read a hundred books and his dreams for the future?

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2. What is the connection between the setting of the story and George's behavior? Think about his family life and neighborhood?

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## Bridging Text and Context

### Task 1

Read the information below.

Between the years 1880-1914, some four million Italians immigrated to America, mostly from the poor southern part of Italy. Because they came with very little education, many of them made their living as unskilled workers, and because they had families to support both in America and sometimes back home in Italy as well, they often did not have the time to get a better education. It was only their children or grandchildren, the second and third generations, who were able to improve their lives.

1. Which character in the story fits this social profile?

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2. How does this information affect your understanding of his character's behavior and actions in the story?

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### Task 2

Read the background information. How is the information reflected in *A Summer's Reading*?

Malamud's stories and novels, in which reality and fantasy are frequently interlaced, have been compared to parables, myths, and allegories and often illustrate the importance of moral obligation. Although he draws upon his Jewish heritage to address the themes of sin, suffering, and redemption, Malamud emphasizes human contact and compassion over orthodox religious dogma. Malamud's characters, while often awkward and isolated from society, evoke both pity and humor through their attempts at survival and salvation. Sheldon J. Hershinow observed: "Out of the everyday defeats and indignities of ordinary people, Malamud creates beautiful parables that capture the joy as well as the pain of life; he expresses the dignity of the human spirit searching for freedom and moral growth in the face of hardship, injustice, and the existential anguish of life."

parable -משל, heritage -מורש, redemption-גאולה, salvation-הצלה, anguish -צער

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**Task 3**

**Read the background information.**

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century thousands of immigrants arrived in New York City looking for a better life for themselves and for their children. These people wanted to achieve the American Dream, which was that through hard work and dedication everybody has an opportunity to live a better and more successful life. Bernard Malamud often wrote about this theme in his books.



A Johnstown tenement on laundry day.

**How is the information above reflected in the story?**

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