

The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber
by Ernest Hemingway
Presented by the Educational Theater of New York

Lesson plan

Before you go:

A: About Ernest Hemingway

1. Pronunciation: How many syllables are there in “Ernest Hemingway?” Which is the strongest? Which is the second strongest?

2. Short bio

- Read aloud and/or hand out.
- Comprehension questions
- Discussion questions

B: About the play: The Short Happy life Francis Macomber

Synopsis:

A married couple goes on vacation in Nairobi, Africa in search of adventure. They hire a hunter to guide them in their quest for lions and buffalo. During the adventure, their inner beings are revealed.

Characters:

Robert Wilson, safari guide and hunter
Francis Macomber: an American diplomat
Margaret (Margo) Macomber: his wife, a beautiful socialite
Gunbearer

Vocabulary

Pre-teach as necessary

Vocabulary from the story:

Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Quote from Shakespeare:
safari tent Africa rifle buffalo lion a red face memsahib diplomat coward bastard “a drink” accident testimony	illegal sporting brave damned	to hunt to shoot to kill, blow things’ heads off, murder to bolt to talk rot to pull yourself together to behave yourself to poison someone	A man can die but once.

Geography: See map attached

Where is Nairobi?

After you go:

Vocabulary practice:

A. Write these words in the blanks by their definitions. Be careful of the spelling.

testimony	“a drink”	safari	illegal
accident	a red face	coward	lion

- 1 _____ a hunt for wild animals in Africa
- 2 _____ a witness gives this in court
- 3 _____ a alcoholic beverage
- 4 _____ a person with no courage
- 5 _____ a VERY large cat
- 6 _____ a sign that you are embarrassed
- 7 _____ something that you didn’t want to happen
- 8 _____ against the law

B. What do you think?

Hemingway was famous for his simple, direct language. He was also a “man’s man” (macho). He often used strong words and words that were not very nice. At the time he wrote, some of his language was shocking.

Look back at your vocabulary words. In your opinion, which words are strong? Which words are not nice or not polite?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Discussion question: Did Margo murder her husband or was it an accident?

Computer class ideas:

Lower level:

Go to Google Images and look for pictures of Ernest Hemingway types of buffalo.

Intermediate:

Plan a photo safari in Africa, by googling “africa safari”

Advanced:

Read the character summaries at this site. Do you agree?

<http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/LitNote/Hemingway-s-Short-Stories.id-10,pageNum-12.html>

All including teachers: Test your knowledge of African countries at maps.com

<http://www.maps.com/FunFacts.aspx?nav=FF#>

About the Writer

Ernest Hemingway was one of the great American writers of the 20th century (the 1900s). He was famous for his simple, direct writing style. Hemingway was born in a suburb of Chicago in 1899. His father was a country doctor and his mother was a very religious woman who gave singing lessons. Hemingway lived and wrote in many places, including Paris, Spain, Cuba, and the Florida Keys. He knew the horrors of war. He drove an ambulance for the American Red Cross in World War I, and he was a newspaper reporter in the Spanish Civil War. Hemingway was a good athlete and loved to hunt and fish. He was “a man’s man” and wrote about courageous people who lived dangerous lives. His relationships with women were often troubled and he was married four times. In 1954 he moved to Idaho. At this time in his life, he suffered from health problems, depression, and alcohol abuse. Ernest Hemingway committed suicide in 1961.



Comprehension questions:

- Hemingway was born in
 - The United States
 - France
 - Spain
- The 20th Century is another way to say
 - the years 1800-1099
 - the years 1900-1999
 - the years 2000-2099
- Put a check mark in front of adjectives that you think describe Ernest Hemingway.

<input type="checkbox"/> nice	<input type="checkbox"/> brave	<input type="checkbox"/> handsome
<input type="checkbox"/> happy	<input type="checkbox"/> strong	<input type="checkbox"/> weak
<input type="checkbox"/> quiet	<input type="checkbox"/> cowardly	<input type="checkbox"/> a good father

Discussion questions

- Was Hemingway alive during your lifetime?
- Have you lived in any of the places where Hemingway lived?
- Why do you think that Hemingway was never a soldier?
- Hemingway had three sons. Do you think he was a good father?

