

Exercise 2.3

The emotional shape of stories



Foundation

Yes

Medium



Read through the narrative below.

A Day in the Life of Emile

Emile, 74 years old. He lives alone. Divorced, he has three estranged children (despite him). Emile enumerates his daily activities, occasionally discussing and relating them to some very important aspects of his life, or evaluating the suitability or not of the activity, the difficulties involved, etc.

“And so, I get up and I go to the pool, maybe before I have breakfast, I get dressed, I make my bed, I clean around here some stuff, (1) I do all these things and then I go to the pool and in the pool I invest at least two or more hours, since I leave home until I come back I spend two or more hours

Attention is drawn to the use of the term ‘invest’ to talk about the time dedicated to sports, which prioritizes intentionality and profit (physical, in this case related to the activity). The pool is complemented with another kind of physical activity, which introduces the issue of mobility difficulties associated with osteoarthritis:

Because I go a little bit to the gym, and I don’t really know if I should or shouldn’t do it because my knee hurts, (2) I have osteoarthritis and I don’t know if it’s any good or I hurt myself, because the truth is that my knee gets worse and worse, but then I do my bit of swimming and so the morning’s gone like the wind (3) Then I go shopping, (4) I get my lunch ready, if I haven’t already prepared it and that’s it (5)

During the afternoon as I set the kitchen, you clean and well I also always set the washing machine, always, all the chores I do them myself, I set the washing machine, I wash, I iron, I wipe the floor and so on (6), but then it turns out that there’s more work than the one you can do, meaning that when you become older you’re not as effective and so often I think, this little task is a lot, it comes a day when at a certain age whatever little thing you have to do feels like a lot, why? cos you do it slowly, you’re not as efficient as you were, you feel clumsy because you ask yourself, oh come on! I used to do that easily and it took me much less time, much less, because it’s not the same being twenty years younger or twenty years older.

I must, can’t you see I not have no one, I do have no one, I live alone, I live alone because of life and its circumstances, I divorced... (I have) loads of acquaintances ... friends, friends, what you really can call friends, nowadays, sometimes you think they are your friends and then they stab you in the back, that’s what’ll happen... so yes, I know a lot of people, I go to the swimming-pool and there I talk to everybody and... but then, once you’re in need at home, nowadays it’s normal to say “you deal with it!”, that’s what’s normal nowadays ...

And that’s the way life is, and it’s already been a while so the moment comes when you get used to it, right? you just accept it, but anyway, it’s not a fulfilling life and it’s not a way to live, in a certain way is not very pleasant,

Loneliness is very bad ... Because, after all, I spend a lot of time alone, but well, what are you going to do? I just ask for the ability to, being able to take care of myself, going to places and being able to move, cos I’m telling you, my knee really really hurts, it hurts a lot.

2.3.1

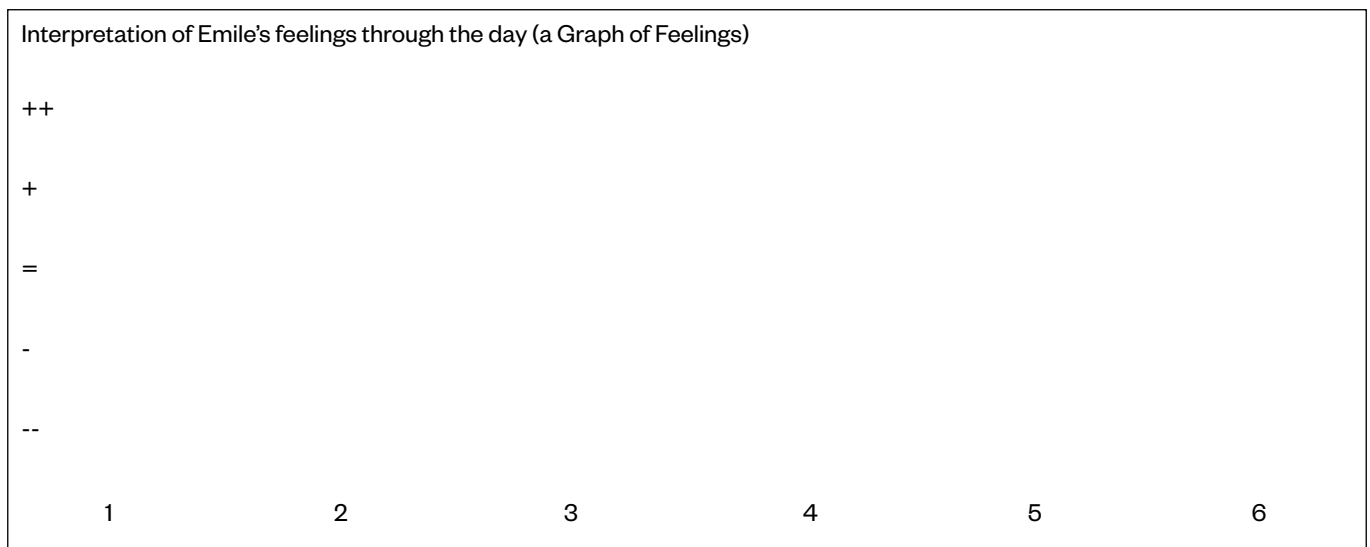
In the extract there are six numbered, underlined sections. In the box below (graph of feelings):

- plot your interpretation of Emile's feelings for those six episodes in his normal day (along the bottom of the graph) - this can be from very positive (++) to very negative (--)

- in the small boxes underneath, given an indication of how and why you have come to this evaluation

- compare your interpretation with a partner or in a small group

- from this write a short summary in the final box of your interpretation of how Emile feels about life



Indicate reasons for your evaluation at each point in the boxes below

1 2 3 4 5 6

Final interpretation of how you think Emile might feel about life:

My personal timeline

High points

Timescale

Low points
