

**Educational Material for That- Theatre, 2019:**

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*”ART”, by Yasmina Reza, Spring, 2018*

**Understanding and reading “ART” in the classroom:**

Step 1: The title of the play you are going to read is called “ART”. From the title what do you predict the play deals with?

Step 2: Read the prelude of the play you are going to read in class called “ART” and while reading translate the lines into Danish: *“My friend Serge has brought a painting. It’s a canvas about five feet by four: white. The background is white and if you screw up your eyes, you can make out some fine white diagonal lines. Serge is one of my oldest friends. He’s done very well for himself, he’s a dermatologist and he’s really into art. On Monday, I went to see the painting. Serge had actually got hold of it on Saturday, but he’d been lusting after it for several months. This white painting with white lines”.*

Step 3: In Pairs: Compare and contrast your translation.

Step 4: From the above lines – in what way has your first prediction of what the play is about changed?

Step 5: Read the very last lines of the play “ART”, and underline all the adjectives that you can find. Next, change the verbs in the present tense into the past tense.

*Under the white clouds, snow is falling*

*You can’t see the white clouds or the snow*

*Or the cold or the white glow of the earth.*

*A solitary man glides down the skis.*

*The snow is falling.*

*It falls under the man disappears back into the landscape.*

*My friend, Serge, who's one of my oldest friends,*

*Has brought a painting*

*It is a canvas about five feet by four.*

*It represents a man who moves across a space then disappears.*

Step 6: Comment on the use of the ing- form versus the use of the present tense in the final lines said by Marc.

### **The function of the title: "ART"**

Step 1: Why is the play called "ART"? Do you think there is any relation between the title and the play?

Step 2: Comment on the following dialogue between the three characters in the play

*Serge: What do you give a fuck about?*

*Marc: I give a fuck about you buying that painting. I give a fuck about you spending two hundred grand on that piece of shit*

*Yvan: Don't you start again, Marc!*

Step 3: In Pairs: Discuss how well the dialogue between the three characters works. Next, try to rewrite the dialogue by adding a few lines of your own. Try also and change for instance Marc's lines in the dialogue, so what he says is said in a more positive and formal way.

Step 4: In Pairs: Discuss possible pros and cons about the title of the play.

Step 5: Come up with possible other titles to the play.

### **Reading and understanding reviews of the Play “ART” by Yasmina Reza**

Step 1: Read the following two reviews of the play “ART” written by Yasmina Reza.

*“Yasmina Reza’s “Art” has been widely acclaimed ever since it opened in Paris in 1994: the different productions which have followed the French original in more than 40 countries have enjoyed equal success. This success, both among audiences and critics, may be attributed to the play’s universal themes, to the tone and richness of its dialogue and to the good acting most productions have displayed. But the fact that the play has been appreciated in so many different countries and languages inevitably implies that translation is also at the centre of its success”.*

*“Since its Paris debut in 1995, ‘Art’ has been nothing less than a phenomenon: it is estimated that the play has earned more than \$300 million worldwide, and it has won numerous awards, including the Moliere Awards for Best Author, Best Play, and Best Production; the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy in 1997; and the Tony Award for Best Play in 1998. It is with this play that Reza was launched to international stardom”.*

Step 2: Look up the underlined word in the above reviews.

Step 3: Write down one important quote from the reviews and comment on it.

Step 4: In Pairs: Compare and contrast your quote.

### **Background knowledge: Yasmina Reza’s life**

Step 1: Search google and write a short biography of Yasmina Reza’s life and works around 100-150 words. Take your point of departure in the following lines, and write in the past tense “*Yasmina Reza was born in Paris on May 1, 1959, to Jewish parents. Her mother was the daughter of a Hungarian violinist from Budapest, and her father hailed from a family of Sephardic Jews from Russia. He was born in 1918, in the middle of the Russian Revolution, when the family (whose original name had been Gedaliah) fled first to Persia, where they changed their surname to Reza and pretended to have become Muslims when, in fact, they observed Judaism at home..... now you continue on your own”.*

Step 2: Rewrite the text using the present tense.

Step 3: In the edited text change your point of view from the third person “she” to the first person “I”.

Step 4: Read each other's texts and discuss in pairs what happens to the texts when you change from one point of view to another.

Step 5: Do the changes affect your writing experience? Why/why not?

**Statements by the author of the play "ART" – read and explain in your own words.**

Step 1: Read the following statements said by Yasmina Reza:

Statement 1: *"Yasmina Reza insists she doesn't like to make her characters suffer. But suffer they do in her deliciously droll dissections of middle-class mores such as "Art" and "God of Carnage," which have been worldwide hits for France's most famous playwright.*

Statement 2: *"I don't have any expensive furniture, or jewels, or a country house either. The only things I treasure are emotional .. a book of drawings by my daughter .. my spirit is my only possession".*

Statement 3: *"Writing helps me survive .. I write from my intuition, my sense of freedom, my feeling for words and rhythm. Sometimes from my heart, but not very much".*

Statement 4: *"I don't know what my profession is. I loved the theatre, and I loved words, so it was logical to write for theatre".*

Statement 5: *"Most writers don't know that actors are never better than in the pauses or in the subtext. They give actors too many words .. In a play, words are parentheses to the silences. They're useful for the actors, but they aren't the whole story".*

Step 2: Individually: Rewrite the three statements – i.e comment on (explain in your own words) the statements.

Step 3: Trade texts with one of your classmates or in groups of four. Compare and discuss the differences between your explanations.

Step 4: Edit (rewrite) your own explanations on the basis of the feed-back you get from your classmates.

### **Create a student's note-book**

Step 1: While reading Yasmina Reza's "ART" a good idea is to keep a student's notebook. Write in your book about anything that comes to your mind while reading the play. Including your own vocabulary (glossary).

Step 2: While writing in your personal language note-book do not bother about grammar - being accurate, but just write down everything that comes to your mind while reading.

Step 3: But before you start reading and writing, discuss in pairs the reason for keeping a writer's notebook while reading the play "ART".

Step 4: In Pairs: Compare and contrast your notebooks after having read the play. Share notes with each other, and discuss the different focus that you may have had while reading the play.

### **A student's writing policy-document.**

Step 1: Sign a student writing policy- document with your teacher before joining the "Writer's Drama Workshop" on Yasmina Reza's "ART".

Step 2: Make a written agreement with your teacher about which of the following points to include in your personal writing policy-document.

Step 3: In Pairs: Discuss the below-mentioned possible points to include in your writing policy-document with your teacher:

- *Not all of my writing about the play "ART" will be handed in to my teacher for marking, sometimes I will write in class, and my teacher will be my coach, and help me reading my written work as I go along.*
- *While writing, my teacher may start a discussion with me, asking questions, explaining things, and suggesting ways in which to improve the content and organization of my work.*
- *Sometimes I will be asked to work with other students, looking at each other's plans or first drafts.*
- *It is a help for me when my teacher gives me some guide lines before I begin my own writing (for instance shows me a case example)*
- *When my teacher marks a piece of work for me, I do not expect every mistake to be corrected.*
- *Sometimes my teacher will underline mistakes and ask me to try and correct them myself.*
- *Sometimes my teacher will correct my papers with a special focus to grammar and spelling .*
- Step 4: In Pairs: Discuss the pros and cons of having a writing-policy document with your teacher.
- Step 5: Anything else you would like to include in your personal writing policy document with your teacher?

### **Guide lines for written work in class**

Step 1: Search google and find out what is meant by “*formative evaluation*” and “*summative evaluation*”. In Pairs: Try and explain to each other the difference.

Step 2: Discuss in pairs, which of the following guiding principles for written formative comments could be good to agree on in class. Write down and account for your answer.

Guide lines for written formative comments:

- *It is important that my teacher always mention improvements, and tells me which aspects are good and why, because? ....*
- *It is important that my teacher notes any particular problems and suggests ways of improving my written work, because? ....*
- *It is important that my teacher summarizes my strengths and weaknesses and gives me a sense of development in my written work, because? ....*
- *It is important that I also get the chance to talk to my teacher (oral feed-back from time to time), because? ....*
- *Continue yourself with the guidelines ..*

Step 3: Agree on handing in an assignment to your teacher about “ART” (for instance write a summary), using at least one of the guidelines for written formative comments.

### **Make your own dictionary while reading “ART”.**

Step 1: Before you start, you may ask yourself. Which words do I want to write down in my vocabulary notebook:

- *Words that I know but with difficult spelling?*
- *New words I find while reading “ART”?*
- *Or?*

Step 2: Before you start you may also ask yourself how to write down (arrange) the words in your notebook:

- *I will arrange my words alphabetically?*
- *I will arrange my words under topic headings?*
- *I will arrange my words as I read them?*
- *I will arrange my words as I learn them?*

- *No special order?*
- *I do not need a vocabulary note-book, because....?*

Step 3: In Pairs: Compare and discuss the way you want to arrange the words.

### **Improving your awareness about writing while reading, “ART”.**

Step 1: Work in pairs and try to write down writing instructions (evaluation charts) for the following different writing activities.

Step 2: Search google and in pairs try to work out writing instructions for:

- *“How to write an essay”*
- *“How to write a letter to the editor”*
- *“How to write a speech”*
- *“How to write an article”*
- *“How to write a paragraph”*
- *“How to write a characterization”*
- *Feel free to add other genres!*

Step 3: Next, compare and discuss in class what points to include in the different evaluation charts. Try to reach an agreement.

Step 5: Next, start writing a paragraph about one of the characters in the play. Remember to use the PEE structure in your paragraph. (give point – evidence- explanation).

### **Vivid writing - “painting” with words.**

Step 1: In Pairs: Discuss and write about (5 -7 lines in prose) how a painting or photo may help you to start writing a story – or any other writing process.

Step 2: Next, search google and try to find a painting or photo that may be titled “*White on White*”, by Kazimir Malevich, 1918.

Step 3: Search google – find out facts about the painter and the painting.

Step 4: Do an individual quick writing about the painting, “*White on White*” around 1½ min.

Step 5: Look carefully at the painting, and now start writing a story about the painting. Your focus of concern in the story is all up to you.

Step 6: In Pairs: Read each other's texts (peer-evaluation) - or read them aloud to each other.

Step 7: Finally, comment on the strengths and weaknesses in each other's stories.

Step 8: Rewrite your story on the basis of the peer- evaluation.

### **“ART” in a new genre.**

Step 1: In Pairs: Discuss how rewriting a text in a new genre may improve your awareness about writing.

Step 2: Next, take your point of departure in Reza's play with title “ART”. From what happens in the play (the plot) - write a short poem about “ART”.

Step 3: Include the following words in your poem: *art – friendship – purchase – a piece of shit.*

Step 3: Now, change your poem into a new genre (for instance an article, a short story ..).

Step 4: Finally, discuss in pairs the effect of the change from one genre to another.

### **Yasmina Reza's inspiration for the play “ART”**

Step 1: In Pairs: Search google and find out how Reza got her inspiration for the play “ART”.

Step2: In Pairs: Search google. How many works have Reza written – what does Reza's play “God of Carnage”, 2009, deal with.

Step 4: Compare and contrast the content of “God of Carnage” with “ART”. Take your point of return in the following article: <https://www.thoughtco.com/god-of-carnage-overview-2713426>. Search google for further help.

Step 5: Search google and find out how many novels have Reza written, and what do these novels deal with.

### **A question of characters and sympathy of the readers in “ART”?!**

Step 1: In Pairs: Discuss which of the three characters do you sympathize the most with in “ART” and why? Is it Serge, Marc or is it Yvan? Explain and substantiate your choice as you read along.

Step 2: Does this sympathy that you share with one of the characters to begin with change as the play, “ART”, progresses? Why? Why not? Substantiate your point of view by referring to the script. Take your point of departure in the following dialogue.

*Marc: It's true I can't imagine you genuinely loving that painting*

*Yvan: But why?*

*Marc: Because I love Serge, and I cannot love the Serge who's capable of buying that painting*

*Serge: Why do you say buying, why don't you say loving?*

*Marc: Because I can't say loving I can't believe loving*

*Serge: So why would I buy it if I didn't love it?*

*Marc: That's the nub of the question*

*Yvan: You're complete freaks both of you...*

Step 3: In Pairs: Discuss what causes this change (if any) of sympathy, and try to give a specific reference to where in the play the possible change of sympathy may take place.

Step 4: Is there any of the characters that you sympathise with throughout the whole play. If so, why is this the case? Substantiate your point of view.

### **The effects of the changing power-relationships on the individual characters in “ART”?!**

Step 1: Reza uses “a painting” as a means to explore the changing tensions in the friendship of three men. Explain how Yvan in the play, in his effort try to placate both sides, ends up being himself the target of his two-friends' criticism.

Step 2: In Pairs: Discuss and write down key-words about the psychological costs of fighting with your best friend(s) about something so simple as for instance a painting.

Step 3: In Pairs: Discuss does the play really question what real “ART” is – or does the play more question the nature of what real friendship is?

### **“ART” – a timeless play?**

Step 1: In Pairs: Discuss. How can “ART” be labeled a play for all times? Substantiate your answer by referring to what happens in the play.

Step 2: In Pairs: Comment on and discuss the following statement said by a person, who has seen the play “ART” being performed on stage many times, since its first performance in 1996, “*You can study a fine painting dozens of times and still notice something new in the nuances, brush strokes and composition with each viewing ..... no matter how many times I watch Yasmina Reza’s comedy master-piece, Art, I find something revelatory in every performance*”.

Step 3: Creative writing. Imagine that you have just come home from the theatre. Write one page in your diary about your first impression - feelings of having watched the play for the first time on stage.

Step 4: Compare and contrast your diary with one of your classmates.

### **Reading “ART” – the “dramatic model/structure”**

Step 1: The play “ART” is untraditional, in the way that it is not divided into acts and scenes – instead it has sections. In Pairs: Study the content of each section, and give each content a headline.

Step 2: Next, use the “dramatic model/structure”, and trace the plot of “ART” through the six different stages. Take your point of departure in the following lines: “*The rising action of the play raises an immediate question. Why is Marc's reaction to the painting by Antrios so intense, so violent? Why would a painting endanger a friendship? Why do Marc and Serge seem to be willing to split apart after fifteen years over a matter of taste? Can't they just agree to disagree and leave it at that?*”

- 1. *The exposition: Important background information to the audience, such as for instance setting, characters’ background stories etc.*
- 2. *The conflict: The problem of obstacles a literary character must overcome. Often a struggle between opposing forces.*
- 3. *The rising action: The events leading from the conflict to the climax of the story*
- 4. *The climax: Turning point in the action of a play*
- 5. *The falling action: The events following the climax of a story before the resolution*
- 6. *The resolution (denouement): The action of solving a problem, dispute, or controversial matter*

### **The “funny” and the more serious moments in the play**

Step 1: Find the places in the play that you found “funny”. In Pairs: Discuss what or who made you laugh?

Step 2: Find the places in the play “ART” that you found to be the more serious moments. In Pairs: Discuss what made these scenes do to you as a reader of the play.

Step 3: Comment on the following dialogue between Serge and Marc – how would you characterize the tone of voice in this dialogue and why?: “

*Serge: Let’s stop talking about the painting, shall we once and for all I’ve no interest in discussing it further.*

*Marc: Why are you so touchy?*

*Serge: I’m not touchy, Marc. You’ve told us what you think. Fine. The subject is closed.*

*Marc: You’re getting upset.*

*Serge: I’m not getting upset. I’m exhausted.*

*Marc: See, if you’re touchy about it, it means you are too caught up in other people’s opinions.*

*Serge: I’m exhausted Marc. This is completely pointless... To tell you the truth, I’m really on the brink of getting bored with the both of you..*

Step 4: In Pairs: Discuss – Is Marc right when he says that Serge is, “... too caught up in other people’s opinions”.

Step 5: Act-out the following dialogue between Yvan and Marc – next, comment on the dialogue - how would you characterize the tone of voice in this dialogue and why? What are they really talking about in this dialogue?

*Marc: How could you say, in front of me, that you find these colors touching?*

*Yvan: Because it’s the truth.*

*Marc: The truth? You find these colors touching?*

*Yvan: Yes, I find these colors touching.*

*Marc: You find these colors touching, Yvan ?!*

*Serge: He finds these colors touching! He’s perfectly entitled to!*

*Marc: No, he’s not entitled to.*

*Serge: What do you mean, he's not entitled to?*

*Marc: He's not entitled to.*

*Yvan: I'm not entitled to?*

*Marc: No.*

*Serge: Why is he not entitled to? I don't think you're very well. Maybe you should go and see somebody.*

*Marc: He's not entitled to say he finds these colors touching, because he doesn't*

*Yvan: I don't find these colors touching?*

*Marc: There are no colors. You can't see them. And you don't find them touching.*

*Yvan: Speak for yourself!*

*Marc: This is really demeaning, Yvan!*

*Serge: Who do you think you are, Marc? Who are you to legislate? You don't like anything, you despise everyone. You take pride in not being a man of your time..... you take pride in your desire to shut yourself off from humanity. And you'll never manage to. It's like you're in quicksand, the more you struggle to get out of it, the deeper you sink. Now apologize to Ivan..*

### **“ART” - turning a dialog from one tone of voice into another**

Step 1: Read aloud the dialogue between the three characters – how would you characterize the tone of voice in the dialogue?

*Marc: How could you say that you find these colors touching?*

*Yvan: Yes, I find these colors touching.*

*Marc: You find these colors touching Yvan!!*

*Serge: He finds these colors touching! He is perfectly entitled to !*

*Marc: No, he is not entitled to.*

*Serge: What do you mean he's not entitled to?*

*Yvan: I'm not entitled to.*

*Marc: No.*

*Serge: Why is he not entitled to? I don't think you are very well. Maybe you should go and see somebody.*

Step 2: Turn the lines of the above dialogue into a more humorous tone.

Step 3: Act- out the dialogue in class. Remember to give feed-back after your acting-out -the performance. Discuss the effect of changing the tone.

### **Development of plot and characters in “ART”**

Step 1: Comment on the plot of the play. Anything that foreshadows the action of the play “ART”?

Step 2: Comment on the ending of the play. How do you interpret the last scene? Did the ending come as a big surprise to you. Why?/why not?

Step 3: In Pairs: Write down a characterization of Marc, Serge and Yvan. Remember to state references to the text.

Step 4: Comment on the development of the relationship between the three characters in the play. Where and when does a change (a turning-point) take place in the relationship between the three of them? Give page reference, and comment on why you think this may be the turning point.

Step 5: How is the relationship between the two characters to begin with? And at the end of the play? What has happened in the middle of the play?

Step 6: Try and write down ½ page about the characters and what happen to them as the story unfolds itself. Take your turning point of departure in the lines where Marc tries to apologize for his way of talking to Serge, and judging his work of art:

*Marc: You know, I've been thinking. I've been thinking and I've changed my mind. The other day, driving across town, I was thinking about you and I said to myself: isn't there, deep down, something really poetic about what Serge has done? Isn't surrendering to this incoherent urge to buy in fact an authentically poetic impulse?*

*Serge: You're very conciliatory today. Unrecognizable. What's this bland, submissive tone of voice? It doesn't suit you at all, by the way.*

*Marc: No, no, I'm not trying to explain, I'm apologizing.*

*Serge: Apologizing? What for?*

*Marc: I'm too thin-skinned, I'm too high-strung, I over-react.. You could say, I lack judgment..*

Step 7: Yvan seems to have been discussing his relationship to Marc and Serge with his psychologist. Take your point of departure in the following lines, and from the dialogue characterize the tone and the two friends' change in behavior towards Yvan.

*Marc: You took notes?*

*Yvan: I wrote it down because it was complicated ... Should I read it to you?*

*Serge. Go on.*

*Yvan: ... If I'm who I am because I'm who I am and you're who you are because you're who you are, then I'm who I am and you're who you are. If, on the other hand, I'm who I am because you're who you are and if you're who you are because I'm who I am, then I'm not who I am and you're not who you are ..(short SILENCE)*

*Marc: How much do you pay this man?*

*Yvan: Four hundred francs a session, twice a week*

*Marc: great. You're very lucky, to be getting the benefit of this man's experience.*

*Serge: Absolutely .. We'd really appreciate it if you'd make a copy for us.*

*Marc: Yes, it's bound to come in handy.*

*Yvan: You are wrong. It's very profound.*

### **Write an article and/or a review about "ART"**

Step 1: You are a literary journalist. Your job is to write a review of "ART" telling your readers why they should/ should not come in and see the play being performed on stage.

Step 2: Begin your review with the following line: *"Reza's "ART" is a very interesting play to read. But when it comes to understand the nature of art..."* . Useful vocabulary in the writing process of your review: *To begin with .... secondly ... another reason is .... the main thing is .... the most important aspect the play deals with ... oddly/surprisingly/strangely enough ... as a rule ... on the whole ... the turning point in the play is ... in my opinion ... from my point of view ... well, personally ... what I am more concerned with .. what I find particularly the play conveys ... in the opening scenes .... I will/will not recommend this play to ....*

Step 3: Write an article about the different characters/ actors in "ART". Or write an article to a magazine about the issue of "ART". Take your starting point in "ART" where the characters seem to discuss art - or what is it that they really discuss? Before you start writing your article you need to find a focus point of departure for your article (a matter of concern/an angle). Moreover, it might

be a good idea to search the internet and find reliable sources and arguments to back up your argumentation.

Step 4: In your article, you must include an interview with Marc, Serge or Yvan. Prepare your interview and write down minimum five questions that you would like to ask them.

Step 5: Your final product (article) is to be printed in a literary magazine, and your target group is readers who are interested in literature.

### **Diary writing**

Step 1: Imagine you are Yvan in “ART”. Write a page in his diary. Your focus of concern has been giving: “*My love for Catherine*”. Before you start do a brainstorming about what to include and not to include.

Step 2: Imagine you are Serge in “ART”. Write a page in his diary. Your focus of concern has been giving, “*My passion for art*”. Before you start do a brainstorming.

Step 3: Imagine you are Marc in “ART”. Write a page in his diary. Your focus of concern has been giving: “*My friendship with Serge and Yvan*”. Before you start do a brainstorming.

Step 4: In Pairs: Compare and contrast (peer feedback) your diary writing focus on content and form.

### **Grammar – incorrect sentences**

Step 1: Correct the following incorrect sentences, and explain to each other the grammatical issue.

- a- *“ART” is a play who deals with the issue of “ART”*
- b- *If you are teacher bring along your students, and come in and watch the play “ART” being performed at Krudttønden.*
- c- *We will never know how the life of the three friends will be in the future*
- d- *There’s a lot more to “ART” than it’s comedy, it says a lot about friendship*
- e- *The differences in personality and circumstances of Reza’s characters colour there behavior and outlook.*
- f- *When do we take an artist serious and why?*
- g- *Searle rejects happiness as a criterion for judging the art.*
- h- *He tells not to worry so much, and dismisses any simple terminology I try to apply to art.*
- i- *He goes to empty the basin of water then put away all the cleaning products.*
- j- *A solitary man glides downhill at his skis.*
- k- *My friend Serge, whose one of my oldest friends, has brought a very expensive painting.*

### **Essay writing about “ART” .**

Step 1: Write a fiction essay about “ART”. In your essay you must include:

- *A characterization of the three characters in the play and the development of their relationship*
- *The title of the play*
- *Theme(s)*
- *Dramatic composition*

Step 2: Before you hand in your essay. Make sure you have read through your essay and used your writing evaluation chart.

Step 3: Agree with your teacher what to focus on when marking and commenting on your essay.

### **A brief summary about the play “ART”**

Step 1: Write a summary of the play “ART”. Use as many possible words from the following list of words: *Three male characters .. power-relationship ... a question of art ..furious.. the peace-maker in the play .. sharp dialogue ...character-driven play.. add more words yourself.*

Step 2: In Pairs. Present your summary to each other

Step 3: Evaluate each other’s work (use your evaluation chart – “How to write a summary”)

Step 4: Hand in your summary to your teacher and agree upon what to correct in your essay.

### **Turn the play “ART” into the story of a film.**

Step 1: Do a brainstorming in class and ask the students to come up with as many other titles to Reza’s play “ART” as possible. Write them down on the blackboard

Step 2: Make the students choose two titles from the board and ask them to write down the story/storyboard of the film behind two of the titles

Step 3: In Pairs. Share your stories with a partner.

Step 4: Finally, read one of the stories aloud in class.

### **Letter writing about “ART”**

Step 1: In class. Talk about how to write a letter (content, form, lay-out etc.)

Step 2: Write a letter opening on the board: *Dear Serge .. I am writing to you, because I am sure that you will understand. I have just seen the latest purchase of yours. And frankly dear I must tell you, I would characterize it as a piece of shit and a complete waste of money. There is nothing artistic with the picture, and I see no need why we ..... All best, Marc.*

Step 3: In class. Open a discussion about the content and form of the letter from Marc to Serge. For instance: What do you think the reply will be from Serge to Marc? Write down suggestions from the students on the board.

Step 4: Individually. Ask each student to finish writing the whole letter from Serge to Marc. To be read aloud in class.

Step 5: In Pairs: Start writing another letter on your own from one of the other characters in the play “ART”. Use your imagination, and think about your focus, the receiver, the tone, the situation, the language, etc.

Step 6: Hand in your letter to your teacher.

### **The minor and major themes of the play “ART”**

Step 1: In Pairs: Talk and write about the themes of “ART”. Write down your immediate response to the nature of the play, take your point of departure in the following statement: *“What motivates me most is writing about people who are well brought up and yet, underneath that veneer, they break down. Their nerves break down. It's when you hold yourself well until you just can't any more, until your instinct takes over. It's physiological.”*

Step 2: What themes (minor and major) do you think the play deals with? Make a list of the themes.

Step 2: Next, argue for your choice and talk about the themes the play deal with in class.

### **Turning story labels into stories**

Step 1: Write down three main events of the play “ART” on a label (a poster) – to put on the blackboard in class.

Step 2: Divide your class into groups of three or four. Give each group the five story labels to work with.

Step 3: The task of each group is now to write down the labels in a sequence that is cohesive and tells a good story. The first group to do so is the winner.

Step 4: Ask the winners to tell the story according to the order of events they have chosen, using their own words.

Step 5: Finally, ask the class to judge (class evaluation) whether they think the story is cohesive and coherent? Whether they think it is a good story that makes sense – why?/why not?

### **SMS – about the play “ART”**

Step 1: Write a text-message (SMS) in English about the play “ART” (two lines) which you send on your mobile phone to another person in class. He/she reads the message and replies and so on ..

Step 2: In class: Discuss the rules you used or invented when you created your text-messages.

Step 3: Compare the language of the text-message to the language of everyday speech. Any differences? Any similarities?

Step 4: Turn the language of one of the text-messages that you received into written language (formal language).

Step 5: Compare and contrast with the language of the text-message. In Pairs: Discuss what might be the advantage/disadvantage of a text-message.

### **Use your imagination – and write on**

Step 1: Individually: What will happen to Yvan after he has married Catherine, how will his life turn out to be? Write a continuation of the play ... or write about the connection between taste and friendship...while writing do not think of grammar or punctuation.

Step 2: Hand in your story to your teacher. Tell her/him to evaluate your first draft. Decide on what kind of feed-back you would like? Consult your writing policy agreement.

Step 3: Rewrite and edit your text on the basis of the feedback from your teacher.

Step 4: Discuss the ending of the play – did you see it coming before it came, so to speak – or did it come as a big surprise to you – or were you disappointed by the ending of the play. Why/why not?

Step 5: Rewrite the ending of the play in your own words.

### **A letter to the editor**

Step 1: Write a letter to the editor from Yvan. Yvan's main focus of concern is: How to help Serge and Marc to become friends again. Take your point of departure in the following lines:” *Dear editor ... I am writing to you because my two best friends for fifteen years do nothing but insult each other. My friend Marc is outraged, because our common friend Serge has brought this very expensive painting. Marc believes that Serge ought to have a few more standards when it comes to determine what good art is. I am trying to walk the line between the two of them, but unfortunately our friendship is tested, and the fact is I do not know how to save this long-standing friendship. Yours faithfully, Yvan.*

Step 2: Write an answer from the letter of the editor to Yvan, where you give him some advice about how to cope with the fact that he feels caught in the middle between his two best friends. While writing think about the content and form.

Step 3: In Paris: Read aloud your letters to each other.

### **Informal language versus formal language - language and style in “ART”**

Step 1: Comment on the significance of the use of informal language in “ART”. Find and write down as many examples from the text as possible and comment on them. Make a list of informal words in “ART” take your point of departure in the following : *this shit - I’m just some jerk - letting yourself be fucked over by her - he’s a little ass-kisser – who gives a fuck-he’s making every effort to piss it away- that asshole- what the bastard said- and now he is making every effort to piss it away- .. now, you continue yourself the list.*

Step 2: In Pairs. Discuss: How do the use of informal words affect you as a reader of the play. Does it affect you in a positive or negative way – why/why not?

Step 3: In Pairs. Discuss – how would you characterize Reza’s way of writing in general (syntax, diction, choice of words). Would you call it a minimalistic way of writing, why/why not?

Step 4: It has been said about Reza that her writing is often very *sharp* and *character-driven*, what is meant by that?

Step 5: In Pairs. Discuss: What do the silences and pauses add to the dialogue in “ART”? Take your point of departure in what Reza has said about that issue, “ *Most don’t know that actors are never better than in the pauses or in the subtext. They give actors too many words ... in a play, words are parentheses to the silences*”.

Step 6: It has been said about Reza that she had hoped to be seen as a, “*Gallic Harold Pinter, for whom silence is as important as a female Pirandello or a twin sister to Beckett. Instead, she was compared with Alan Ayckbourn or a mini-Proust*”. Comment on this statement – do you agree that there might be something Pinteresque about Reza’s dialogue, as she herself would have liked people to say about her writing of style – why/why not?

### **Close reading of the play – the function of the monologue in “ART”.**

Step 1: Do a close reading of Yvan’s monologue in “ART with focus on the style of writing. While reading the monologue. Use your notes from your language note -book and write down what you think is characteristic of his monologue. Comment primarily on the form (i.e the way it has been written). Take your point of departure in the following words: “ *So, a crisis, insoluble problem, major crisis, both stepmothers want their names on the wedding invitation. Catherine adores her step-mother, who more or less brought her up, she wants her name on the invitation, she wants it and her step-mother is not anticipating, which is understandable, since the mother is dead, not appearing next to Catherine’s father, whereas my step-mother, whom I detest, it’s out of the question her name should appear on the invitation, but my father won’t have his name on it if hers*

*isn't, unless Catherine's step-mother is left off, which is completely unacceptable, I suggested none of the parents' names should be on it, after all we're not adolescents, we can announce our wedding and invite people ourselves, so Catherine screamed her head off arguing that would be a slap in the face for her parents who are paying through the nose for the reception, and finally let myself be persuaded, totally against my better judgment, because she wore me down, I finally agreed that my step-mother, whom I detest, who's a complete bitch, will have her name on the invitation, so I telephoned my mother to warn her, mother, I said, I've done everything I can do to avoid this, but we have absolutely no choice, Colette's name .. (now you read on)*

Step 4: How would you characterize the tone and language (word-choice, syntax, level of formality) of the above dialogue?

Step 5: Find the underlined relative pronouns in the above excerpt from Yvan's monologue. Comment on the use of the relative pronouns.

Step 6: Find the following listed verbs in the monologue, and turn them from the past tense into the present tense: *want – brought her up – won't have – suggested – should be on – screamed – wore me down – agreed – telephoned - I said .*

Step 7: What does the monologue tell us about Yvan as a character- substantiate your answer by referring to the monologue.

Step 8: In Pairs. Discuss: The function of a monologue. Why do you think Reza decided to include one in her play "ART"? Discuss whether or not Reza ought to have let out the monologue – what is the purpose of the rather long monologue - substantiate your answer.

Step 9: Comment on Yvan's monologue. How does he start his speech? How does he develop it? And how does he conclude.

Step 10: Discuss – how do you think the monologue will function on stage? Will it be difficult for the actor to keep the attention of the audience? Why/why not?

### **Statements said by the characters in the play "ART"**

Step 1: In Pairs: Discuss the following statement said by Serge to Marc: "*By whose standards is this shit? If you call something shit, you need to have some criterion to judge it by ... You have no interest whatsoever in contemporary painting, you never have. This is a field about which you know absolutely nothing, so how can you assert that any given object, which conforms to law as you don't understand, is shit? "*

Step 2: In Pairs: Discuss the following statement said by Marc to Yvan: “ *Answer me this. You and Catherine get this painting as a wedding present. Does it make you happy? .. Does it make you happy? .. (Yvan to himself alone) ... Of course it doesn't make me happy, just like that. I'm trying to .. I'm trying to think of an occasion when I could have said yes, I'm happy ... Are you happy to be getting married, my mother stupidly asked me one day, are you at least happy to be getting married? .. Why wouldn't I be?*”.

Step 3: In Pairs: Discuss the following statement said by Serge about Marc: “ *I don't blame him for not responding to this painting, he doesn't have the training, there's a whole apprenticeship you have to go through, which he hasn't either because he's never wanted to or because he has no particular instinct for it, none of that matters, no, what I blame him for is his tone of voice, his smugness, his tactlessness. I blame him for his insensitivity. I don't blame him for not being interested in modern art, I couldn't give a shit about that, I like him for other reasons ...*”.

Step 4: In Pairs: Discuss the following statement said by Marc to Serge: *You should never leave your friendship unchaperoned. Your friends need to be chaperoned, otherwise they'll get away ... Look at poor Yvan, whose chaotic behavior used to delight us, we've allowed him to become this timid stationer ... practically married ... He brought us his originality and now he's making every effort to piss it away*”.

Step 5: What do the above statements tell us about the nature of the three characters.

Step 6: Now, it is your turn to find important quotes said by the three characters, Marc, Serge and Yvan, to compare and discuss in class why you find especially these quotes relevant to point out.

### **Short essay about “ART”**

Step 1: In a short essay (300-500 words) explain how Marc may be said to be the tragic victim of the play “ART”. Remember to state references to the script. Take your point of departure in the following lines said by Marc: “*I mean, it is a serious matter. But I could have found some other way to put it to him. I could have used a less aggressive tone. Even if it makes me physically ill that my best friends has brought a white painting, all the same I ought to avoid attacking him about it*”.

In a short essay explain how Yvan tries to question the value of the three men's friendship, or lack of same. Remember to state references to the text. Take your point of departure in the following lines said by Yvan: “*Why do we see each other, if we hate each other? It's obvious we do hate each other! I mean, I don't hate you, but you hate each other! And you hate me! So why do we see each other?*”

Or:

In a short essay write about the individual responsibility of Yvan to get hold of himself and his own life instead of getting so emotionally involved in the lives of his two friends. Take your point of departure in Yvan's words to Marc: *"I am in agony! It's like something drilling through my brain!"*

Step 2: Before writing your essay focus on what to include and in which order.

Step 3: Write the essay.

Step 4: Read it aloud to your teacher. Rewrite it on the basis of your teacher's advice and formative comments.

### **Open word association**

Step 1: Write non-stop for about five minutes. Your focus of concern is Marc and his relationship to "ART" in "ART".

It is very important that you write without deleting or correcting your writing.

Step 2: Next, compare and discuss your open association with your neighbor or in class.

Step 3: Finally, on the basis of your discussion rewrite your first text.

Step 4: Make a note to yourself about your own relationship to "ART" – the value of "ART" in your life.

### **Talking about one of the characters in "ART"**

Step 1: Write a 1½ min. speech on Yvan's life. Focus on for instance the loss of his old job – or his upcoming wedding - or on his love and care for two friends who do not seem to care about him. Or write a speech on Serge's life. Focus on for instance his life after his divorce where he seems to have found peace in the realm of Modern Art. Or write a speech about Marc's life. Focus on for instance his life as a strongly opinionated man when it comes to the treatment of other people, and what he values and does not value.

Step 2: Before you start writing your speech think about your audience, and ask yourself the following questions:

- *Who will I be speaking to?*
- *What do they know about my topic already?*

- *What will they want to know about my topic?*
- *What do I want them to know by the end of my talk?*

Step 3: Next, brainstorm your topic and organize your material and write a first draft of your speech

Step 4: In Pairs: Read aloud your speech to each other.

Step 5: Finally, give feedback and evaluate each other. Write down two good things to each other - and write down two things that may be improved.

Step 6: Rewrite your speech on the basis of your peer-evaluation.

Step 7: Deliver your presentation in class. Remember:

- *Talk to your audience, do not read to them!*
- *Watch your language*
- *Use pauses and speak slowly and clearly*
- *Use your body to communicate*
- *Interact with your audience*

Step 8: In class, evaluate the speech.

- *What is the speaker's purpose?*
- *How does he/she draw his audience into his speech?*
- *Comment on the techniques and the language employed by the speaker?*
- *How does the speaker build up his/her speech?*
- *Comment on the use of modes of appeal (ethos, logos, pathos)*
- *Comment on the use of figurative language*

### **Describing characters and the relationship between characters in details.**

Step 1: Give a characterization of Serge. Write a short paragraph in which you use as many adjectives as possible to describe Serge's personality. Take into consideration the following information about Serge: *"He's done very well for himself, he's a dermatologist and he's really into art"*.

Step 2: Give a characterization of Marc. Write a short paragraph in which you use as many adjectives as possible to describe Marc's personality. Take into consideration the following information about Marc. *"He is an intelligent enough guy ... he has a good job, he's an aeronautical engineer, but he's one of those new-style intellectuals, who are not only enemies of modernism, but seem to take some sort of incomprehensible pride in running it down"*.

Step 3: Give a characterization of Yvan. Write a short paragraph in which you use as many adjectives as possible to describe Yvan's personality. Take into consideration the following information about Yvan: *"I am a little tense at the moment, because having spent my life in textiles, I've just found a new job as a sales agent for a wholesale stationary business. People like me. My professional life has always been a failure and I'm getting married in two weeks. She's a lovely intelligent girl from a good family"*.

Step 4: Next, compare your characterization with what one of your classmates has written.

Step 5: Edit your text and add some of the adjectives that your classmate has used to improve your own text.

Stage 6: Comment on the relationship between Marc, Serge and Yvan. Remember to state references to the text.

Step 7: In Pairs: Discuss the costume of the characters on stage, as a means to further illuminating the characters' differing self-perceptions and different personalities. What kind of clothes do you think the three characters wear on stage?

Step 8: Finally, discuss in pairs whether or not the three characters develop throughout the play. If a character develops he or she might be called a round/dynamic character. If a character does not develop her or she may be called a flat/static character.

### **Find hints and evidence in the play "ART".**

Step 1: Find hints in the play that there is a power-struggle going on between Marc and Serge. Take your point of departure in the following lines. Start acting out the lines in class think of voice and intonation. Next, discuss who is the one in control of the dialogue – why/why not?:

*Yvan: I didn't like the painting ... but I didn't hate it.*

*Marc: Well, of course not. You cannot hate what's invisible, you can't hate nothing.*

*Yvan: No, no it has something ..*

*Marc: What do you mean?*

*Yvan: It has something. It's nothing.*

*Marc: You're kidding ..*

*Yvan: I'm not harsh as you. It's a work of art, there's a system behind it*

*Marc: A system?*

*Yvan: A system?*

*Marc: What system?*

*Yvan: It's the completion of a journey ..*

*Marc: Ha, ha, ha!*

*Yvan: It wasn't painted by accident, it's a work of art which stakes its claim as a trajectory ..*

Step 2: Find evidence in the play that the three men finally become friends at the end of the play.

Step 3: Find evidence in the play that the painting has actually been painted by Yvan.

Step 4: Find hints in the play that Yvan seems to be the weakest character of the three characters in this dialogue. Moreover, find hints that his friends are actually trying to help him take a stand when it comes to women and marriage. Take your point of departure in the following lines:

*Marc: Why do you let yourself be fucked over by all these women*

*Yvan: Why do I let myself be fucked over? I don't know. They're all insane*

*Serge: And if you're already letting yourself be fucked over by her, you're in for a hideous future*

*Yvan: What can I do?*

*Marc: Cancel it*

*Yvan: Cancel the wedding?*

*Serge: He's right*

*Yvan: But I can't, are you crazy?*

*Marc: Why not?*

*Yvan: Well, because I can't that's all. It's all arranged. I've only been working in the stationary business for a month..*

*Maerc: What's that got to do with it?*

*Yvan: It's her uncle's stationary business, he had absolutely no need to take on anyone, least of all someone who's only ever worked in textiles.*

*Serge: Do whatever you want. I have told you what I think.*

Step 5: Now your turn to write a hint or two to one of your classmates about “ART”.

### **Imagine how he future will be - write on**

Step 1: You now have the choice of two different tasks: Write half a page of dialogue as you imagine the future between Yvan and his wife to be. Or write half a page of dialogue as you imagine it between Serge talking to a friend about Yvan and his life to be with a woman that he may/may not love. When writing your dialogue take into consideration two things: How they speak to each other i.e the level of formality (high style/low style, choice of words, tone) and how their dialogue develops (tone).

Step 2: In Pairs: Practice reading aloud your dialogue to each other.

Step 3: Next, read out the dialogue in front of the class.

### **Possible interpretations of the play “ART”**

Step 1: Which of the following levels of possible interpretation for “ART” do you find most valid. Comment on an account for your choice. Do not delete or edit as you write. Write for five minutes, at least half a page to each of the possible interpretations:

- *a. Reza’s play “ART” has to be interpreted on a realistic level ?!*
- *b. Reza’s play “ART” has to be interpreted as a power- game between two characters – one struggling to prove his innocence*
- *c. Reza’s play “ART” has to be interpreted as representing what happens to any XXX.*
- *d. My interpretation is that Reza’s play “ART” ...?!*
- *e. Reza’s play “ART” refers to the “ART” of words, the “ART” of keeping up human relationships, friendship ..*
- *f. Reza’s play “ART” has nothing to do with what real “ART” is, with how to understand and look at a piece of art, and how to value it*
- *g. Reza’s play “ART” has touched a universal nerve, appealing to the audience intellectually and emotionally ..*

Step 2: Next, in Pairs: Compare and contrast possible interpretations.

Step 3: Finally, on the basis of your discussion edit your text and write a new text.

### **Reza's characters – a question of trust ?**

Step 1: In “ART”, Yvan often finds himself accused and under attack by his friends. Do we, as readers, find Serge a reliable and caring friend when he tells Yvan “*to steer clear of pathos*”, and the same goes with Marc when he tells his best friend is “*to calm down*”. Write an argumentative paragraph titled “A question of ever-lasting friendship?”

Step 2: Your writing must take your point of departure in the following dialogue between Serge, Marc and Yvan:

*Marc: Calm down ...*

*Yvan: Don't tell me to calm down! What possible reason do I have to calm down, are you trying to drive me crazy, telling me to calm down? Calm down's the worst thing you can say to someone who's lost his calm. I'm not like you, I don't want to be an authority figure, I don't want to be a point of reference, I don't want to be self-sufficient, I just want to be your friend Yvan the joker! Yvan the joker! (SILENCE) ..*

*Serge: Could we try to steer clear of pathos?*

*Yvan: I'm finished. You have got something to nibble on? Anything just to keep from passing out*

*Serge: I've got some olives.*

Step 3: In Pairs: On the basis of peer-evaluation. Edit and rewrite your first writing.

Step 4: Read it aloud to one of your classmates.

Step 5: In Pairs. Comment on the use of SILENCE AND PAUSES in the above dialogue – and the play in general. What do the use of silence and pauses add to the understanding of the relationship between the three characters.

### **Close reading and rewriting of dialogue**

Step 1: Read the following dialogue between Serge and Marc. Next, comment on Serge's attitude towards Marc.

*Serge: You're the coward ..attacking someone who's incapable of depending himself.. as you well know.*

*Marc: You're right .. you're right and when you put it like that, it makes me feel even worse ... the thing is all of a sudden, I can't understand, I have no idea what binds me to Yvan .. I have no idea what my relationship with him consists of ..*

*Serge: Yvan has always been what he is..*

*Marc: No he used to be eccentric, kind of absurd ... he was always unstable, but his eccentricity was disarming*

*Serge: What about me?*

*Marc: What about you?*

*Serge: Do you have any idea what binds me to you?*

*Marc: That's a question that could take us down a very long road*

Step 2: Rewrite the dialogue changing Marc's attitude (feelings) towards Yvan.

Step 3: In Pairs: Discuss the function of the changes of attitude.

Step 4: Rewrite the dialogue again. This time focus on a change of tone.

Step 5: In Pairs: Discuss the function of the changes of tone.

Step 6: Use your imagination and write your own dialogue between X and X. Next, act-it-out in class.

### **What to remember about "ART".**

Step 1: Write about the importance of watching the play “ART” on stage as if you are writing it to a close friend in a letter or in a mail, in a text or on Facebook. Include as many details as possible about “ART” ; everything you felt after having read, and watched the play on stage.

Step 2: When you have finished your writing about “ART”, read your text and consider what is most important and what could be left out so that your text is still recognizable.

Step 3: Save your first text and start rewriting a new, shorter version. You may decide to cut an entire paragraph, one detail or individual words. You may have to rewrite parts of the text to keep it coherent. Your new text must be half the length of the original text. Spend five minutes to edit.

Step 4: Compare the two texts – and try to describe the writing process from the initial writing to the final editing.

### **Having read the play “ART” - write before you speak about it.**

Step 1: Write around two minutes about what you think are the main points to be remembered from having read the play “ART”. Do not delete or edit as you write your first draft.

Step 2: In Pairs: Compare and contrast by reading each other’s texts or by reading them aloud to each.

Step 3: In Pairs: Write a new text and decide on which main points to include and what to leave out.

Step 4: Having seen the play being performed on stage. Write a review of the play “ART” to your school magazine.

### **Near the ending of the play - read and rewrite**

Step 1: In “ART” Yvan, the peacemaker, tries very hard not only to put his own life together but also to restore the friendship between his two best friends, Marc and Serge. However, it turns out that at the end of the play the three of them get into another verbal fight about the white painting. Take your point of departure in the following lines, and discuss the role of Serge and his influence on Marc in the following dialogue:

*Yvan : ... To think we’ve reached these extremes ... Apocalypse because of a white square.*

*Serge: It’s not white*

*Yvan: A piece of white shit! ... Face it, pal .. You buying this thing is demented.*

*Serge: Do you have any of your famous felt- tips?*

*Yvan: What for? .. You're not going to draw on the painting.*

*Serge: Do you or don't you?*

*Yvan: Just a minute ... Yes... a blue one*

*Serge: Give it to me*

*Yvan: You're not going to do it*

*Serge: Come on.*

*Yvan: You're raving lunatics, both of you! (Marc leans toward the painting. Under Yvan's horrified gaze, he draws the felt-tip along one of the diagonal streaks. Serge remains impassive. Then, carefully, on the slope Marc draws a little skier with a woolly hat. When he's finished, he strengthens up and contemplates his work. Serge remains adamant. Yvan is as if turned to stone. SILENCE. Marc tries a smile. He puts the top back on and playfully throws the pen to Yvan, who catches it)*

*Serge: Well, I'm starving. You want to go eat?*

Step 3: In Pairs: Discuss: What do you think that Serge wants to demonstrate to Marc?

Step 4: On the basis of your discussion. Rewrite the lines of the dialogue so that Yvan decides the outcome of the felt-tip dialogue.

Step5: Get feedback from your teacher (consult your writing policy-document).

### **The ending of the play:**

Step 1: At the end of the play, Marc desecrates the painting with a marker by first forcefully slashing a diagonal line across Serge's painting, and then drawing a downhill skier above the line. However, in the end both he and Serge wash away his drawing with soap and water, symbolically restoring hegemony between the two of them – In Pairs: Discuss why do you Serge gives Marc the felt-tip – and why do you think Marc destroys the painting?

Step 2: Comment on Yvan's mental state of mind at the end of the play, take your point of departure in the following monologue. What is it that Yvan is trying to say here about the nature of freindship?: *" ... the day after the wedding, Catherine put her wedding bouquet and a little bag of sugared almonds on her mother's grave at the Montparnasse cemetery. I slipped away to cry behind a monument and in the evening, thinking again about this touching tribute, I started silently sobbing in my bed. I absolutely have to speak to Finklezohn about this tendency to cry, I cry all the time, it's not normal for someone my age. It started, or at least clearly revealed itself at Serge's, the evening of the white painting. After Serge, in an act of madness, had demonstrated to Marc that he cared more about him than he did about his painting, we went and had dinner, chez Emil. Over dinner, Serge and Marc made the decision to try to reconstruct a relationship destroyed by word and deed. At one point, one of them used the expression, trial period, and I burst into tears. This expression, "trial period", applied to our friendship, set off in me an uncontrollable and ridiculous convulsion. In fact, I can no longer stand any kind of rational argument"*.

Step 3: Turn the monologue from the present tense into the past tense.

Step 4: Find all the prepositional phrases in the monologue.

Step 5: What do you think Yvan means when he concludes by saying: *"In fact, I can no longer stand any kind of rational argument"*?

Step 6: Why do you think Yvan lies - when he tells Marc that he did not know that his felt-tip was washable? What seems to be Yvan's problem at the end of the play? - *"No I said, very quickly, lying. I came within an inch of saying, yes, I guess, I did know. But how could I have launched our trial period with such a disappointing admission? ... On the other hand, was it right to start with a lie? ... A lie! Let's be reasonable. Why am I being so absurdly virtuous? Why does my relationship with Marc have to be so complicated?"*

Step 7: Rewrite the ending of the play, turning Yvan's last lines into more positive lines. Act out the changed dialogue.

### **The stage directions and their significance for understanding the play "ART"**

Step 1: Take your point of departure in the following lines and discuss the significance of the stage directions in "ART": *"At Serge's. At the back, hanging on the wall, the Antrios. Standing in front of the canvas, Marc is holding a basin of water, into which Serge is dipping a little piece of cloth. Marc has rolled up his sleeves and Serge is wearing a little builder's apron that is too short for him. Round about are various cleaning products, bottles of white spirit and stain remover, rags and*

*sponges. Moving very delicately, Serge puts the finishing touch to the cleaning of the picture. The Antrios is as white as ever. Marc puts down the basin and looks at the painting. Serge turns to Yvan, who's sitting off to one side. Yvan nods approvingly. Serge steps back and contemplates the picture in his turn. SILENCE”.*

Step 2: What information do the stage directions give us about actions, movements and positioning? Give examples.

Step 3: Discuss in Pairs: What do the stage directions add to your understanding of the play “ART”

Step 4: Find all the nouns in the above stage direction, write them down and translate into Danish.

Step 5: Moreover, discuss in Pairs: Having seen the play on stage - how are props used in the play “ART”? If any - to what effect? –how is lightening used? Does it have a symbolic effect? – Is there music or sound effects in the play/on stage? Give examples. How do they contribute to the atmosphere in the play?

Step 6: If no costume changes are needed and there are only few props required for a production. In Pairs: Discuss, the purpose of such a very “minimalistic” setting.

### **“ART” – a question of genre**

Step 1: Discuss in Pairs: Does the play, “ART”, belong to a specific genre – comedy, tragedy, romance, modern drama, etc. Substantiate your point of view by referring to the text.

Step 2: In Pairs. Discuss: Does the play belong to a specific dramatic tradition or historical context? How is this important for the understanding of the play? Substantiate your point of view by referring to the text.

Step 3: The play, “ART”, won the Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy in 1997, and when Reza accepted the award she said, *“It is intriguing to win the prize for best comedy, as I thought I was writing a tragedy”*. In Pairs: Discuss – do you think that Reza has written a tragedy – a comedy - or maybe something in between, a funny-tragedy? (*tragi-comedy*)

Step 4: Reza remains deeply grounded in French culture, where seriousness is more highly regarded than laughter. In Pairs. Comment on the following statement said by Reza, *“Laughter is always a problem and is very dangerous. The way people laugh changes the way you see a play”*.

Step 5: In pairs. Comment on the following statement said by Reza, *“It is not for me to say, but theatre is a mirror, a sharp reflection of society. The greatest playwrights are moralists”*.

Step 6: A journalist once wrote about “ART”: *“Behind an apparent simplicity and lightness lies a very elaborate text, both demanding and communicative, with a rich dialogue in which comedy and*

*drama, laughter and emotion, are mixed in the right proportion, appealing to the audience intellectually and emotionally*". Find evidence in the text that Reza in her play "ART" both appeals to the audience intellectually and emotionally - or find evidence in the text that Reza may play with the audience's reactions, making them turn their sympathies from one character to the other, and by doing so she makes the audience get involved in the play more in an emotional way than in a rational way.

Step 7: Reza's plays are very popular and have won many prizes. Her American translator, David Ives, has once said that, "*Half the reason her plays get done is because actors want to do them on stage ... there's a cracking surface there for a performer*". In Pairs: Discuss: What do you think is implied in this statement.

### **"ART" – prediction of the future of the three characters:**

Step 1: Discuss in pairs: How will the future be for Yvan, Marc and Serge.

Step 2: Continuation of the play: Work in pairs and write down your own continuation of the play (one or two scenes).

Step 3: Act- out your scenes in class.

Step 4: Evaluate your acting in class – with focus on content, tone, intonation and your use of mimic.

Step 5: Work in pairs and write down your own continuation of the future life of Yvan and Catherine (one or two scenes).

Step 6: Act- out your scenes in class.

Step 7: Evaluate your acting in class – with focus on content, tone, intonation and your use of mimic.

### **"ART" – dealing with the term mood and conflicts in the play**

Step 1: How is the term "mood" in "ART" quickly established in the first scene?

Step 2: Discuss in pairs: How would you characterize the overall mood of the play?

Step 3: Discuss in pairs: If any, when do the moments of humor and lightheartedness occur? Remember to state references to the text.

Step 4: Find examples of the many “conflicts” in “ART”. What do the many conflicts deal with – remember to state references to the text.

Step 5: Discuss, in pairs if the many conflict in “ART” become solved or remain unsolved.

### **“ART” - thoughts about theatre**

Step 1: Comment on the following statement said by Reza: “... *when I think of English and American theater. I feel it’s too neat, too well done, too structured, there’s too much of a desire to entertain. There’s always a sort of wink at the audience, which I find distracting and annoying ..In Europe we have a tradition of minimalism that I love – that of the other extreme, something hysterical, fanatical, but it’s very different from the Anglo- American tradition. It doesn’t cater to the audience in the same way*”.

Step 2: Discuss in pairs: What can be said to be minimalistic about Reza’s play “ART”. Substantiate your point of view by referring to the script.

Step 3: Comment on the statement said by Reza: “*English actors are just so extravagant – they really overdo it. I kept thinking as I watched them perform. Hold it, rein it in a little! That’s just a cultural difference that I haven’t been able to get used to*”.

Step 4: Discuss in pairs: ‘Do you think Reza is right when talking about a cultural difference between the Anglo- American tradition and the European tradition? Why/why not?’