 Year 12 English Standard

Pygmalion: Be my guest – social expectations in the 21st century

Pygmalion is about a man’s attempt to transform a woman, both in appearance and language, into a ‘lady’. Although first published in 1912, the play deals with a simple idea that is still relevant today.

Task 1: Preparing for dinner with your boyfriend’s parents

Each pair will be provided with a different social scenario that will require one student to ‘coach’ the other in preparation for a social event. You will prepare your partner for a dinner with your boyfriend’s parents. You will complete the table and answer the following:

| Questions | Instructions |
| --- | --- |
| What clothes should you wear? |       |
| What topics should you discuss? |       |
| How will you act/behave? (For example, body language and facial expression) |       |
| How should you speak (language/tone)? (For example, colloquial or formal?) |       |

Task 2: Preparing for a barbeque at a friend’s house

Each pair will be provided with a different social scenario that will require one student to ‘coach’ the other in preparation for a social event. You will prepare your partner for a barbeque at a friend’s house. You will complete the table and answer the following:

| Questions | Instructions |
| --- | --- |
| What clothes should you wear? |       |
| What topics should you discuss? |       |
| How will you act/behave? (For example, body language and facial expression) |       |
| How should you speak (language/tone)? (For example, colloquial or formal?) |       |

Task 3: Preparing for your grandparent’s 70th birthday

Each pair will be provided with a different social scenario that will require one student to ‘coach’ the other in preparation for a social event. You will prepare your partner for your grandparent’s 70th birthday. You will complete the table and answer the following:

| Questions | Instructions |
| --- | --- |
| What clothes should you wear? |       |
| What topics should you discuss? |       |
| How will you act/behave? (For example, body language and facial expression) |       |
| How should you speak (language/tone)? (For example, colloquial or formal?) |       |

Task 4: Preparing for a 16th birthday party

Each pair will be provided with a different social scenario that will require one student to ‘coach’ the other in preparation for a social event. You will prepare your partner for a 16th birthday party. You will complete the table and answer the following:

| Questions | Instructions |
| --- | --- |
| What clothes should you wear? |       |
| What topics should you discuss? |       |
| How will you act/behave? (For example, body language and facial expression) |       |
| How should you speak (language/tone)? (For example, colloquial or formal?) |       |

Task 5: Preparing for a family friend’s wedding

Each pair will be provided with a different social scenario that will require one student to ‘coach’ the other in preparation for a social event. You will prepare your partner for a family friend’s wedding. You will complete the table and answer the following:

| Questions | Instructions |
| --- | --- |
| What clothes should you wear? |       |
| What topics should you discuss? |       |
| How will you act/behave? (For example, body language and facial expression) |       |
| How should you speak (language/tone)? (For example, colloquial or formal?) |       |

Task 6: Preparing for your school graduation

Each pair will be provided with a different social scenario that will require one student to ‘coach’ the other in preparation for a social event. You will prepare your partner for your school graduation. You will complete the table and answer the following:

| Questions | Instructions |
| --- | --- |
| What clothes should you wear? |       |
| What topics should you discuss? |       |
| How will you act/behave? (For example, body language and facial expression) |       |
| How should you speak (language/tone)? (For example, colloquial or formal?) |       |

Note to teacher – Ask partners to stage an impromptu scene with each other. Afterwards, ask partners to discuss their choices with the class. Why were the dress and language at the barbeque less formal? Emphasise social class distinctions and expectations.