

# Vanity Fair – EXTRA

## Level 3

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least three years and up to four years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level B1. Suitable for users of TEAM magazine.

### SYNOPSIS

Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp are best friends. Amelia comes from a wealthy City family and expects to marry George Osborne, a handsome army officer. Amelia is romantic, loyal and no judge of character. Becky has no family or money. She has looks, brains and big ambitions.

Becky plots her way through life, rising from governess to wife of aristocratic (but penniless) Rawdon Crawley. Becky is popular with the men in *Vanity Fair*, but unpopular with their wives.

Amelia's family fall on hard times when her father loses all his money in the City. Amelia and George marry, against his father's wishes. After only a few weeks they go to Brussels for the war with Napoleon. George has fallen in love with Becky and wants to run off with her. But the men are called to battle. George is killed at the Battle of Waterloo. Dobbin is in love with Amelia, but she thinks only of George. She gives birth to George's son. They are very poor, living on money that Dobbin secretly sends. Becky has a son too. She has no maternal feelings, and the child is left in the care of his father.

A powerful man, Lord Steyne, becomes interested in Becky. There is a scandal, and Rawdon leaves her. Becky is ruined and flees to Europe. There, she meets Amelia and Dobbin by chance. She reveals to Amelia that George was in love with her, which releases Amelia to love Dobbin.

Amelia and Dobbin marry and have a daughter. Becky lives alone but in comfort.

### THE BACK STORY

William Makepeace Thackeray was born in India in 1811. Soon after, his father died and he was sent to school in England at the age of four. He went to Cambridge University, but he didn't work hard, gambled away his fortune and left university without a degree. After he married Isabella Shawe in 1837, he needed to make some money and he started writing. He wrote poems, novels, magazine columns and, in 1847–8, *Vanity Fair*. The feisty Becky Sharp, heroine of the novel, was a great success with the public, and has remained a favourite character ever since.

Thackeray's novel, *Vanity Fair*, is more than 800 pages long. It has been filmed many times for television and the cinema.

The story mixes fiction and fact, with many characters based on real socialites known to Thackeray, and others on historical characters like Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington. The characters negotiate their way through real historical events, such as the stock market crash of 1815, and the Battle of Waterloo.

### MEDIA LINKS

**DVD:** *Vanity Fair* is available as a Universal Pictures DVD, directed by Mira Nair and starring Reese Witherspoon as Becky Sharp, Jonathan Rhys Meyers as George Osborne and Rhys Ifans as William Dobbin.

**CD:** A recording of *Vanity Fair* is available to accompany the Scholastic Reader.

**Internet:** There are clips from the Universal Pictures film at: [www.vanityfairmovie.com](http://www.vanityfairmovie.com)

## HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC READER

### Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Have the students seen the film version of *Vanity Fair* starring Reese Witherspoon? Motivate them by reading aloud the first page of the story with dramatic atmosphere or playing the first chapter on the CD.

### Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Decide how many pages to set for reading each week. Select exercises from the Self-Study section at the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each chunk of reading. (All the answers are on page 4 of this resource sheet.)

### Using the CD

Students can listen and follow in their books. They can listen and then read. They can read and then listen. All these activities will improve their reading speeds and skills.

### Using the DVD

Select the English language option on the DVD. The film is 135 minutes long. Select scenes to show in parallel with the class reading schedule, or show scenes when the class has finished the book, as a reward.

### Glossary

Go to 'New Words' at the back of the reader. Translate the words with the class or get students to find meanings at home. The Vocabulary Builder on page 3 of this resource sheet practises the new words in a different context.

### The language of Thackeray's time

*Vanity Fair* was published in 1847–8. This adaptation is mostly told in modern English, but keeps a flavour of the original. Read through page 6 of the reader to prepare students for the language they will come across.

### Fact Files

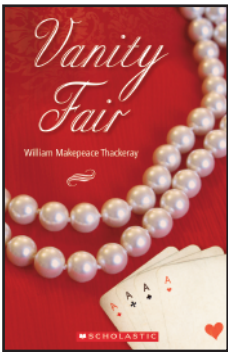
Set the Fact Files as self-study or use for whole class work. These provide background information about the writer, the historical background to the story and the lives of young gentlemen in Thackeray's day.

### What did they think?

Get your students to do a written or spoken review of *Vanity Fair*. Compare opinions. Will students go and see the film? Did you enjoy teaching with this reader? Let us know at:

[readers@scholasticeltreaders.com](mailto:readers@scholasticeltreaders.com)

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES



Vanity Fair  
- EXTRA

People and places

Who are these people? Write their names.

- a) He isn't clean or smart. .... *Sir Pitt*
- b) He doesn't tell lies. ....
- c) She is poor. ....
- d) He doesn't work in England. ....
- e) He has an older brother. ....

Chapters 1-3

1 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- a) Becky's parents are both dead.
- b) Becky is afraid of Miss Pinkerton.
- c) She tries to catch Jos for a husband.
- d) She sings and plays the piano very well.
- e) She understands George Osborne's character very well.
- f) She is popular with everyone in Amelia's house.

2 Make sentences.

- a) Jos runs away i) very boring and cries all the time.
- b) Sir Pitt pretends ii) live at home.
- c) Lady Crawley is iii) to be a servant when Becky arrives at Queen's Crawley.
- d) Mr Pitt Crawley likes iv) to read religious books to the family.
- e) Rawdon Crawley does not v) very rich and lives in London.
- f) Miss Crawley is vi) after George tells him not to marry Becky.

3 Who says these things, do you think? Choose from:

Becky's father   Dobbin   ~~Jemima Pinkerton~~   Jos  
Miss Crawley   Mr Pitt

- a) 'I will miss Becky Sharp even if nobody else misses her.' .... *Jemima Pinkerton*
- b) 'Miss Pinkerton, I am afraid I will not live much longer. Thank you for taking care of my girl.' .....
- c) 'When people see me with Miss Sharp on my arm, they will be amazed!' .....
- d) 'Go to bed, Jos, and have a good sleep.' .....

- e) 'Girls! Please sit quietly while I am reading to the family.' .....
- f) 'Thank you, dear brother, but my money is safe in the bank.' .....

4 Work with a partner. Discuss how Becky will make herself popular with the different members of the Crawley family.

Example: She will pretend to be interested in Mr Pitt's religious talks.

Chapters 4-6

1 Circle the mistakes in these sentences and write the correct sentences in your exercise book.

- a) Becky pays attention to everyone at Queen's Crawley except <sup>including</sup> the servants.
- b) Miss Crawley has a good opinion of Mr Pitt Crawley.
- c) Life is more fun at Queen's Crawley when Miss Crawley is not there.
- d) In her letter, Becky tells Amelia that she likes Captain Rawdon.
- e) Miss Crawley thinks that she is better than Becky.
- f) Aunt Miss Crawley wishes Rawdon would run away with Becky.

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- a) George spends all his free time with Amelia.
- b) Dobbin is in love with Amelia.
- c) George enjoys reading Amelia's letters.
- d) Dobbin thinks George should pay more attention to Amelia.
- e) Mr Osborne is proud that his son moves in good circles.
- f) Mr Osborne thinks Amelia is too good for George.

3 Match the questions and answers.

- a) What nearly kills Miss Crawley? i) Sir Pitt's wife.
- b) Who is a very good nurse? ii) A letter.
- c) Who dies but nobody cries? iii) Becky.
- d) How long has Becky been married? iv) No!
- e) Where do Becky and Rawdon hope to live? v) A seafood dinner.
- f) What does Briggs find in Becky's room? vi) Two weeks.
- g) Does Miss Crawley forgive Becky and Rawdon? vii) Park Lane.

4 Talk to other students. Becky and Rawdon have no money. Miss Crawley says they can't have any of hers. How can they live?

Chapters 7-12

1 Choose the best words in italics.

- a) Mr Sedley loses his fortune because of Napoleon / John Osborne.
- b) Amelia *knows* / *doesn't know* in her heart that George doesn't love her.
- c) *George* / *Dobbin* buys Amelia's piano and sends it to Mr Clapp's house.
- d) George feels good because *he has saved Amelia* / *Amelia* is happy.
- e) John Sedley agrees that Amelia and George can marry *before* / *after* he talks to Dobbin.
- f) Mr Osborne says he will throw George out of the house if he *marries* / *doesn't marry* Amelia.

## RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### 2 Are these sentences right (✓) or wrong (x)?

- a) Amelia dresses more fashionably than Becky.
- b) Amelia thinks George is bored with her.
- c) Mr Osborne doesn't ever want to see his son again.
- d) Miss Crawley doesn't want to see Becky.
- e) Miss Crawley cries because nobody loves her and everybody wants her money.
- f) Rawdon is very pleased when he receives twenty pounds from his aunt.

### 3 Talk to other students. Discuss Amelia's relationship with these people after the Battle of Waterloo.

- a) Mr Osborne      b) Dobbin      c) her son

### Chapters 13–18

#### 1 Becky is climbing high in *Vanity Fair*. Tick (✓) the things she does to get higher.

- a) She gives fashionable suppers.
- b) She makes friends with Rawdon's brother Pitt.
- c) She makes Lord Steyne laugh.
- d) She takes her son to the park to meet famous people.
- e) She cries when Old Sir Pitt dies.
- f) She admires Lady Jane's children.

#### 2 Choose the best answers.

- a) What kind of mother is Becky?  
 i) She is unkind.                      ii) She is loving.
- b) What kind of mother is Amelia?  
 i) She is unkind.                      ii) She is loving.
- c) Who listens to Becky's singing at Lady Steyne's party?  
 i) All the ladies.                      ii) Only Lady Steyne.
- d) Does Becky know that Rawdon is going to be locked up?  
 i) I think so.                              ii) I don't think so.
- e) How does Rawdon feel when Becky doesn't come for him?  
 i) He doesn't mind.                      ii) Heartbroken.
- f) Has Rawdon spent Lord Steyne's money?  
 i) Yes, he has gambled it away.      ii) No, Becky has it.

#### 3 Work with other students. You are at a fashionable dinner party. It is the day after Rawdon knocked Lord Steyne down the stairs. Talk about Becky, Rawdon and Lord Steyne. Say what you really think of them.

#### 4 Put these events in the order they happen.

- a) Amelia and her father move into Jos's new house.
- b) Amelia learns that Dobbin sent her the piano, not George.
- c) Amelia writes to Dobbin and asks him to return.
- d) Amelia, Dobbin and George travel to Germany.
- e) Becky shows Amelia the note that George wrote her.
- f) Dobbin gets tired of Amelia and returns to England.
- g) Dobbin returns and marries Amelia.
- h) They meet Becky, who has fallen on hard times.

### FINAL TASKS

#### Writing

- 1 Choose your most or least favourite character in *Vanity Fair*. Write a profile of them. Say why you do or don't like them.
- 2 Imagine George Osborne doesn't die at the Battle of Waterloo. What is his life with Amelia like after the battle? Does Becky agree to run away with him? Does he make friends with old Mr Osborne? Is George a good father to his own son? Write about his life.
- 3 Work with another student. You are Amelia and Lady Jane. Neither of you has seen Becky since Amelia's wedding to Dobbin. You take tea together and talk about her.

### VOCABULARY BUILDER

Look at the 'New Words' at the back of *Vanity Fair*.

#### 1 Find words to complete these sentences.

1. She buys new styles as soon as they come into the shops – she's ..... *fashionable* .....
2. He's always looking in the mirror – he's very .....
3. They stole some apples and now they feel .....
4. Yesterday they got ..... and they're getting married in July.
5. He always says and does the wrong thing – he's a .....
6. Dan is the school ..... He loves to choose a small boy in the playground and frighten him.
7. The Persian ..... was going to Athens when it was stopped by 300 Spartan ..... at the ..... of Thermopylae.
8. I ..... anyone who is brave enough to become a ..... – it's such an unpopular job.
9. Prince Harry was sent to fight in Afghanistan with his .....

#### 2 In Thackeray's time ...

1. people travelled by horse and ..... *CARRIAGE* .....
2. .... with cards was popular and some young men lost huge .....
3. rich women wore beautiful ..... to big dances.
4. .... and ladies employed many ..... to look after their townhouse and their ..... in the country.
5. lords and ladies usually had a ..... to teach their young children at home.
6. if a gentleman ..... a lot of money to a money-lender, he might find a ..... at his door.

### WILLIAM THACKERAY (pages 78–9)

#### Puzzle reading

Students work in A/B pairs. Photocopy these cards and give them out. Student A covers page 79. Student B covers page 78. Students take turns to use the prompts on the card to ask questions about Thackeray's life and note down the answers. Students use their notes to write sentences about Thackeray. They then compare their sentences with the information on their partner's page.

#### STUDENT A (Cover page 79)

Loved who? .....

*Vanity Fair* came out when? .....

Success with *Vanity Fair*? .....

Physical description .....

Lifestyle .....

Died when? ..... Age? .....

Remembered today for? .....

#### STUDENT B (Cover page 78)

Born when? .....

Lived where to age 4? .....

Went to school where? .....

University? .....

Good/bad student? .....

Inherited money when? .....

Lost money why? .....

Married, who, when? .....

Children? ..... What happened to wife? .....

### THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO (pages 80–1)

#### After the battle: Interviews

Students work in groups of three. One is a journalist. The other two are soldiers – one is French, one is English. Both fought at Waterloo. Students prepare questions and answers using the information on the page, in the story of *Vanity Fair*, in books or on the Internet. Students rehearse their interviews before performing them for the class. Example:

**Interviewer:** *Michel, you fought for Napoleon at Waterloo.*

**Michel:** *Yes, it was a terrible battle.*

**Interviewer:** *When did it start?*

**Michel:** *It started on 18 June.*

### YOUNG MEN IN REGENCY ENGLAND (pages 82–3)

#### Then and now

Students work in small groups and compare the lifestyle of men today in their country with the young men of Regency England, using the pictures and information in the Fact File. They could use these headings:

- Style of dress
- Free time and sport
- Education
- Work
- University
- Fighting
- Life skills (e.g. horse-riding, driving a car)

### ANSWER KEY

#### Self-Study Activities (pages 84–8)

- 1 a) gentleman b) governess c) servant d) lord e) soldier
- 2 a) rich b) you sometimes win c) their appearance d) usual e) often buy new clothes f) acts stupidly
- 3 a) sensation b) bully c) jewels d) regiment e) shock f) admire
- 4 a) Becky Sharp b) William Dobbin c) Lord Steyne d) Miss Crawley e) Open answers
- 5 a) happy b) Amelia c) only French d) thinks he is e) Everyone f) lower g) proud and vain h) doesn't ask
- 6–7 Open answers.
- 8 a) debt b) estate c) owe d) battle
- 9 Open answers.
- 10 The correct order is: d, b, h, g, c, e, a, f.
- 11–12 Open answers.
- 13 They're about to marry.
- 14 Open answers.
- 15 a) the Sedleys b) Dobbin c) John Osborne d) George Osborne e) John Sedley f) George
- 16 a) It's the other way around – George falls in love with Becky. b) Mr Osborne is not happy about the wedding. c) She is not afraid of being poor. d) She agrees to see only Rawdon. e) George is never careful with money. f) The fashionable people go to Brussels. g) She doesn't enjoy the dance. h) The note is from George.
- 17–19 Open answers.
- 20 a) wrong – she goes back to bed b) right c) right d) right e) right f) wrong – Becky isn't popular with the ladies g) wrong – only Rawdon loves him h) wrong – Dobbin sends them money secretly i) wrong – he shakes with feeling when his daughter talks about them
- 21–23 Open answers.
- 24 a, c, d, e, g are all things that Lord Steyne does or has done.
- 25 a) Sir Pitt and Lady Jane b) the business between Lord Steyne and the Crawleys c) Because George will always be her husband, even though he is dead d) George knows that Dobbin sees people as they really are e) She has always lied before f) Shows Amelia the note that George gave Becky at the Brussels dance

26–27 Open answers.

#### Resource Sheet Activities

##### People and places

- b) William Dobbin c) Becky Sharp d) Jos Sedley  
e) Rawdon Crawley

##### Chapters 1–3

- 1 b) F c) T d) T e) T f) F
- 2 b) iii c) i d) iv e) ii f) v
- 3 b) Becky's father c) Jos d) Dobbin e) Mr Pitt f) Miss Crawley
- 4 Open answers.

##### Chapters 4–6

- 1 b) Mr Pitt > Rawdon c) is not > is d) she likes Captain Rawdon > Captain Rawdon likes her e) better than > no better than f) Rawdon > a lord
- 2 b) T c) F d) T e) T f) F
- 3 b) iii c) i d) vi e) vii f) ii g) iv
- 4 Open answers.

##### Chapters 7–12

- 1 b) knows c) Dobbin d) he has saved Amelia e) after f) marries
- 2 b) ✓ c) ✓ d) ✓ e) ✓ f) x
- 3 Open answers.

##### Chapters 13–18

- 1 b), c) and f).
- 2 b) She is loving. c) Only Lady Steyne. d) Open answer. e) Heartbroken. f) No, Becky has it.
- 3 Open answers.
- 4 The correct order is: a, b, d, h, f, c, e, g.

#### Vocabulary Builder

- 1 2. vain 3. ashamed 4. engaged 5. fool 6. bully 7. army, soldiers, Battle 8. admire, tax collector 9. regiment
- 2 2. gambling, fortunes 3. jewels 4. lords, servants, estate 5. governess 6. owed, debt-collector