

talk  
to  
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

# First Flight



## 1. Watch and listen to the story

Click on the link below to watch a video of the story being read. Note the pronunciations of the words and read along using the subtitles.

[\(88\) The Hundred Dresses II - YouTube](#)

## 2. Background

This chapter is a continuation of the earlier one which narrates the story of a very poor, quiet and lonely Polish school girl called Wanda Petronski. Unfortunately, she was subjected to a lot of bullying by Peggy, with her best friend Maddie standing by.

However, she was a very talented artist and won a drawing competition where she had submitted hundred drawings of different dresses. She did not know that she had won, because she had stopped coming to school. This chapter reveals the reason for her disappearance and how Peggy and Maddie try to make up for bullying and ill-treating her.

### 3. Summary

Miss Mason, the class teacher, received a letter from Wanda's father saying that his children, Wanda and Jake would not be coming to school any longer. He was moving the family to a large city where the children would not be teased because of their Polish names.

Miss Mason read this letter to the students in her class and conveyed her disappointment that they had made fun of Wanda, without thinking about the consequences. She said the whole incident was very sad and unfortunate.

Maddie felt very guilty about allowing Peggy to bully Wanda, and wanted to reach out to Wanda. However, as always, she looked to Peggy for support. Peggy too obviously felt somewhat guilty. So they both went to Wanda's house at Boggins Heights to apologize to her, but she and her family had already moved away.

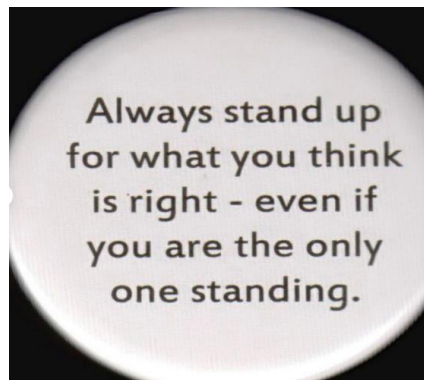
Maddie blamed herself for being a coward who did not stand up against the wrong done to Wanda. She decided that she would never again let anyone tease another person, nor would she ever be a silent witness to bullying.

Maddie and Peggy decided to write a letter to apologize to Wanda, but ended up writing her just a friendly letter. Wanda did not reply to them. However, she wrote to Miss Mason around Christmas, saying that she missed the school, and that she wanted to gift one drawing each to Maddie and Peggy. Both of them were very happy to receive the drawings. They assumed that this gift meant that Wanda liked them, despite the way they had treated her.

However, Maddie continued to feel guilty. She was very sad that she would never see the Polish girl again, and couldn't ever make things right between them.

The moral of the story is that we must always stand up for what is right.

I raise up my  
voice - not so  
that I can shout,  
but so that those  
without a voice  
can be heard.  
malala



#### 4. Vocabulary

1. **Circling** – moving in a circle, often around something  
The vultures were **circling** over the area, indicating that some animal had died there.
2. **Monitor** – someone who watches over something to make sure that it is done right, or people behave rightly; a machine often in a hospital that measures something such as heart rate; a screen that shows information or pictures, usually connected to a computer  
The class **monitor** collected all the answer sheets and handed them over to the teacher.  
The **monitor** was showing that her pulse rate was dropping.  
I cannot use that computer as its **monitor** is not working.
3. **Several** – some, but not a lot  
I have called her **several** times, but she has not answered my calls.

4. **Thoughtfully** – quietly, because you are thinking of something; kindly because you want to help other people  
My mother read the letter **thoughtfully** before replying to my father.  
She had **thoughtfully** kept his dinner on the table, so that he could eat as soon as he came home.
5. **Shuffling** – walk by dragging one's feet, shambling  
The beggar was **shuffling** along the railway platform asking for food.
6. **Tense** – nervous, worried and not able to relax  
The students looked **tense** as they waited for their exam results.
7. **Expectant** – having or showing a feeling that something is about to happen; to anticipate  
The audience waited in **expectant** silence for the announcement of the contest results.
8. **Adjusted** – modified, altered to reach the desired result; adapted  
The teacher **adjusted** the mike before beginning the lecture.
9. **Deliberately** – on purpose; intentionally  
The fire department was convinced the fire was started **deliberately**.
10. **Indicated** – desired; suggested; pointed out; recommended  
The Principal **indicated** that the board exams may be held earlier this year.
11. **Listened closely** – listened with attention  
He **listened closely** to the message his father had sent.
12. **Brief** – using only a few words; lasting only for a short time  
We had a **brief** discussion on the matter.  
She made a **brief** visit to the museum to see the famous painting.
13. **Holler** – to shout or call loudly  
We should not **holler** in the school corridors as it may disturb the other classes.
14. **Pollack** – a rude name for a Polish person  
Those **Pollacks** have a funny accent.
15. **Purposely** – willfully; deliberately  
He **purposely** blocked the athlete as he was nearing the finish line.

16. **Unfamiliar** – not known to you  
I noticed many **unfamiliar** faces in the meeting room.
17. **Thoughtlessness** – a lack of thought about how your actions or words may upset someone  
I am very unhappy at the **thoughtlessness** of people who do not wear masks when they go out.
18. **Unfortunate** – unlucky or having bad effects  
It was **unfortunate** that her train was late and so she missed the interview.
19. **Put yourself in her shoes** – imagine being in another's situation or circumstance  
If you **put yourself in her shoes**, you will understand the hard life she leads.
20. **Stole a glance** – took a hurried look at something  
I **stole a glance** at my father's face and saw that it was red with anger.
21. **Dismissed** – sent away; let go; released  
His ideas were **dismissed** by our group as being crazy and dangerous.
22. **Pretended** – false, fake  
We could all see through his **pretended** interest in the project.
23. **Casualness** – lack of interest or concern; informality  
The teachers were surprised at the **casualness** of the students regarding the board exams.
24. **Glowed** – looked happy or healthy, to shine  
She **glowed** with happiness when the teacher praised her work.  
The sun **glowed** in the sky.
25. **Forbidding** – unfriendly; likely to be unpleasant, to refuse  
The Principal's **forbidding** expression warned the children that he was going to give them some bad news.  
My father kept **forbidding** me to go out of the house during the COVID pandemic.

26. **Damp and dismal** – wet and depressing  
The **damp and dismal** winter weather kept us indoors.
27. **Gruffly** – a rough harsh voice; low unfriendly voice  
The shopkeeper **gruffly** asked the vegetable vendor to remove his cart.
28. **Wisps** – a small thin twisted bunch; small piece or amount of something; strands; shreds  
**Wisps** of smoke rose from the chimney into the sky.
29. **Pathway** – a track that a person can walk along  
Please follow this **pathway** till you reach the door of the house.
30. **Sparse** – thinly scattered; very little; scanty; scarce  
The **sparse** rations provided by the Government were not sufficient for the whole village.
31. **Yard** – a piece of land next to a house; a measure of distance that equals three feet.  
Though the **yard** at the back of the house was small, they grew vegetables in it.  
Please keep at least two **yards** away from each other during the COVID pandemic.
32. **Shabby** – looking old and in a bad condition because of being used for a long time, or not being cared for  
They lived in a small shack in a **shabby** part of town.
33. **Make amends** – to show that one is sorry, by doing something good  
He tried to **make amends** for his bad behavior by apologizing to the head of the family.
34. **Otherwise** – used to indicate what will happen if a suggestion or order is not followed  
Please write down the directions, **otherwise** you will forget them.
35. **Forehead** – the flat part of the face, above the eyes and below the hair  
She wiped the sweat from her **forehead** with a handkerchief.

36. **Conclusion** – the end or finish of an event, process or text; opinion you have after considering all the information about something  
The **conclusion** of the story is very sad.  
I have come to the **conclusion** that sports are necessary in schools.
37. **Picking on someone** – treating someone unkindly; unfairly criticising them  
The boys are always **picking on someone** to bully.
38. **Please forward** – please send a letter from someone's old address to their new address; or to send a letter, email, etc. that you have, received to someone else  
**Please forward** this important letter to Vimla's new address.
39. **Speeches** – formal talks given usually to a large number of people on a special occasion  
We were late, and missed all the dignitaries' **speeches** at the beginning of the event.
40. **Defending** – protecting someone or something against attack or criticism; speaking in favour of someone or something  
He stood in front of his mother, **defending** her from the robbers.  
His best friend continued **defending** him even though he had lied to the teacher.
41. **Ashamed** – feeling guilty or embarrassed about something you have done or about a quality in your character  
She should be **ashamed** of talking to her father like that.
42. **Christmas** – 25<sup>th</sup> December, a Christian holy day that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ  
All the Christmas gifts were arranged beneath the beautifully decorated **Christmas** tree.
43. **Gifted** – having special ability in a particular subject or activity, talented; to give someone a present  
Gopal is a **gifted** singer.  
My parents **gifted** me a beautiful sari for my birthday.
44. **Intently** – with earnest and eager attention  
The students listened **intently** to the lecture.



45. **Equalise** – to make things or people equal; to come up to the same level  
The department head decided to **equalise** the salaries of all the staff members.
46. **Wreaths and holly** – decorative items for festivals, specially Christmas; wreaths were originally made of flowers; holly is a plant that has pointed leaves and small, round, red berries  
The colorful **wreaths and hollies** have given a festive appearance to the school hall.



**Christmas wreath**



**Hollies**

47. **Stacked** – put one on top of another  
The boxes were unevenly **stacked** and so they toppled down.
48. **Candy peppermint sticks** – sweets made of sugar and peppermint in the shape of a stick; usually eaten during Christmas  
The Christmas tree was decorated with shiny balls, bells, stars and lots of **candy peppermint sticks**.



**Candy peppermint stick**

49. **Cornucopias** – a large amount; overflowing; here, a decorative container  
The gift basket was a **cornucopia** of snacks, fruits and beverages.
50. **Transparent** – something you can see through easily; clear and easy to understand or recognise; open and honest, without secrets  
We could see what was happening inside the shop through the **transparent** glass windows.  
I think we should make the instructions more **transparent**.  
The whole process of selecting teachers for the school is fair and **transparent**.

51. **Strung** – a set of objects joined together on a single rope or thread  
In winters vegetables are **strung** on a rope and dried in the sun.  
The pearls were **strung** on a gold chain.
52. **Reflected** – a surface threw back light, heat, sound, or an image instead of absorbing it; showed, expressed or was a sign of something; thought carefully  
The sunlight **reflected** off the surface of the lake.  
His blank face **reflected** his boredom.  
She **reflected** on the problem for a long time before deciding what to do.
53. **Tight-lipped** – someone who is tight-lipped is pressing their lips together to avoid showing anger, or is refusing to speak about something  
He was very **tight-lipped** about what happened at the meeting.
54. **Wallpaper** – a thick often decorative paper used for covering the walls and sometimes ceilings of a room  
The room was decorated with pretty **wallpaper**.
55. **Brilliancy** – intense brightness of light  
The **brilliancy** of the sun blinded us as we came out of the dark room.
56. **Blurred** – unable to see or be seen clearly  
Her vision is **blurred** by a cataract.
57. **Gazed** – to look at something or someone for a long time, especially in surprise or admiration, or because you are thinking of something else  
He **gazed** out of the classroom window and did not listen to the teacher at all.
58. **Hastily** – said or done in a hurry, sometimes without necessary care or thought  
The Principal decided **hastily** to postpone the exams.
59. **Vivid** – producing powerful feelings or strong clear images in the mind  
My memories of the last day at school are still very **vivid**.

60. **Scarcely** – barely; almost nothing;  
The beggar **scarcely** had enough money to buy a small plate of dry rice.  
I could **scarcely** walk after the accident.  
I had **scarcely** sat down to write the letter when the phone rang.
61. **Clattered** – fell with a big sound; made a sound  
The dishes clattered to the ground when the shelf broke.  
The children **clattered** down the stairs after school.
62. **Exclaimed** – said or shouted something suddenly because of surprise, fear, pleasure, etc.  
She **exclaimed** in delight when she heard the good news.
63. **Blinked** – shut and open the eyes quickly; flutter  
She **blinked** nervously when questioned about the theft.
64. **Stolidly** – in a way that is calm and does not show emotion or excitement  
The mother looked **stolidly** at the screaming children and shook her head.

## 5. Questions

### I. Oral Comprehension Check

1. **What did Mr Petronski's letter say?**
2. **Is Miss Mason angry with the class or is she unhappy and upset?**
3. **How does Maddie feel after listening to the note from Wanda's father?**
4. **What does Maddie want to do?**
5. **What excuses does Peggy think of giving in justification of her behaviour? Why?**
6. **What are Maddie's thoughts as they go to Boggins Heights?**

7. Why does Wanda's house remind Maddie of Wanda's blue dress?
8. What does Maddie think hard about? What important decision does she come to?
9. What did the girls write to Wanda?
10. Did they get a reply? Who was more anxious for a reply, Peggy or Maddie? How do you know?
11. How did the girls know that Wanda liked them even though they had teased her?

## II. Thinking about the Text

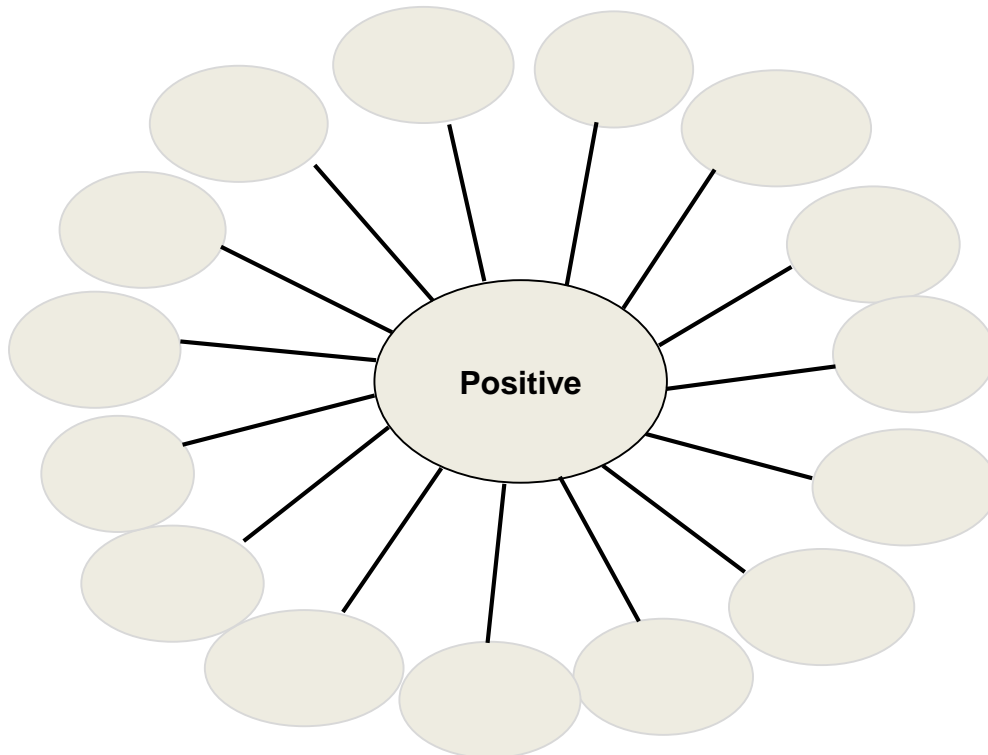
1. Why do you think Wanda's family moved to a different city? Do you think life there was going to be different for their family?
2. Maddie thought her silence was as bad as Peggy's teasing. Was she right?
3. Peggy says "I never thought she had the sense to know we were making fun of her anyway. I thought she was too dumb. And gee, look how she can draw!" What led Peggy to believe that Wanda was dumb? Did she change her opinion later?
4. What important decision did Maddie make? Why did she have to think hard to do so?
5. Why do you think Wanda gave Maddie and Peggy the drawings of the dresses? Why are they surprised?
6. Do you think Wanda really thought the girls were teasing her? Why or why not?

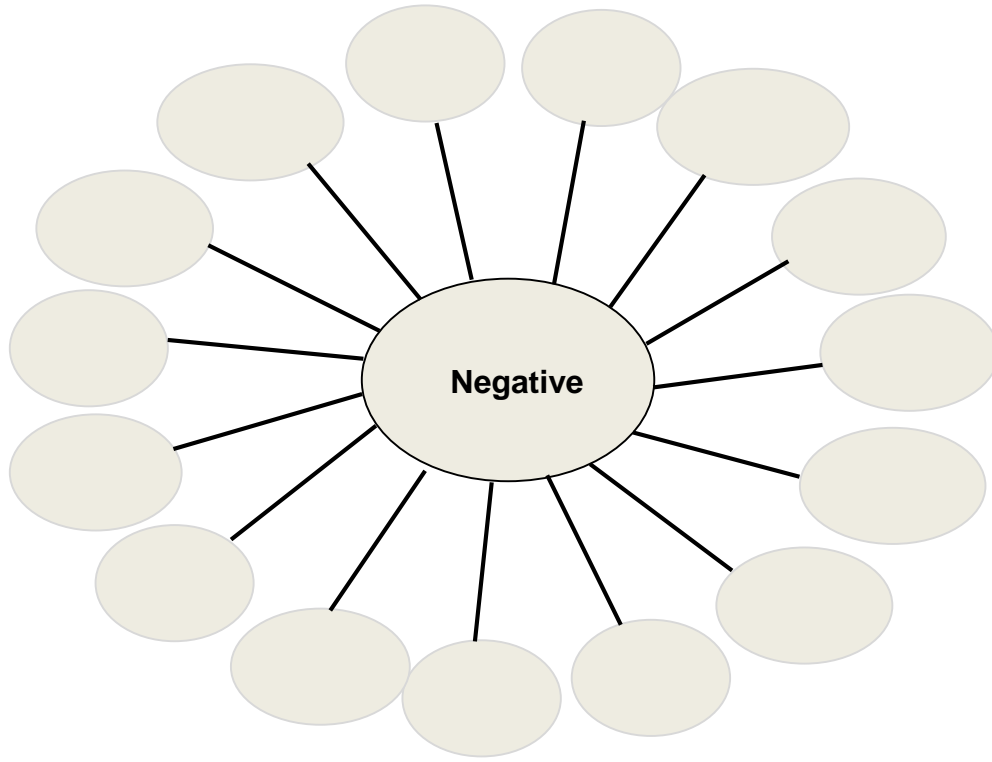
## 6. Grammar

### Thinking about Language

- I. Here are thirty adjectives describing human qualities. Discuss them with your partner and put them in the two word webs (given below) according to whether you think they show positive or negative qualities. You can consult a dictionary if you are not sure of the meanings of some of the words. You may also add to the list the positive or negative 'pair' of a given word.

kind, sarcastic, courteous, arrogant, insipid, timid, placid, cruel, haughty, proud, zealous, intrepid, sensitive, compassionate, introverted, stolid, cheerful, contented, thoughtless, vain, friendly, unforgiving, fashionable, generous, talented, lonely, determined, creative, miserable, complacent





II. What adjectives can we use to describe Peggy, Wanda and Maddie? You can choose adjectives from the list above. You can also add some of your own.

1. Peggy \_\_\_\_\_
2. Wanda \_\_\_\_\_
3. Maddie \_\_\_\_\_

III. 1. Find the sentences in the story with the following phrasal verbs.

*lined up    thought up    took off    stood by*

2. Look up these phrasal verbs in a dictionary to find out if they can be used in some other way. (Look at the entries for *line*, *think*, *take* and *stand* in the dictionary.) Find out

what other prepositions can go with these verbs. What does each of these phrasal verbs mean?

3. Use at least five such phrasal verbs in sentences of your own.

IV. Colours are used to describe feelings, moods and emotions. Match the following 'colour expressions' with a suggested paraphrase.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| (i) the Monday morning blues | – feel embarrassed/ angry/ ashamed                                     |
| (ii) go red in the face      | – feel very sick, as if about to vomit                                 |
| (iii) look green             | – sadness or depression after a weekend of fun                         |
| (iv) the red carpet          | – the sign or permission to begin an action                            |
| (v) blue-blooded             | – a sign of surrender or acceptance of defeat; a wish to stop fighting |
| (vi) a green belt            | – in an unlawful act; while doing something wrong                      |
| (vii) a blackguard           | – a photographic print of building plans; a detailed plan or scheme    |
| (viii) a grey area           | – land around a town or city where construction is prohibited by law   |
| (ix) a white flag            | – an area of a subject or a situation where matters are not very clear |
| (x) a blueprint              | – a dishonest person with no sense of right or wrong                   |
| (xi) red-handed              | – a special welcome  |
| (xii) the green light        | – of noble birth or from a royal family                                |

## 7. Writing

1. Look again at the letter which Wanda's father writes to Miss Mason, Wanda's teacher. Mr Petronski is not quite aware how to write a formal letter in English. Can you rewrite it more appropriately? Discuss the following with your partner before you do so.

The format of a formal letter – How to begin the letter and how to end it; the language of the letter needs to be formal. (Avoid informal words like “holler” and fragments like “No more ask why funny name.”) Write complete sentences.

2. Are you interested in drawing and painting? Ritu Kumar, one of India's best known dress designers, has no formal training in designing. She started by sketching ideas for her own dresses, and getting them stitched by a tailor. Ritu's friends liked her dresses so much that they asked her to design clothes for them, and even paid her for it!

Imagine you are going to make a career out of your hobby. What sort of things will you need to learn? Write a paragraph or two on this topic after consulting an expert or doing reference work on your chosen area.

3. Rewrite a part of the story as if Wanda is telling us her own story.





## **In This Lesson**

### **WHAT WE HAVE DONE**

Narrated the story of Wanda Petronski, a poor little Polish girl in an American school, and how her amazing drawing skills made her classmates feel ashamed about how they had treated her.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Help your students conduct a survey in their class to find out about the different talents that their classmates possess — anything from cooking to painting to singing to gardening. Divide the class into two equal sections, A and B. Each student from Section A talks with one student from Section B, and they interview each other for five or ten minutes, so that at the end of that time all the students have been interviewed. Then about five students from each section (more if there is time) talk about the talents of the person they interviewed. Make sure that some of the more 'marginalised' students from your class (each class has some of them) have their moment of 'fame.'

This exercise can be done after Units 5 and 6 have been completed, so that students understand the point of the exercise better.