

Class: FCE- Thursday 2 pm  
Student: Pavel Kůs  
Assignment 3: three tasks

Task 1: list the things she does with her hands (approx 14 actions)

She

- had stroked his face; (1)
- had patted his cheek; (1)
- had a trick peeling rather than sharpening pencils; (1)
- had of inserting her little finger into her ear and vibrating it very rapily; (2)
- would open an copybook to make a margin, imprint a vertical line, fold in the edge of the page, press, relase and smooth it out while panting (6)
- would moisten the glistening nib with susurrous lips before dipping it into the bapstimal int font (2)
- hunted though her collection of spelling tests (1)

In total, 14 activities („shar<sup>ing</sup>“ is not understood as an activity what she is used to do).

Task 2: Write sentences using:

take aback, affection, stupendous, pant, emit, puff, moisten, dip, sloppy, exquisite

My grandmother **was taken aback** by the result in the municipal election. She was so happy that the previous mayor, who is very unpleasant to her, ~~haven't~~ <sup>hadn't</sup> been elected into the town council.

People have a strong **affection** for a new mayor because of his social work before the election.

He has the **stupendous** news, his ticket was the winning one.

He should start to do something to be fit. Due to his lack of interest, he always **pants** when he goes the stairs.

Our Sun **emits** and absorbs light like an ideal black body.

We were unpleasantly surprised when our car's engine **puffed** a cloud of steam.

His eyes **moistened** by happiness when she told him the news.

He tried to have his head **dipped** under the water as long as he could.

Due to his **sloppiness** and lack of humbleness he destroyed a contract for many millions.

Nobody wants to be hospitalized in the hospital, but when that happens one can look forward an **exquisite** care.

Task 3:

1. Why does Nabokov focus on Mademoiselles' hands ?
2. How old is Mademoiselle? Give evidence for your speculations from text.
3. How would you characterize her? Is she a good teacher? Bad ? Or..... ? Why?

1. I am little bit confused at this point. On one hand, it seems to me it might be a symbol of his adversity to her. A sign of this can be found on the second line when he describes her hands as „unpleasant“. He also focuses on some of her character attributes which can be described



puff sth (suck in)  
ie. puff a cigarette  
puff up: emit  
dip expresses the motion  
of down + up... not  
staying for a  
period of time.

by her „hands“, e.g. „press, release, smooth it out“ show us that she is a hardworking woman who doesn't waste time and goes straight to things (sounds a little dry). On the other hand it can be understood as something <sup>that</sup> he likes about her. Or rather, he has some feelings for her; therefore he watches all her movement and experiences every moment when he is with her.

When he writes „little finger into her ear.“ it sounds daintily. /adj / dainty /  
I would expect that the author chooses her hands as a symbol of her personality which is described throughout the text.

2. I think she is a lady: „froggy gloss on their tight skin“ sounds like he tries to say, using unpretty words, she is old.
3. I would assume that she is a good teacher – she tries to have a positive relationship with the student (the author himself), see: „...no stranger had ever stroked my face“.

① I agree with all the details you bring up... very astute reading of the text. But the reason he chooses her hands to carry the weight of description is in the 1st sentence: that the hands of an adult live at the level of a child's line of sight. (paraphrase)

Otherwise nice work...  
See comments —

Thanks, P.

good.