

Hands actions:

to hover, to stroke, to pat, to insert, to give, to paint, to peel, to hold, to open, to imprint,  
to fold, to press, to release, to smooth, to twist around,

Vocabulary:

I **took** **aback** her by my decision to take a day off.

I have **affection** for organised people.

Despite <sup>winning</sup> that he won a **stupendous** amount of money; he didn't give his children a penny.

He is **puffing** and **panting** because he has run <sup>a long distance</sup>.

The lamp **emitted** light on my opened book.

He **moistened** his finger and turned the page of the book.

She **dipped** her chips into ketchup.

His phone was a bit **sloppy** so he put it into a bowl of rice. ? no idea

They cook an **exquisite** salmon there.

Take aback (transitive phrasal verb)  
has 3 possible structures:  
1/ take Peter aback (noun) inside  
2. take aback Peter (noun) outside  
3. / take him aback (pronoun) inside

but never.  
Take aback him  
pronoun outside

Questions & Answers:

Why does Nabokov focus on Mademoiselles' hands?

*Nabokov tries to remember his Mademoiselle, after a long time, I suppose, since the text is from his memoir. Besides, wealthier parents with a good social status, such as the Nabokov's parents, often paid <sup>for</sup> their children <sup>to have</sup> the services of Mademoiselles, French-speaking female teachers, in nowadays Russia. I think that Mademoiselle's hands serve as a distinctive mark for her character in Nabokov's memory. He was probably fascinated by all her old-fashion rituals and activities (or mannerisms as he said) involving hands.*

agree with all of this; however, the reason for his use of her hands in his description is given in the 1st sentence: an adult's hands is on a child's line of vision (para phrasal)

How old is Mademoiselle? Give evidence for your speculations from text.

*Based on the text, I think she was much older than Nabokov because he describes her hands as "unpleasant" having "the froggy gloss" and "tight skin"; moreover, he mentions "patting [his] cheek in sign of spontaneous affection" which grandmas usually do.*

How would you characterize her? Is she a good teacher? Bad ? Or..... ? Why?

*To be honest, it is hard to describe her character and ability to teach because the text presents only Nabokov's (young) perspective which can be distorted by his memories. However, based on that, I would say she was nice in general, but her style of teaching was a bit old-fashioned (which seems funny to judge from today's view), and relatively pedantic.*

Nice work.  
see comments -  
Thanks, J.

good