

**Agrégation interne d'anglais**

**Session 2024**

**Épreuve EPC**

**Exposé de la préparation  
d'un cours**

**EPC**

**331**

Ce sujet comprend 3 documents :

- Document 1 : Frances Benjamin Johnston, *Frances Benjamin Johnston, full-length portrait, seated in front of fireplace, facing left, holding cigarette in one hand and a beer stein in the other, in her Washington, D.C. studio*, photographic print mounted on layered paper: gelatin silver, 1896.
- Document 2 : Virginia Woolf, "Chapter I", *A Room of One's Own*, London: Penguin Classics, 2020 [1929].
- Document 3 : Graham Swift, *Mothering Sunday*, London: Scribner, 2016.

Compte tenu des caractéristiques de ce dossier et des différentes possibilités d'exploitation qu'il offre, vous indiquerez à quel niveau d'apprentissage vous pourriez le destiner et quels objectifs vous vous fixeriez. Vous présenterez et justifierez votre démarche pour atteindre ces objectifs.

**Document 1** : Frances Benjamin Johnston, *Frances Benjamin Johnston, full-length portrait, seated in front of fireplace, facing left, holding cigarette in one hand and a beer stein in the other, in her Washington, D.C. studio, photographic print mounted on layered paper: gelatin silver, 1896.*



Document iconographique également consultable sur la tablette multimédia fournie.

**Document 2** : Virginia Woolf, "Chapter I", *A Room of One's Own*, London: Penguin Classics, 2020 [1929], pp. 1–2.

But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction — what has that got to do with a room of one's own? I will try to explain. When you asked me to speak about women and fiction I sat down on the banks of a river and began to wonder what the words meant. They might mean simply a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs Gaskell and one would have done. But at second sight the words seemed not so simple. The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. But when I began to consider the subject in this last way, which seemed the most interesting, I soon saw that it had one fatal drawback. I should never be able to come to a conclusion. I should never be able to fulfil what is, I understand, the first duty of a lecturer — to hand you after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece for ever. All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point — a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved. I have shirked the duty of coming to a conclusion upon these two questions — women and fiction remain, so far as I am concerned, unsolved problems. But in order to make some amends I am going to do what I can to show you how I arrived at this opinion about the room and the money. I am going to develop in your presence as fully and freely as I can the train of thought which led me to think this. Perhaps if I lay bare the ideas, the prejudices, that lie behind this statement you will find that they have some bearing upon women and some upon fiction. At any rate, when a subject is highly controversial — and any question about sex is that — one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker. Fiction here is likely to contain more truth than fact. Therefore I propose, making use of all the liberties and licences of a novelist, to tell you the story of the two days that preceded my coming here — how, bowed down by the weight of the subject which you have laid upon my shoulders, I pondered it, and made it work in and out of my daily life. I need not say that what I am about to

describe has no existence; Oxbridge is an invention; so is Fernham; 'I' is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being. Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth 45 keeping. If not, you will of course throw the whole of it into the waste-paper basket and forget all about it.

Here then was I (call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please — it is not a matter of any importance) sitting on the banks of a river a week or two ago in fine October weather, lost in 50 thought.

**Document 3** : Graham Swift, *Mothering Sunday*, London: Scribner, 2016, pp. 96 – 98.

One day, when it had long been her business—her profession, even the reason why she was ‘well known’—to write stories and to deal intricately with words, she would be asked another perennial and somewhat tedious question: ‘So when—so how did you become a writer?’ She had answered  
5 it enough times and, really, you couldn’t answer it in a different way every time. Yet people—surprisingly since her occupation was telling stories—did not jump to the conclusion that in giving her standard answer, she might also be telling a story, only kidding, as it were. They took her at her word. And, after all, it was a good answer, a fairly unchallengeable one.

10 ‘At birth. At birth, of course,’ she would say, even when she was asked this question in her seventies or eighties or nineties, when her birth, always a mysterious fact, now seemed the remotest and strangest of events.

‘I was an orphan’, she would divulge for the umpteenth time. ‘I never knew my father or mother. Or even my real name. If I ever had one. That  
15 has always seemed to me the perfect basis for becoming a writer—particularly a writer of fiction. To have no credentials at all. To be given a clean sheet, or rather, to *be* a clean sheet yourself. A nobody. How can you become a somebody without first being a nobody?’

And a characteristic glint might enter her eye, an additional crease  
20 appear at the corner of her mouth, and her interviewer might think that, yes, there was a touch of slyness here. Jane Fairchild was known for being a crafty old bird. But the gaze, for all the glinting, was steady, the face, for all its knottiness, essentially straight. It even seemed to be putting the innocent counter-question: You think I would tell you a lie?

25 ‘Not just an orphan,’ she might go on, ‘but a foundling. Now there’s a word for you. Not such a common one, is it, these days? Foundling. It sounds like a word from the eighteenth century. Or from a fairy tale. But I was left on the steps of an orphanage—in some sort of bundle, I suppose—and taken in. That is what I was told. There were places in those days where  
30 that sort of thing could happen. 1901. It was a different world. Not the start in life any of us might wish for. But then in some ways’—the glint would appear again—‘the perfect one.

‘My name, Fairchild, was one of the names that were given to foundling children. There were lots of Fairchilds, Goodchilds, Goodbodys and so on  
35 who came out of orphanages—so that they would have, I suppose, a well-intentioned start in life. People sometimes ask me—goodness knows why—do I write under my own name, my real name? Well yes I do—it was my given name. Jane Fairchild. But it might as well be a pen name. I might as

well call myself Jane Foundling. In fact, it has a rather pleasing ring, don't  
40 you think?'

'And the Jane?'

'Oh Jane is just any old girl's name, isn't it? Young girl's, I mean. Jane  
Austen, Jane Eyre, Jane Russell...'