

Introduction to *Uncle Vanya*

Storyboard

February 2nd, 2025

Instructional designer:

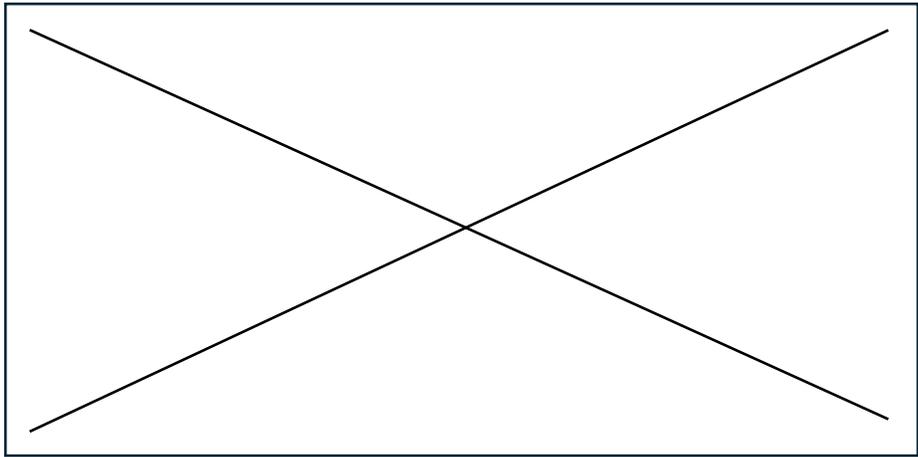
Sasha Khmelnik

Instructional goal:

After completing this module, creative writing graduate students will read and meaningfully engage with an English translation of *Uncle Vanya*, able to connect to its content personally as humans and professionally as writers, integrating into their reading the play's historical and literary context and its place in present-day culture.

INTRO PAGE

Uncle Vanya



Implementation/Design Notes:

Persistent tabs on the right of the screen will let learners navigate between sections at any point

Objective:

Motivate further engagement

Content:

Written in 1897, Uncle Vanya has been produced again and again in large and small productions and continues to be billed as “the play for our times.”

NYTimes: “Why Uncle Vanya Is the Play for Our Anxious Era”

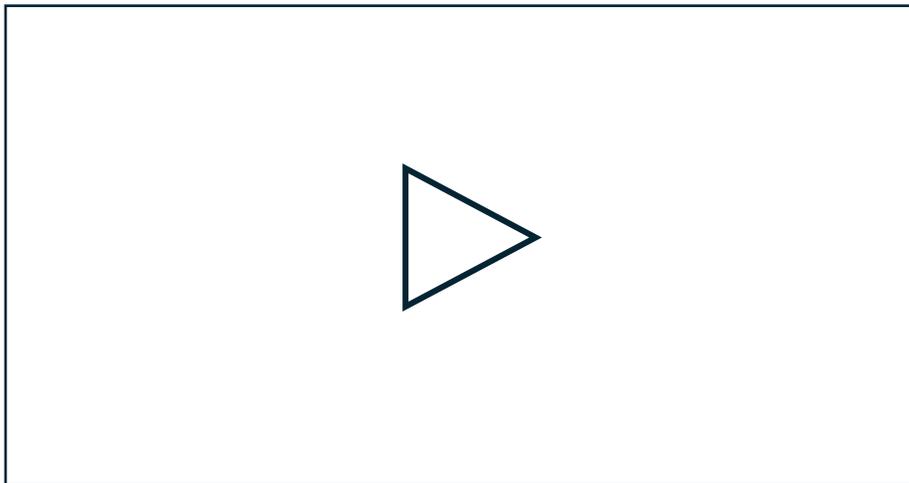
Links to similar articles

Interactions:

Navigate to one of the four sections of the module

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Uncle Vanya



Objective:

Make the historical context in which the play is set more approachable, personally relevant, and engaging

Content:

Video overview of 1860-1904 Russian history and Chekhov's lifetime in a way that relates it to his writing and to contemporary concerns

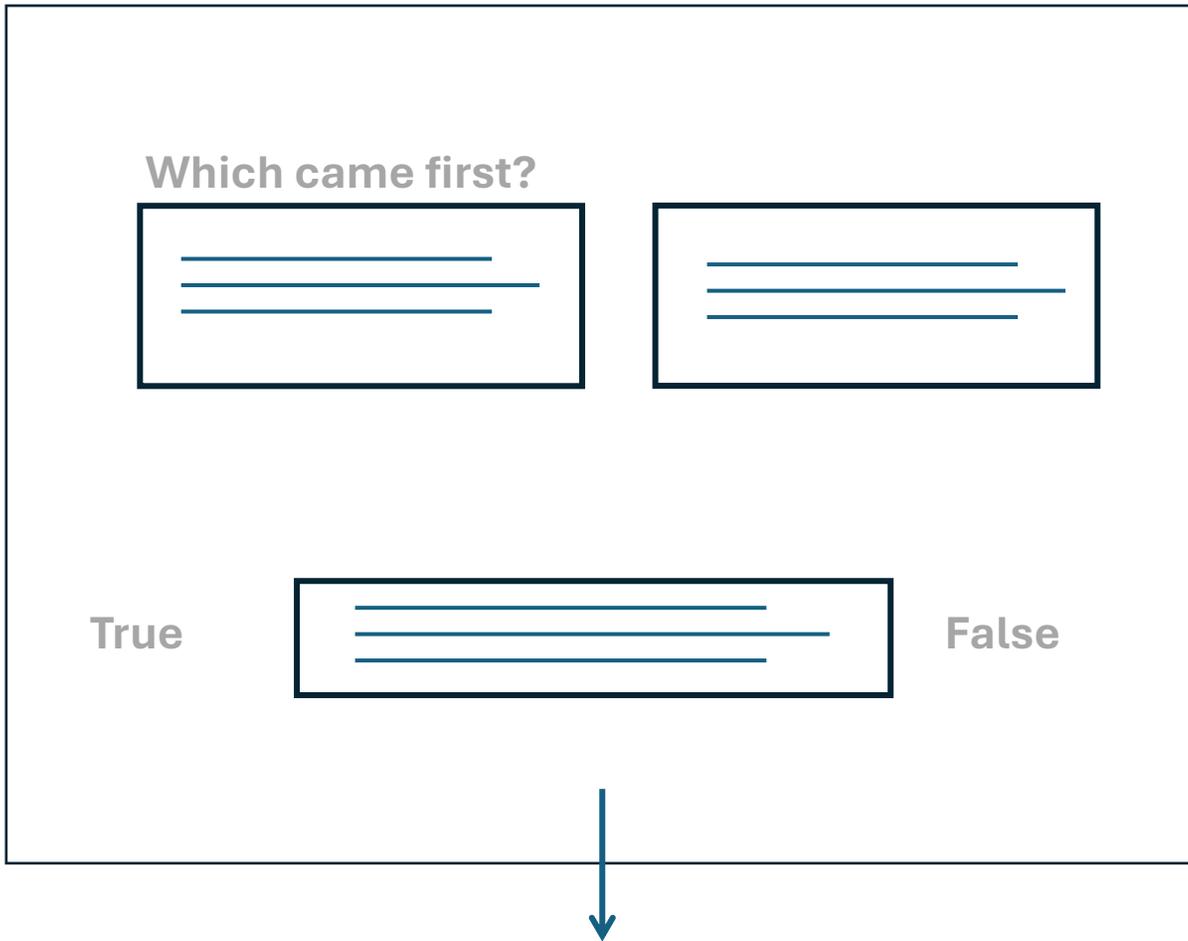
Interactions:

Play the video

Implementation/Design Notes:

The scroll to the next section will be suggested by an arrow or button to create a sense of intentional flow

HISTORICAL CONTEXT CONT'D



Implementation/Design Notes:

A new question will appear each time a learner answers correctly. When a learner gets a question wrong, they will be given a short explanation and prompted to try again. No score will be reported. This interaction should be quick and seamless, not a test.

Objective:

Trigger critical thinking / synthesis, establish a facility with the historical moment, and build a sense of self-efficacy

Content:

Pairs of historical events mentioned in the preceding video

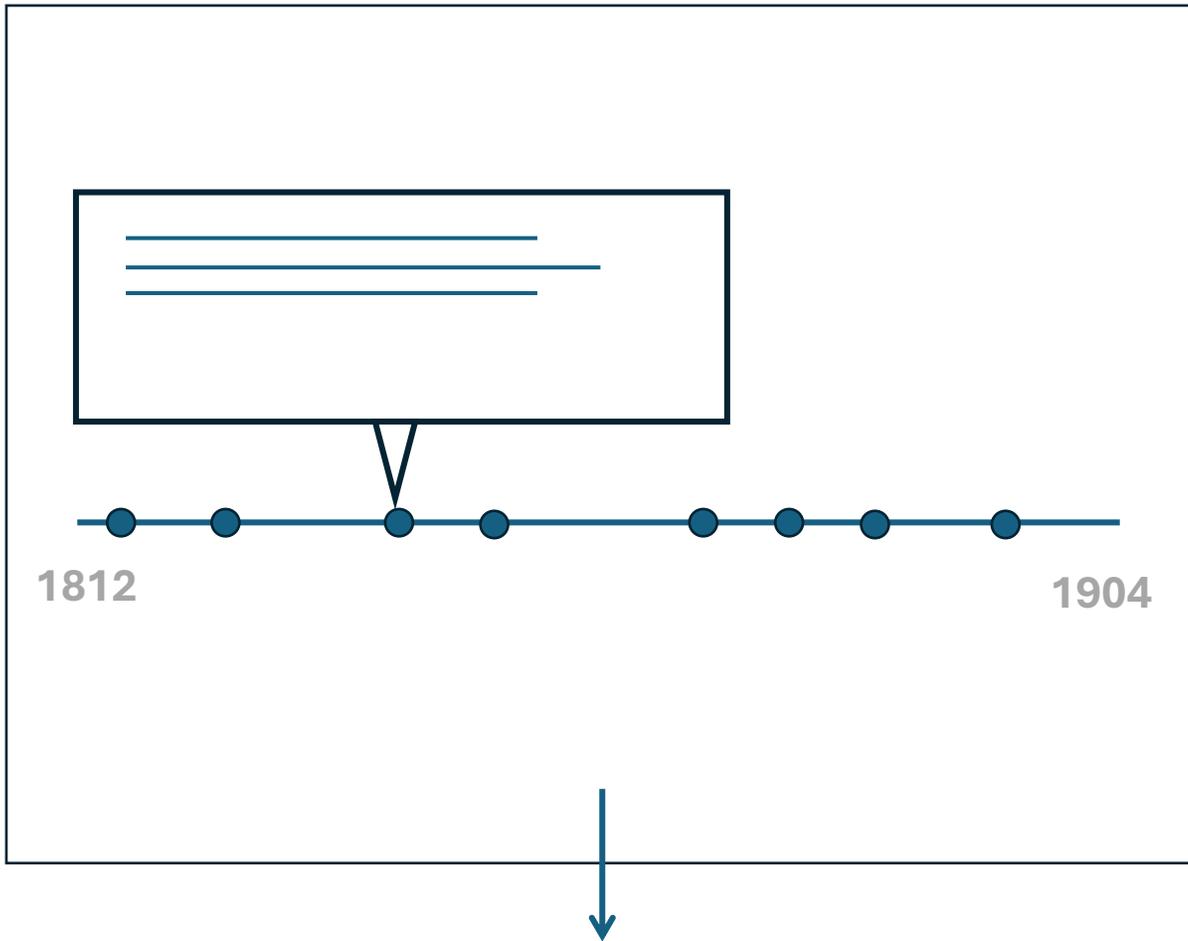
Descriptive statements or historic facts written on cards, some true, some false

Interactions:

Learner has to select the earlier of two historical events

Learner has to identify statements as true or false

HISTORICAL CONTEXT CONT'D



Implementation/Design Notes:

The contextual info will be implemented as an overlay that moves to different points on the timeline. For phase 2 development, a unique mobile implementation should be considered.

Objective:

Organize the historical timeline in a written form with opportunities for additional context

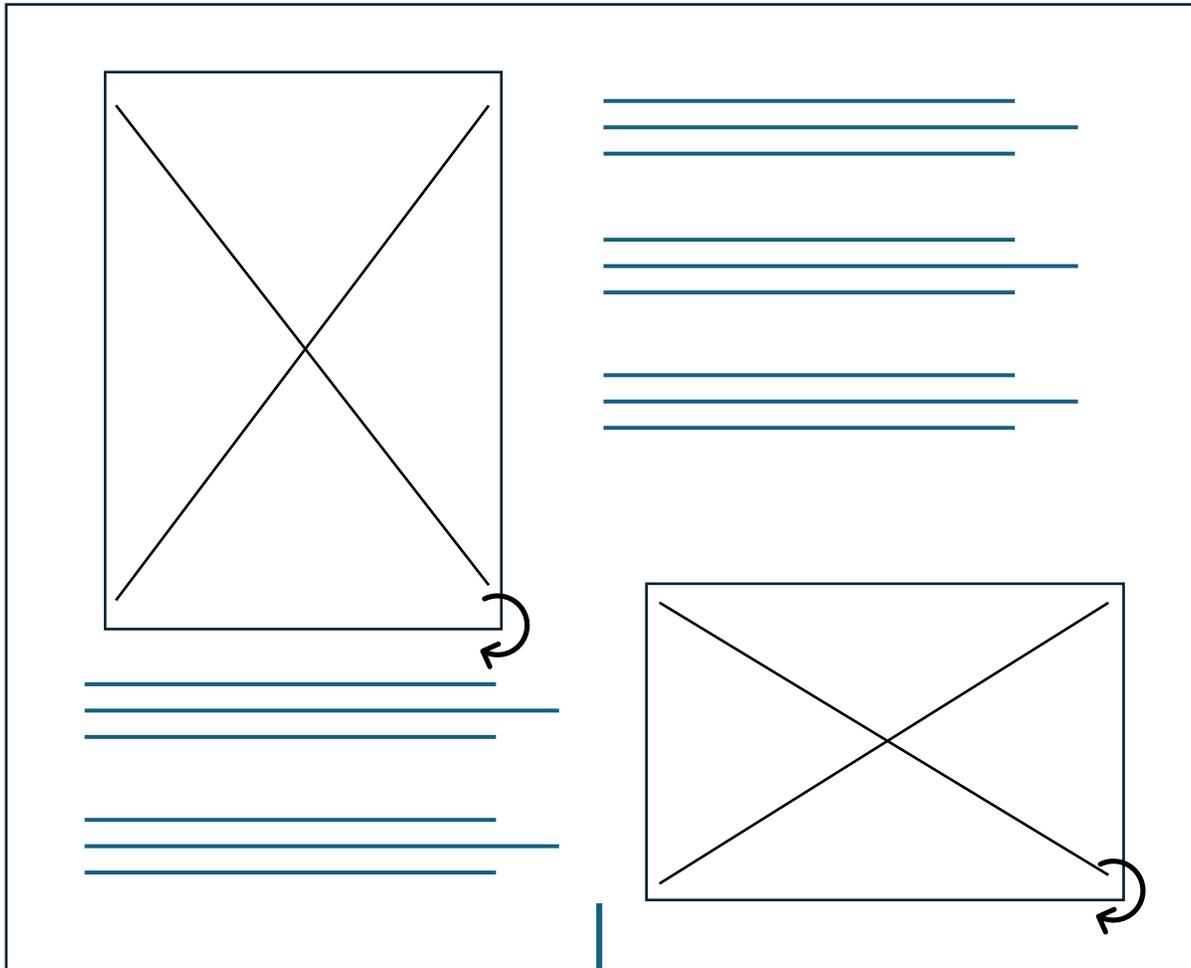
Content:

Key moments in Russian history as well as Chekhov's life, arranged on a timeline. The detail view will include context relevant to Chekhov and his writing as well as occasional literary and historical context likely to be familiar to the audience.

Interactions:

Click on timeline points to reveal added context

HISTORICAL CONTEXT CONT'D



Implementation/Design Notes:

This section will be laid out in an engaging way, with short blocks of text that are easy to absorb and images that directly support understanding the context of Chekhov's life.

Objective:

Make Chekhov relatable as a writer and person in the historical context

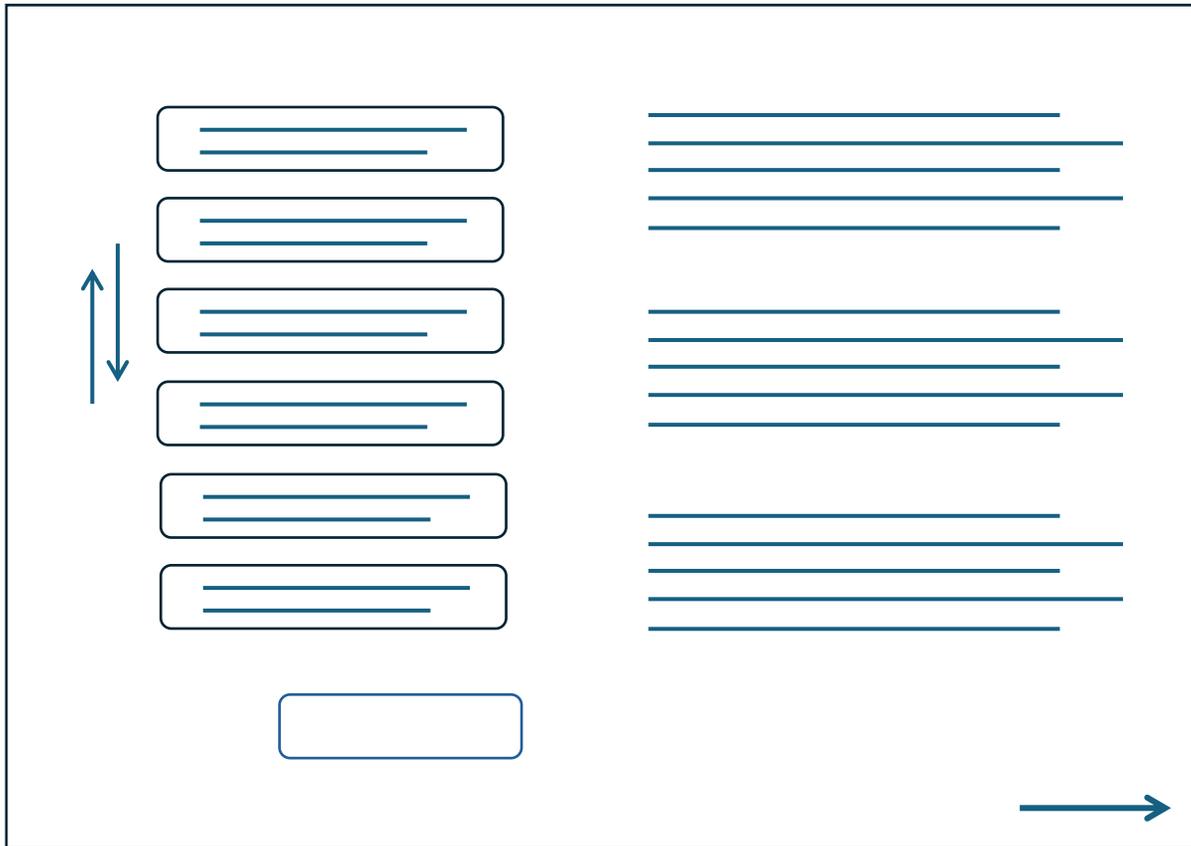
Content:

Photos may include Chekhov and his parents, the house where he lived, the village where he grew up, possibly scenes that ground his life in Moscow. Facts will focus on the experiences that informed his writing.

Interactions:

Clicking the images will flip them over to reveal short bits of info about the subject of the photo

HISTORICAL CONTEXT CONT'D



Implementation/Design Notes:

The learner will arrange the drag-drop cards, then click “Check Timeline.” If the timeline is incorrect, a hint will be displayed summarizing the overall historical arc. The learner will have unlimited attempts.

Objective:

Low-stakes opportunity to test new contextual knowledge and feel a sense of accomplishment

Content:

A list of events from Russian history and Chekhov’s life to be ordered in the correct way.

Feedback will include hints about the overall arc of historical events and Chekhov’s life in relation to this.

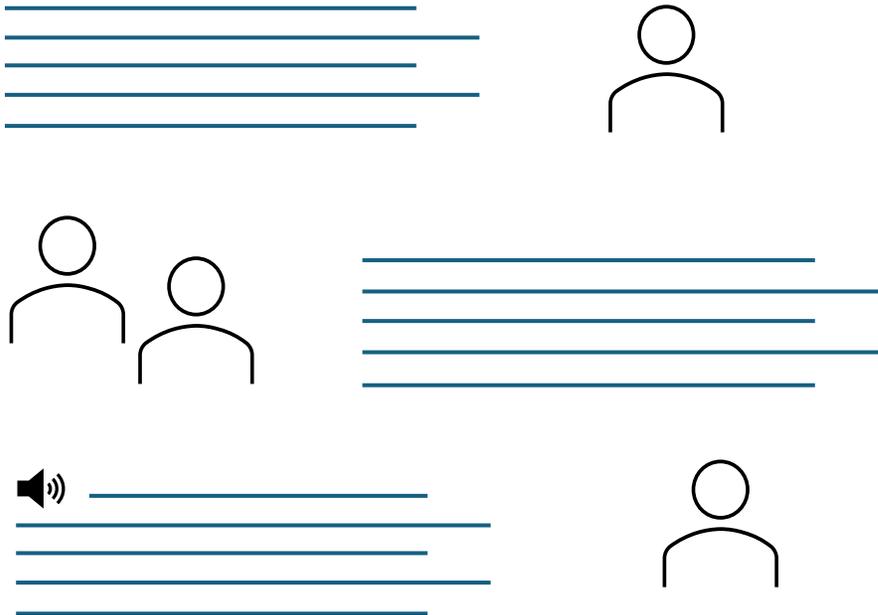
Interactions:

Drag-and-drop timeline sorting exercise

Navigate to other module sections

CHEKHOV AS WRITER

Uncle Vanya



Implementation/Design Notes:

This page will feature the quotes in an easy-to-read, organized way. Original audio will be offered if available.

Objective:

Build interest in reading the play among writing students by discussing Chekhov's strengths and beliefs as a writer

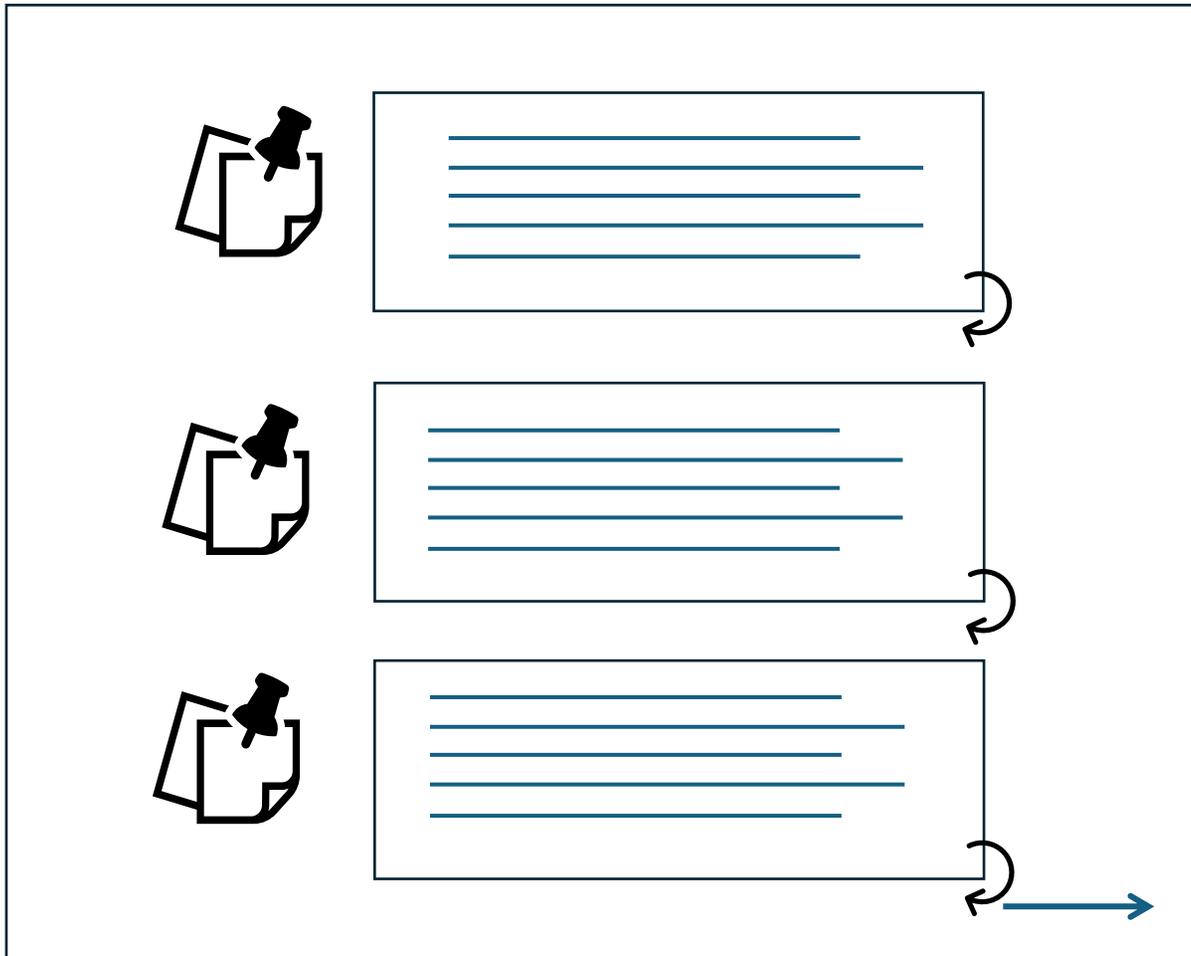
Content:

Quotes from other famous writers (ones learners will recognize) characterizing Chekhov's place in literature

Interactions:

Play audio clips (if possible to locate)

CHEKHOV AS WRITER CONT'D



Implementation/Design Notes:

The learner can flip each card/topic to see an example from a Chekhov story or play and a link that will open a new tab and take the learner to the text of the story

Objective:

Build interest in reading the play among writing students by discussing Chekhov's strengths and beliefs as a writer

Content:

Quotes from Chekhov's letters grouped by common writing questions/problems that learners will have a context to engage with.

Each quote will have an example passage from a Chekhov story with a link to the text of the full story

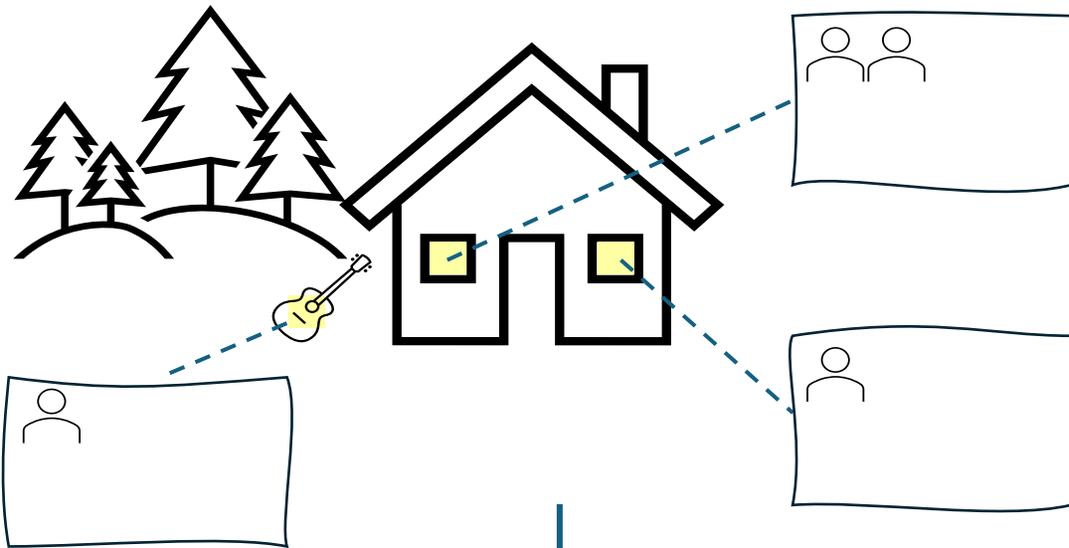
Interactions:

Click to rotate each card and see example from Chekhov's writing

Navigate to other module sections

INTRO TO THE PLAY

Uncle Vanya



Implementation/Design Notes:

The diagram of the estate will have clickable hotspots that reveal information about characters. Ideally, it would be possible to reveal all the hotspots at once. The location of hotspots has meaning for the play.

Objective:

Familiarize learners with character names and relationships to help learners overcome obstacles to engagement with the text

Content:

Excerpts of some of the stage directions that contextualize the action

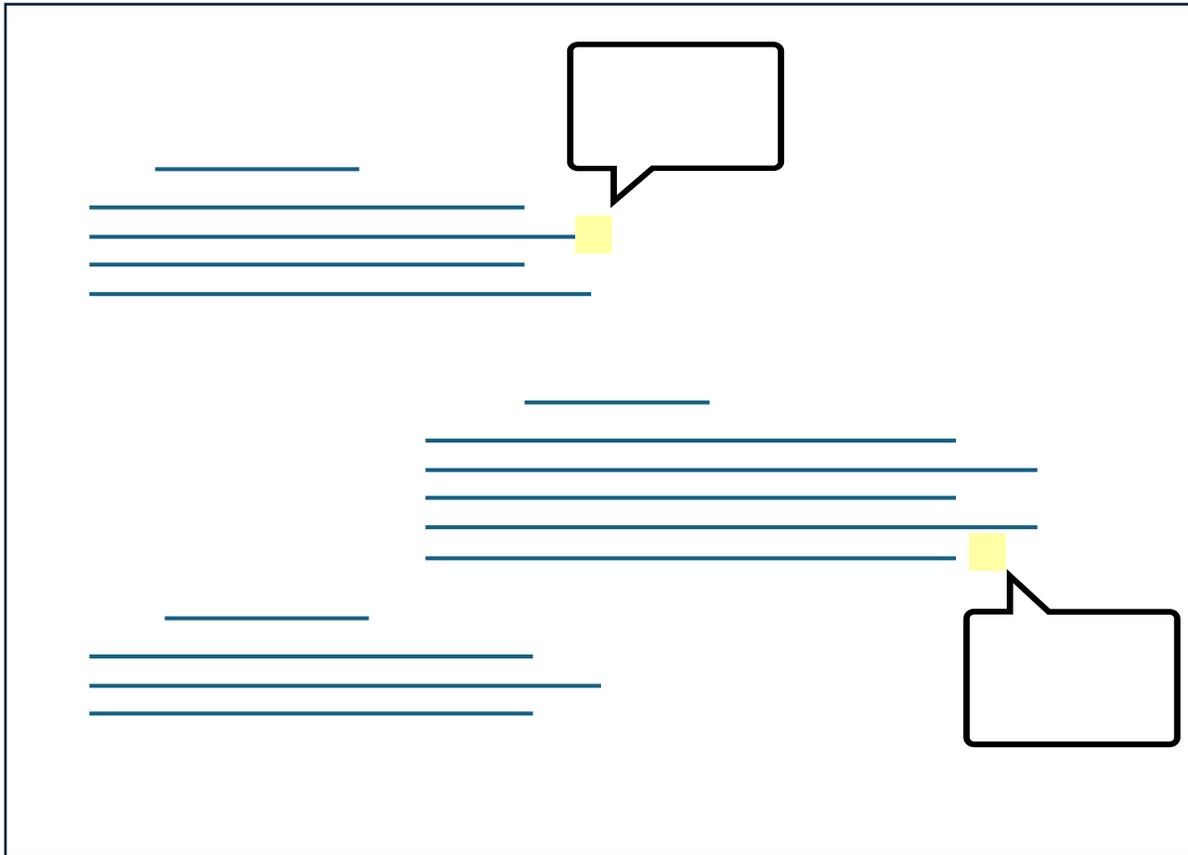
A diagram of the estate house and surrounds

Excerpts from the play that help characterize the characters (“I could have been Dostoyevsky!”)

Interactions:

Click on windows/hot-spots to reveal characters and relationships

INTRO TO THE PLAY CONT'D



Objective:

Help learners overcome the initial barriers to engaging with the play: disorientation at the start

Content:

Opening text of the play with contextual explanations

Interactions:

The learner triggers an unfolding of the text of the first exchange in the play

The learner plays the audio transcript

Implementation/Design Notes:

The text should build progressively as each character speaks and the callouts should appear when appropriate to provide additional detail. Learner triggers the progressive reveal and has the option to pause and restart as well as options for audio or no audio

INTRO TO THE PLAY CONT'D

Which name doesn't belong?

Which characters run the estate?



Objective:

Help learners become familiar with the characters and their relationship to one another to reduce some of the cognitive load of reading the play

Content:

Test-yourself questions that help learners practice the basic facts that will help them to more easily enter the play.

Interactions:

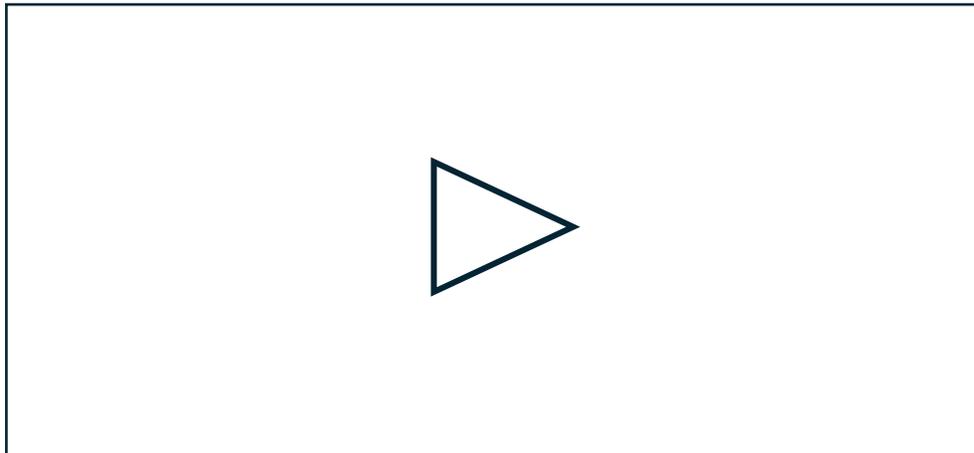
Quick questions and drag and drop exercises

Implementation/Design Notes:

Learner will receive immediate feedback with added contextual detail and will have the chance to get the question right. No score will be reported.

PRODUCTIONS

Uncle Vanya



Objective:

Relate the text/history to modern day through contemporary productions and interviews with familiar actors

Content:

Video clips of interviews and excerpts from recorded productions.

Interactions:

Scroll through videos

Play videos

Navigate to other module sections

Implementation/Design Notes:

Playing one video will pause other videos. Videos will be clips organized by year and production.