

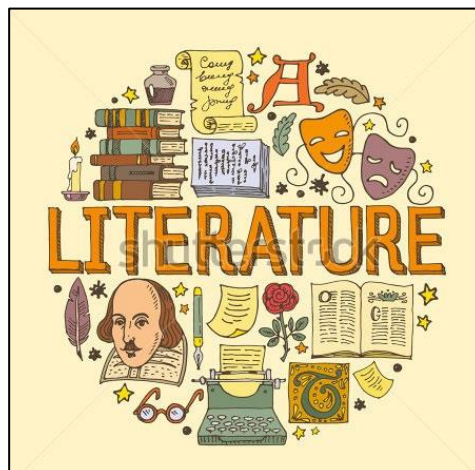


Transition Tasks

A Level English Literature

Year 11 → Year 12

Name:



Overview of preparation material:

Welcome to A Level English Literature!

At Heston Community School, we study AQA English Literature B:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-literature-b-7716-7717>. You will complete two units – ‘Comedy’ (*Twelfth Night*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Small Island*) and ‘Elements of Social and Political Protest Writing’ (*The Kite Runner*, *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Blake’s poetry) – as well as two extended pieces of coursework on Betjeman’s poetry and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* or another suitable text of your choice.

To help you to make the best possible start to Year 12, we have compiled the following pack which consists of two key sections.

The first section is called ‘Consolidating GCSE’ and is designed to improve your academic writing and essay construction skills and build on your knowledge of context and structure.

You do not need to print this section – you can instead complete all work on paper. You do not necessarily need to bring this with you to your first A Level lesson. However, it is advisable to start with this section as these skills are tremendously important in successfully transitioning to A Level study.

The second section is called ‘KS5 Preparation’. You will be expected to complete the pre-reading and bring any written work from this section with you to your first A Level lesson. Two tasks in particular are very important – one asks you to annotate an extract from the sitcom ‘Frasier’ and another guides you through engaging with the elements of social and political protest within the song ‘Strange Fruit’. You are advised which pages it may be helpful to print but again, if you are unable to do so, please just complete all work on paper.

On the next page, you will also see some recommended reading and viewing to help you prepare further for the texts you will study at A Level. English Literature is primarily a reading and essay-based subject so this is a very important aspect of your preparation.

Good luck and if you have any questions, please just send an email to: nd'lima@hestoncs.org

With best wishes,
Miss D’Lima

Compulsory Tasks <i>These must be completed before you start your course in September</i>	Minimum Time	Date
1. Consolidating GCSE: Writing essays and developing SPAG (p. 3 – 26) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expression - Punctuation - Sentence structure - Writing in essays - Constructing an argument 	5 hours	
2. Consolidating GCSE: Revising structure and context (p. 26 – 38) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structure - Context 	4 hours	
3. KS5 Preparation: Widening your interpretation of texts (p. 39 – 49) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding what AO1 is in English Literature at A Level - Understanding what genre questions look like 	5 hours	
4. KS5 Preparation: AO1 is for me – genre study (comedy) (p. 50 – 58) <i>Your work on this section of the pack should be brought with you to your first lessons in Year 12.</i>	5 hours	
5. KS5 Preparation: AO1 is for me – genre study (social and political protest writing) (p. 58 – 84) <i>Your work on this section of the pack should be brought with you to your first lessons in Year 12.</i>	5 hours	
6. Recommending viewing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Twelfth Night</i> by William Shakespeare: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-twelfth-night-1910-online https://www.amazon.co.uk/Twelfth-Night-Sheila-Atim/dp/B07HNDRRHB - Comedy programmes which will support your Year 12 study (an episode of each will suffice. Make notes whilst you watch on the type of comedy created and what is being commented on). <i>The Simpsons</i> (available via Disney+ or on television), <i>Friends</i> (available via Netflix or on television), <i>Gavin and Stacey</i> (available via BBC iPlayer), a satirical comedy like <i>Mock the Week</i> or <i>Have I Got News for You?</i> (available via BBC iPlayer) 	6 hours	
7. Recommended reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studied text: <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> by Margaret Atwood - Recommended extended reading: <i>1984</i> by George Orwell, <i>The Road</i> by Cormac McCarthy, <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> by Ray Bradbury, <i>Beloved</i> by Toni Morrison - Studied text: <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> by Oscar Wilde - Recommended extended reading: https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/i/the-importance-of-being-earnest/critical-essays/themes-in-the-importance-of-being-earnest, https://www.bl.uk/works/the-importance-of-being-earnest, <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>The Sign of the Four</i> by Arthur Conan Doyle, Victorian era television e.g. <i>Ripper Street</i>, <i>Victoria</i>, <i>Sherlock Holmes</i>, <i>Bleak House</i> 	10 hours	

Optional Challenge Tasks <i>These will look impressive on your UCAS Personal Statements</i>	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra viewing <p>Lectures/Speeches</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Inspiring Truth in Fiction by Tomas Elemans Link 2. Ten Best Literary TED Talks of the Year Link 3. Clarence B. Jones recommends the Best Speeches of All Time Link 4. Penguin Literary Podcasts Link <p>Documentaries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Real George Orwell Link 2. In The Shadow of Kafka Link 3. What Was Virginia Woolf Afraid Of? Link <p>Film</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy (Dir: T. Alfredson, 2011) 2. The 39 Steps (Dir: A. Hitchcock, 1935) 3. Gone With The Wind (Dir: D. O. Selznick, 1939) 4. Goodfellas (Dir: M. Scorsese, 1990) <p>TV</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pride and Prejudice (1995 TV Miniseries, J. Austen) 2. North and South (2004 TV Miniseries, E. Gaskell) 3. Jane Eyre (2006 TV Miniseries, C. Bronte) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider reading: classic and critically acclaimed works <p><i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> by Jane Austen <i>Jane Eyre</i> by Charlotte Bronte <i>The Bloody Chamber</i> by Angela Carter <i>Heart of Darkness</i> by Joseph Conrad <i>Great Expectations</i> by Charles Dickens <i>Birdsong</i> by Sebastian Faulks <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> by Thomas Hardy <i>Atonement</i> by Ian McEwan <i>Cloud Atlas</i> by David Mitchell <i>The Bell Jar</i> by Sylvia Plath <i>White Teeth</i> by Zadie Smith <i>Dracula</i> by Bram Stoker <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> by Oscar Wilde <i>Mrs Dalloway</i> by Virginia Woolf</p>	

Section 1: Writing essays and developing SPAG

Note:

If you are unable to print Section 1 and 2, please just complete them on paper.

You do not need to bring work on these sections with you in September – it is purely to develop your writing skills and revise some components of your GCSE studies.

Expression

Below are some key issues often evident in Year 12 writing:

- Run-on sentences
- Lack of capital letters and punctuation
- Restricted punctuation (no use of colon, semi-colon or dash)
- Wrongly used long words
- Clichéd or wrongly used connectives
- Verb tense confusion
- Lack of singular/plural agreement
- Lack of formality
- Spelling issues
- Limited vocabulary choices
- Lack of cohesion within and between paragraphs
- Lack of fluency in word choice or word order, missing words
- Non-standard grammar

Use the self-assessment below to diagnose any issues currently in your work.

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
I can write fluently, never missing out vital words or making poor choices about vocabulary, verb tense or word order.			
I know the difference between standard and non-standard English grammar.			
I read widely and am confident that I can understand challenging texts written for academic, business or intellectual purposes.			
I have an advanced, ever-growing vocabulary.			
I can use a full range of punctuation, including full stops, capitals, commas, semi-colons, dashes, colons and ellipsis.			
I can spell homophones ('soundalike' words) accurately.			
I can recognise a wide range of prefixes, suffixes and word roots and guess the meaning of unfamiliar words.			

I can spell low-frequency, specialist terminology correctly.			
I can vary syntax (word order within a sentence) for specific effect.			
I can use a range of connectives and adverbs to link ideas.			
I can use a range of paragraph lengths for specific effect.			
I can deduce and infer meaning, recognising underlying bias or author assumptions.			
I can confidently explain and analyse, in sufficient depth for the purpose of the reader or listener.			
I experience a wide range of spoken language, i.e. I watch the news, challenging documentaries, I listen to political debates or phone-ins on the radio.			
I do not need other people to translate difficult texts for me or to re-draft my own writing.			

➤ *What are your current strengths?*

➤ *What are your current areas of developments?*

- *How can you improve on these? For example, could you read more of a range of texts? Could you practise writing for different contexts? Could you use BBC Bitesize and Skillswise to improve on the basics?*

Punctuation

Read the information about each type of punctuation. Write up three sentences containing each type of punctuation about the subject English. Use the sentence starters if you need help.

Rule 1
Use a colon after an independent clause that is followed by a word or phrase that answers or explains the idea set up in the independent clause.

Rule 2
Use a colon after an independent clause that introduces a list of items.

Tip: the second clause must be a dependent phrase or word (i.e. doesn't work by itself)

Barry wanted only one thing from life: lots of money.

There are several activities to do on the beach: swim, snorkel, build sandcastles, or read a book.

In English, you will cover a range of books, including:...

English is a subject about the human experience: it is all about...

The study of English is interesting:...

Reading widely is very important;...

Semicolon ;

Used to replace a full stop between two sentences that are closely linked.

Call me tomorrow; I'll know the answer then.

Can replace connectives of two closely linked main clauses, such as but / because.

Florence was very keen on swimming; her sister preferred cycling.



Brackets are used to separate off information that isn't essential to the meaning of the rest of the sentence.

Mount Everest (8,828m) is the highest mountain in the world.

Robyn has the longest hair (which is red) in the class.

My favourite book (set in...) is ...

English Literature (the study of...) is one of my options at A Level because...

Punctuation test for adults – select the correctly punctuated sentence from below. At the end, check your answers.

- 1
- a) Spain is a beautiful country; the beache's are warm, sandy and spotlessly clean.
 - b) Spain is a beautiful country: the beaches are warm, sandy and spotlessly clean.
 - c) Spain is a beautiful country, the beaches are warm, sandy and spotlessly clean.
 - d) Spain is a beautiful country; the beaches are warm, sandy and spotlessly clean.

Check your answer

- 2
- a) The children's books were all left in the following places: Mrs Smith's room, Mr Powell's office and the caretaker's cupboard.
 - b) The children's books were all left in the following places; Mrs Smith's room, Mr Powell's office and the caretaker's cupboard.
 - c) The childrens books were all left in the following places: Mrs Smiths room, Mr Powells office and the caretakers cupboard.
 - d) The children's books were all left in the following places, Mrs Smith's room, Mr Powell's office and the caretaker's cupboard.

Check your answer

- 3
- a) She always enjoyed sweets, chocolate, marshmallows and toffee apples.
 - b) She always enjoyed: sweets, chocolate, marshmallows and toffee apples.
 - c) She always enjoyed sweets chocolate marshmallows and toffee apples.
 - d) She always enjoyed sweet's, chocolate, marshmallow's and toffee apple's.

Check your answer

- 4
- a) Sarah's uncle's car was found without its wheels in that old derelict warehouse.

- b) Sarah's uncle's car was found without its wheels in that old, derelict warehouse.
- c) Sarah's uncle's car was found without its wheels in that old, derelict warehouse.
- d) Sarah's uncle's car was found without its wheels in that old, derelict warehouse.

Check your answer

5

- a) I can't see Tim's car, there must have been an accident.
- b) I can't see Tim's car; there must have been an accident.
- c) I can't see Tim's car there must have been an accident.
- d) I can't see Tim's car; there must have been an accident.

Check your answer

6

- a) Paul's neighbours were terrible; so his brother's friends went round to have a word.
- b) Paul's neighbours were terrible: so his brother's friends went round to have a word.
- c) Paul's neighbours were terrible, so his brother's friends went round to have a word.
- d) Paul's neighbours were terrible so his brother's friends went round to have a word.

Check your answer

7

- a) Tim's gran, a formidable woman, always bought him chocolate, cakes, sweets and a nice fresh apple.
- b) Tim's gran a formidable woman always bought him chocolate, cakes, sweets and a nice fresh apple.
- c) Tim's gran, a formidable woman, always bought him chocolate cakes sweets and a nice fresh apple.
- d) Tim's gran, a formidable woman, always bought him chocolate, cakes, sweets and a nice fresh apple.

Check your answer

8

- a) After stealing Tims car, the thief lost his way and ended up in the chief constable's garage.
- b) After stealing Tim's car the thief lost his way and ended up in the chief constable's garage.
- c) After stealing Tim's car, the thief lost his way and ended up in the chief constable's garage.
- d) After stealing Tim's car, the thief lost his' way and ended up in the chief constable's garage.

Check your answer

9

- a) We decided to visit: Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy's mountains.
- b) We decided to visit Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italys mountains.
- c) We decided to visit Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy's mountains.
- d) We decided to visit Spain Greece Portugal and Italy's mountains.

Check your answer

10

- a) That tall man, Paul's grandad, is this month's winner.
- b) That tall man Paul's grandad is this month's winner.
- c) That tall man, Paul's grandad, is this months winner.
- d) That tall man, Pauls grandad, is this month's winner.

Answers:

- 1. D
- 2. A
- 3. A
- 4. B
- 5. D
- 6. C
- 7. D
- 8. C
- 9. C

Sentence structures

Simple sentence

The basic English language sentence is called a simple sentence. It requires a noun and a verb. We ordinarily include some additional words that explain the subject. The sentence or a part of a sentence that contains a subject and a verb and constitutes a complete thought is called an independent clause.

I like English.

The sentence above conveys a complete thought. The noun is "I", and the verb is "like". The word English conveys an understanding of what the subject likes. The sentence has one independent clause and is a simple sentence.

Complex sentence

A complex sentence contains a main clause and a subordinate clause. The main clause can function as a complete sentence. The subordinate clause also contains a subject and a verb but cannot function as an independent sentence.

We surveyed the damage as the wind subsided.

"We surveyed the damage." This is a main clause and a complete sentence. The words convey a complete thought. The words "as the wind subsided" form a subordinate clause. The words do not convey an intelligent thought that can stand alone as a sentence.

Compound sentence

A compound sentence contains two independent (or main) clauses. Two independent clauses may be joined by a comma and a conjunction, or by a semicolon, or by a colon.

We accept the design; it meets our standards.

The school board funded the computer laboratory, computer classes will be offered next year.

The judge has ruled as follows: "The court finds the defendant guilty and sentences him to time served."

Minor Sentence

Often found in adverts, poetry, song lyrics, dialogue in novels and plays/films – these are incomplete sentence fragments that do not form a single independent clause. They either lack a verb or a noun or both. You cannot use these in essays.

Blue, hazy skies. Hated him. Really? Delicious, crunchy and munchy!

Test yourself – What type of sentence is each of the below?

1. Victor Frankenstein is a great inventor with many brilliant ideas.
2. He wants to create the perfect human being.
3. Amazingly, Mary Shelley wrote the novel “Frankenstein” when she was just seventeen years old.
4. Some people believe Frankenstein is a Gothic novel, some people insist it is the first instance of Science Fiction ever written.
5. Some people believe Frankenstein is a Gothic novel, some people insist it is the first instance of Science Fiction ever written – in fact it belongs to both genres.
6. Once he has been animated, the monster is cruelly rejected by his creator.
7. Possessing no knowledge of what it means to be alive or how to survive, the monster is totally alienated.
8. He does not know language.
9. He does not know how to behave amongst other people.
10. Judging him purely on his freakish appearance, the villagers attack him.
11. The monster retreats to a forest alone, however he finally meets someone who is friendly towards him.
12. An old blind man is able to talk to him.
13. The old blind man is friendly to the monster because he cannot see him therefore he does not judge him on his appearance.
14. However the monster soon runs out of luck, the old man’s nephew returns and shoots at the monster.
15. Furious and hurt, the monster vows to take revenge on humanity.
16. He wanders through the countryside, drifting from village to village.
17. One day he sees a little boy playing by a lakeside.
18. He decides to talk to the boy, the boy mentions his Uncle, Victor Frankenstein, to the monster.
19. The name “Frankenstein” triggers recognition in the monster’s subconscious.
20. Brutally, he murders the boy.
21. Proud of his heinous act, he seeks out Victor Frankenstein so that he can gloat about the misery he has caused.
22. Frankenstein feels guilty; he created the murderer of his own nephew.
23. Frankenstein chases after the monster, however he cannot quite catch up with him.
24. The monster travels all the way up to the Arctic Circle, meanwhile Frankenstein is in hot pursuit after him.
25. Once he reaches the edge of the North Pole, Frankenstein is physically exhausted.
26. Frankenstein collapses.
27. The monster has destroyed his creator, he decides to commit suicide.

Answers:

1. Victor Frankenstein is a great inventor with many brilliant ideas. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
2. He wants to create the perfect human being. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
3. Amazingly, Mary Shelley wrote the novel "Frankenstein" when she was just seventeen years old. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
4. Some people believe Frankenstein is a Gothic novel, some people insist it is the first instance of Science Fiction ever written. **COMPOUND - 2 equal, independent clauses**
5. Some people believe Frankenstein is a Gothic novel, some people insist it is the first instance of Science Fiction ever written - in fact it belongs to both genres. **COMPOUND - 3 equal, independent clauses**
6. Once he has been animated, the monster is cruelly rejected by his creator. **COMPLEX - 1 main and 1 sub clause**
7. Possessing no knowledge of what it means to be alive or how to survive, the monster is totally alienated. **COMPLEX- 1 main and 1 sub clause**
8. He does not know language. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
9. He does not know how to behave amongst other people. **SIMPLE - 1 Clause**
10. Judging him purely on his freakish appearance, the villagers attack him. **COMPLEX - 1 main and 1 sub clause**
11. The monster retreats to a forest alone, however he finally meets someone who is friendly towards him. **COMPLEX - 1 main and 1 sub clause**
12. An old blind man is able to talk to him. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
13. The old blind man is friendly to the monster because he cannot see him therefore he does not judge him on his appearance. **COMPLEX - 1 main and 1 sub clause**
14. However the monster soon runs out of luck, the old man's nephew returns and shoots at the monster. **COMPLEX - 1 main, 2 sub clauses**
15. Furious and hurt, the monster vows to take revenge on humanity. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
16. He wanders through the countryside, drifting from village to village. **COMPLEX - 1 main, 1 sub clause**
17. One day he sees a little boy playing by a lakeside. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
18. He decides to talk to the boy, the boy mentions his Uncle, Victor Frankenstein, to the monster. **COMPOUND - 2 equal, independent clauses**
19. The name "Frankenstein" triggers recognition in the monster's subconscious. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
20. Brutally, he murders the boy. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
21. Proud of his heinous act, he seeks out Victor Frankenstein so that he can gloat about the misery he has caused. **COMPLEX - 1 main, 1 sub**
22. Frankenstein feels guilty; he created the murderer of his own nephew. **COMPOUND - 2 equal, independent clauses**
23. Frankenstein chases after the monster, however he cannot quite catch up with him. **COMPLEX - 1 main, 1 sub clause**
24. The monster travels all the way up to the Arctic Circle, meanwhile Frankenstein is in hot pursuit after him. **COMPLEX - 1 main, 1 sub clause**
25. Once he reaches the edge of the North Pole, Frankenstein is physically exhausted. **COMPLEX - 1 main, 1 sub clause**
26. Frankenstein collapses. **SIMPLE - 1 clause**
27. The monster has destroyed his creator, he decides to commit suicide. **COMPOUND - 2 equal, independent clauses**

Writing in essays

Opening paragraphs or sentences can be structured with any of the three main sentence structures. What is important though is that your opening sentence within any paragraph lets the reader know the topic – these sentences are called topic sentences and you are expected to use them in essays.

So, if you were writing a paragraph about a Jane Austen novel, e.g. *Emma* and the title of the essay was “Discuss Austen’s characterization of Emma”, you might begin your essay with:

In the novel, “Emma” the main character is immature, judgemental and insensitive.

This is a SIMPLE SENTENCE (and, in terms of word choice, note that because her name is Emma and so is the title of the novel, repetition has been avoided by using the terms “the main character”)

OR

Austen deliberately presents a flawed main character in “Emma”; a protagonist who is immature, judgemental and insensitive.

COMPOUND – 2 equal, independent clauses. (Please note that specialist literary terms are used here, such as protagonist)

OR

Austen’s “Emma” is a rites-de-passage novel, therefore the author has to show the protagonist is flawed – in this case, immature, judgemental and insensitive.

- Which opening sentence do you prefer? Why?

Depending on what you want to express, you may use either of the above structures. There is nothing wrong with using simple sentence as topic sentence as they are reader-friendly.

However, as you develop ideas, you should not over-use use simple sentences. This is because you will end up oversimplifying what you are explaining. Also at A Level and degree level, you are usually analysing or explaining links, cause/effect relationships, theoretical possibilities or viewpoints based on differing perspectives.

It is not logically possible to explain complex ideas using simple and compound sentences alone – nor simply using high-frequency, basic vocabulary. Look at the following explanation of Marxist ideology, which only uses simple and compound sentences.

Society is unfair. The rich own most stuff. The poor do most of the work. Everything is about money. It would be more fair to share stuff around and the rich and the poor could have the same amount.

It would be fine if you were explaining this in speech to a young child but as a piece of A level or degree level writing, it is not good enough. *Can you rewrite the ideas above so it is a developed opening paragraph using a range of sentence structures?*

What is being described below – speech or writing?

- Reciprocal – more than 1 person creates meaning
- Can use minor sentences or sub clauses and the message is still understood
- Can hesitate, change meaning half-way through the message, re-start/re-phrase
- Can use run-on sentences (never ending, multiple-clause sentences that have lots of “and”s)
- Can use slang
- Don’t spend long choosing our word, often use the most obvious or first choice of word that comes into our minds – usually use “high frequency” vocabulary (the most commonly used words in the language, used by everyone, including young children)

Speech	Writing

In speech, we all use “non-fluency features” – even really skilled speakers like sales people, stand-up comedians and politicians will hesitate, re-phrase themselves, use minor sentences etc. It is not a problem at all, no-one walks around in life speaking from a perfectly structured script.

Students who get D/E/F/G grades at GCSE and D, E or U grades in A Levels often write using incorrect sentence structure and high frequency vocabulary, when really they should consciously use different sentence structures and specialist terminology (low-frequency words, words which belong to certain subject at an advanced level).

In other words, they write as if they are speaking. All of the above features listed in the bullet points describe speech and yet this is how some people also write.

Let's recap the example of very basic structure and style looked at previously.

Society is unfair. The rich own most stuff. The poor do most of the work. Everything is about money. It would be more fair to share stuff around and the rich and the poor could have the same amount.

A student writing in this style and also using run-on sentences would sound like this:

Society is unfair and the rich own most stuff and the poor do most of the work and everything is about money and it would be more fair to share stuff around and the rich and the poor could have the same amount.

This is obviously not good enough!

It is not specific, it is not controlled, it fails to explain the reasoning behind Marx's ideas.

From Wikipedia

Marxism builds on a materialist understanding of societal development, taking as its starting point the necessary economic activities required by human society to provide for its material needs. The form of economic organization or mode of production is understood to be the basis from which the majority of other social phenomena – including social relations, political and legal systems, morality and ideology – arise, or at the least by which they are directly influenced. These social relations form the superstructure, for which the economic system forms the base. As the forces of production -most notably technology- improve, existing forms of social organization become inefficient and stifle further progress. These inefficiencies manifest themselves as social contradictions in the form of class struggle.

Analyse the structure of this information in terms of writing style in the space below. What types of sentence are being used? How are these effective? What tone is created?

When you have finished, check your answers on the next page.

Marxism builds on a materialist understanding of societal development, taking as its starting point the necessary economic activities required by human society to provide for its material needs. **COMPLEX STRUCTURE USED FOR TOPIC SENTENCE**

The form of economic organization or mode of production is understood to be the basis from which the majority of other social phenomena – including social relations, political and legal systems, morality and ideology – arise, or at the least by which they are directly influenced. **COMPLEX SENTENCE TO EXPLAIN FURTHER WITH SOME PARENTHETICAL (EXTRA) POINTS DEFINED FURTHER IN CASE THE READER IS UNSURE**

These social relations form the superstructure, for which the economic system forms the base. **SIMPLE SENTENCE**

As the forces of production -most notably technology- improve, existing forms of social organization become inefficient and stifle further progress. **COMPLEX SENTENCE**

These inefficiencies manifest themselves as social contradictions in the form of class struggle. **SIMPLE SENTENCE USED TO EXPLAIN A SINGLE IDEA (that of class struggle, which is then explained further in the next paragraph)**

Specialist vocabulary: materialist, societal, social phenomena, ideology, superstructure, forces of production, social contradictions

Here is an example of some scientific information. Underneath this, there is a poorly re-written version similar to what a student may produce:

Based on research performed by Edwin Hubble, Georges Lemaitre and Albert Einstein, among others, the **big bang theory** postulates that the universe began almost 14 billion years ago with a massive expansion event. At the time, the universe was confined to a single point, encompassing all of the universe's matter. That original movement continues today, as the universe keeps expanding outward.

The theory of the big bang gained widespread support in the scientific community after Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson discovered **cosmic microwave background radiation** in 1965. Using radio telescopes, the two astronomers detected cosmic noise, or static, that didn't dissipate over time. Collaborating with Princeton researcher Robert Dicke, the pair confirmed Dicke's hypothesis that the original big bang left behind low-level radiation detectable throughout the universe.

Science.howstuffworks.org

Negative Re-Writing:

Some scientists did some research and said that the universe started 14 billion years ago with a big bang and that when it started it was a tiny thing then it get all getting bigger and it keeps getting bigger today.

People started to support the idea when two men discovered some type of microwave radiation cosmic thing in 1965 they did it with radio telescopes and they heard noise that hadn't gone quieter over time and then another man agreed and said there's lots of radiation in the universe.

Now have a go at negatively re-writing the following – using run-on sentences and high frequency vocabulary that is vague.

According to **Archimedes' buoyancy principle**, the force acting on, or buoying, a submerged or partially submerged object equals the weight of the liquid that the object displaces. This sort of principle has an immense range of applications and is essential to calculations of density, as well as designing submarines and other oceangoing vessels.

Then, rephrase this vague and imprecise expression about Mrs Birling in 'An Inspector Calls' to clarify meaning. Circle any mistakes you notice in terms of punctuation or spelling and annotate issues in this piece of writing as you think a teacher might. Finally, rewrite using varied syntax and complex grammatical structures. When you finish, compare your version to the model on the next page.

Mrs birling is a selfish charactor its clear throughout the play that she is only concerned with her families social status. Thats priestly's message in the play hes trying to show us that capitalism is selfish and will cause pain. Mrs Birling shows this message because she doesnt really care about helping Eva Smith until she realises that Eva was involved with her own son Eric but by that time it's way too late and she cant take back what shes done. She also underestimates the working class thinking that they are incapable of moral behaviour because they are focused on money but it's ironic because actually it's the middle classes who behave immorally.

Annotations of issues:

Mrs Birling *lack of capital* is a selfish character its *missing apostrophe* clear throughout the play that she is only concerned with her families *incorrect use of plural – apostrophes should be used to show possession* social status. Thats *missing apostrophe – the student is trying to write ‘that is’ so there should be an apostrophe to show there is a contraction* priestly’s *missing capital and misspelling of author’s name* message in the play hes *missing apostrophe* trying to show us that capitalism is selfish and will cause pain *vague phrasing*. Mrs Birling shows this message *unclear phrasing* because she doesnt *missing apostrophe* really care about helping Eva Smith until she realises that Eva was involved with her own son Eric but by that time it’s way too late and she cant *missing punctuation* take back what shes *missing punctuation* done *run-on sentence – too many ‘ands’*. She also underestimates the working class thinking that they are incapable of moral behaviour because they are focused on money but it’s ironic because *could be rephrased for clarity* actually it’s the middle classes who behave immorally.

There are lots of good ideas in this piece of writing but the poor expression is really limiting it. Also, the student should try to talk about Mrs Birling as a character rather than talking about her actions as if she is a real person: this can be easily be addressed by writing ‘Priestley utilises’ or ‘Priestley crafts’ at the beginning of sentences instead of ‘Mrs Birling’.

Rewritten version:

Mrs Birling, **the selfish, cold and etiquette-obsessed matriarch of the family**, is primarily concerned with her family’s social status. Priestley crafts the play with an underlying moral: the capitalism is selfish and corrupt, resulting in terrible consequences for the most marginalised and vulnerable in society (represented by Eva Smith). Mrs Birling embodies this message – Priestley effectively crafts Act 2 to show Mrs Birling’s initial denial of any responsibility and indeed, her cruel rejection of Eva Smith because of her elitist and prejudiced beliefs; however, the eventual revelation of Eric’s involvement effectively demonstrates the hypocrisy within society. Mrs Birling underestimates the working class, believing **a girl of that sort** could never refuse money – **ironically**, it was her son who behaved immorally by exploiting Eva and then stealing to provide for her. Thus, Priestley presents us with a sympathetic victim, Eva, suffering due to the cruel actions of the middle-class characters, highlighting the corruption within capitalism.

The ideas here are similar but now they are expressed clearly and cogently with varied sentence structures and punctuation. Immediately, this student would be viewed by an

examiner as stronger. A few key details you could use in your own writing are annotated below.

- "a girl of that sort"

This is an embedded quotation which is effective in avoiding the need to provide evidence. At A Level, quotations should be very short and embedded into points made as you don't have time to 'PEEL'.

- Ironically

You can use adverbs to further shade meaning without interrupting the 'flow' of your idea.

- "the selfish, cold and etiquette-obsessed matriarch of the family"

This is known as an appositive phrase – it follows a noun phrase to provide extra information, like a 'bonus' fact adding detail and is usually framed by commas.

Here are a few more examples from *grammarly.com*:

1. Hermione Granger, a witch at Hogwarts School, is highly accomplished at magic.
2. The Eiffel Tower, Gustave Eiffel's masterpiece, can be found on the Champs de Mars in Paris.

Look at the sentences below and add a suitable appositive phrase.

1. English Literature is regarded as a very suitable A Level for studying Law at university.
2. *An Inspector Calls* can be seen as a morality play and as a 'whodunnit' police detective story.
3. My best friend prefers Maths to Science.
4. William Shakespeare wrote 'Hamlet' and 'Macbeth'.
5. Enforced quarantine has become the norm across Europe.
6. *Frankenstein* actually refers to the creature's creator, not the creature itself which remains nameless.

Some ideas:

1. English Literature – the study of plays, poetry and prose from a range of cultures and time periods – is regarded as very suitable A Level for studying Law at university.

2. *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley's tragic investigation into responsibility in pre-war society, can be seen as a morality play and as a 'whodunnit' police detective story.
3. My best friend, Grace, prefers Maths to Science.
4. William Shakespeare wrote 'Hamlet' and 'Macbeth' – tragedies which adopt Greek conventions in terms of the tragic hero trope.
5. Enforced quarantine, a period of time when citizens must isolate at home wherever possible, has become the norm across Europe.
6. *Frankenstein* actually refers to the creature's creator, the eponymous Victor Frankenstein who selfishly rejects and abandons him, not the creature itself which remains nameless.

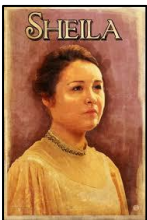
Constructing an argument

In English Literature at A Level, similarly to GCSE, your essays should contain a clearly constructed argument. To construct an argument, you always need to understand the writer's purpose in crafting a particular character or in shaping the events in a particular manner.

For example...

In *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley's purpose is to promote socialism and undermine capitalism. For the characters and events below, what would be your argument? When you have finished, check your answers on the next page.

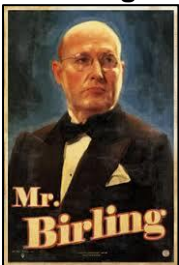
Sheila Birling



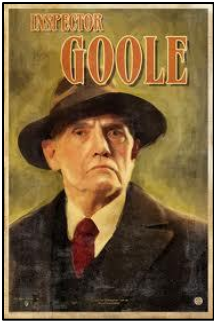
Eva Smith



Mr Birling



Inspector Goole



Phone call at the end of the play



Answers:

Sheila is used to promote socialism by showing that people are capable of change. She also undermines capitalism by challenging her parents' views and repeating the Inspector's words, showing the impact that socialist ideas have had on Sheila.

Eva is used to promote socialism and undermine capitalism by showing the effects of unchecked, selfish capitalism on the innocent and vulnerable in society. The fact we never see her directly makes her voiceless and emphasises her powerless in the situation.

Mr Birling is used to undermine capitalism because he is callous and self-centred; he is a very unsympathetic character who fails to take responsibility for his actions, which makes us disagree with his capitalist views. Priestley also uses dramatic irony when Birling mentions historical details like the Titanic or war to show that he is completely wrong and his opinions are untrustworthy.

Inspector Goole is used to promote socialism by challenging the elitist and capitalist views of the family and by leading them to take responsibility for their part in Eva's death. His impact on the younger members of the family show the power of socialism. In contrast with Mr Birling, he is prophetic about what will happen in the future, mentioning "fire and blood and anguish" if people don't admit the errors of their ways.

The phone call at the end of the play promotes socialism because whilst the Birlings celebrate the fact that the deaths haven't taken place, the call interrupts their ignorant conversation and brings them sharply back to reality.

Constructing an argument in your writing

Read through the different phrases below. What is the purpose of each colour group of phrases? What is meant by the 'command' words?

Check your answers and make any necessary corrections.

Consider	
Discuss	

To what extent/ How do you respond to the view...	
--	--

- The author crafts/ manipulates ...
- The author depicts/explores/ exposes/ portrays/ presents...
- The author employs / utilises (name of device) in order to ...
- ... is significant as far as However, ...
- The author/writer/poet/playwright seeks to engage our sympathy in...
- This highlights/illustrates/reveals/ demonstrates/ explains...
- The effect of this...is intensified by...
- The purpose of...is to...

- Similarly / In comparison / Likewise /
- On the other hand / Comparatively / Contrastingly / However / Conversely/ Nevertheless
- Consequently / Because of / Due to/ As a result / Therefore / Thus / Moreover / Furthermore /In addition
- A notable example is.../ This is particularly clear when.../ For instance,.../
- An alternative interpretation would be...
- Arguably the most interesting/ plausible/ implausible/ exaggerated/ directly relevant/ symbolic/ irrelevant/ tedious/ engaging/ deplorable/ despicable/ immoral/ moral/ amoral/ intolerable/ reprehensible...
- So and so's value as a narrator/leader/guide/interpreter is...
- It is interesting to note that...
- Hitherto the action has centred on...
- The shift of focus from...to...is brought about by...
- The life/love/attitudes...depicts are...
- It useful to consider...
- It is illuminating to trace/follow/analyse...
- Examining..., we find that...
- A salient characteristic of...is...

Initially (at first)/ Eventually/ Subsequently (afterwards)/ Simultaneously (at the same time)

- Finally...This is not to say that...
- In conclusion...Artistically...
- In ways which I have tried to suggest...
- While considering....., it is worth remembering that.....
- It would be unacceptably narrow/inflexible to go on to suggest that...
- There is little doubt that...

Consider	Say what you think and have observed about something in light of the statement you have been given. Support your comments using appropriate evidence from the text (and critical readings, if relevant.) Include any views which are contrary to your own and how they relate to your ideas.
Discuss	This is a written debate where you are showing your skill at reasoning, backed up by carefully selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument. Remember to arrive at a conclusion.

To what extent/ How do you respond to the view...	Evokes a similar response to questions containing 'How far...'. This type of question calls for a thorough assessment of the evidence in presenting your argument. Explore alternative explanations where they exist.
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Analysing the author's methods

The author crafts/ manipulates ...

The author depicts/explores/ exposes/ portrays/ presents...

The author employs / utilises (name of device) in order to ...

... is significant as far as However, ...

The author/writer/poet/playwright seeks to engage our sympathy in...

This highlights/illustrates/reveals/ demonstrates/ explains...

The effect of this...is intensified by...

The purpose of...is to...

Building an argument

Similarly / In comparison / Likewise /

On the other hand / Comparatively / Contrastingly / However / Conversely/ Nevertheless

Consequently / Because of / Due to/ As a result / Therefore / Thus / Moreover / Furthermore /In addition

A notable example is.../ This is particularly clear when.../ For instance,.../

An alternative interpretation would be...

Arguably the most interesting/ plausible/ implausible/ exaggerated/ directly relevant/ symbolic/ irrelevant/ tedious/ engaging/ deplorable/ despicable/ immoral/ moral/ amoral/ intolerable/ reprehensible...

So and so's value as a narrator/leader/guide/interpreter is...

It is interesting to note that...

Hitherto the action has centred on...

The shift of focus from...to...is brought about by...

The life/love/attitudes...depicts are...

It useful to consider...

It is illuminating to trace/follow/analyse...

Examining..., we find that...

A salient characteristic of...is...

Referring to time in the text

Initially (at first)/ Eventually/ Subsequently (afterwards)/ Simultaneously (at the same time)

To conclude

Finally...This is not to say that...

In conclusion...Artistically...

In ways which I have tried to suggest...

While considering....., it is worth remembering that.....

It would be unacceptably narrow/inflexible to go on to suggest that...

There is little doubt that...

Now, practise constructing an argument in response to questions below on *An Inspector Calls*. Use the example to help you. You must write an introductory sentence and the topic sentence of at least three paragraphs.

Example:

How far is Mrs Birling an unlikeable character?

Introductory sentence: Mrs Birling, the elitist matriarch of the Birling family, embodies the out-dated, capitalist beliefs that Priestley – and his mouthpiece, the Inspector – is trying to undermine in the play.

Topic sentence 1: Mrs Birling is first introduced to us as a fastidious character, obsessed with decorum and manners, when she reprimands Mr Birling for the praise he offers for the celebratory meal they have just enjoyed.

Topic sentence 2: By presenting Mrs Birling’s total lack of regret or remorse for her actions until she realises Eric was romantically involved with Eva, Priestley reveals the hypocrisy present in middle-class society: Mrs Birling believes that ‘morals’ are above the working class when in fact, it is her son Eric who behaves completely immorally.

Topic sentence 3: By the end of the play, when Mrs Birling learns that the Inspector was a ‘hoax’, Priestley presents her as a character who quickly forgets her earlier moral journey, showing that capitalism is corruptive.

Question 1:

To what extent do you consider Sheila to be the most important character in the play?

Introductory sentence:

Topic sentence 1:

Topic sentence 2:

Topic sentence 3:

Question 2:

“An Inspector Calls is fundamentally a morality play.” Consider the play in light of this statement.

Introductory sentence:

Topic sentence 1:

Topic sentence 2:

Topic sentence 3:

Question3:

Discuss the role of the Inspector as Priestley's mouth-piece in the play

Introductory sentence:

Topic sentence 1:

Topic sentence 2:

Topic sentence 3:

Section 2: Revising structure and context

Structure

Structure is the “big-picture” of the whole text. Sometimes, at GCSE, you may have been narrowed in on small details or particular sections. At A Level, you are asked to look much more broadly at the text as a whole.

Look up the terms below to develop your understanding of structure of different literature texts:

1. Exposition
2. Rising action
3. Climax
4. Falling actions
5. Resolution

6. Tension
7. Non-linear narrative
8. The hero's journey
9. In media res
10. Framed narratives
11. Brooker's The Seven Basic Plots
12. Unreliable narrator

Think about a text you have studied at GCSE, for example, 'An Inspector Calls'. How was the plot crafted and to what effect? How did this support the writer's purpose?

Create a mind-map of the text's overall structure and try to link in some of your previous research.

Now read through the key techniques below. Highlight in one colour any terms you already know and in another colour any unfamiliar terms.

Allegory - narrative form in which the characters are representative of some larger humanistic trait (i.e. greed, vanity or bravery) and attempt to convey some larger lesson or meaning to life. Although allegory was originally and traditionally character based, modern allegories tend to run in parallel both story and theme.

Character - representation of a person, place or thing performing traditionally human activities or functions in a work of fiction

Protagonist - The character the story revolves around.

Antagonist - A character or force that opposes the protagonist.

Minor character - Often provides support and illuminates the protagonist.

Static character - A character that remains the same.

Dynamic character - A character that changes in some important way.

Characterisation - The **choices** an author makes to reveal a character's personality, such as appearance, actions, dialogue, and motivations. What they say, do and look like and what the other characters say of them.

Look for: connections, links and clues between and about characters. Ask yourself what the **function and significance** of each character is. Make this determination based upon the character's history, what the reader is told (and not told), and what other characters say about themselves and others.

Connotation - implied meaning of word. BEWARE! Connotations can change over time.

Denotation - dictionary definition of a word – the space between this and its **connotation** can sometimes be called irony.

Diction - word choice that both conveys and emphasises the meaning or theme of a poem through distinctions in sound, look, rhythm, syllable, letters and definition.

Figurative language - the use of words to express meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words themselves.

Metaphor - contrasting two seemingly unlike things to enhance the meaning of a situation or theme without using like or as.

You are the sunshine of my life.

Simile - contrasting two seemingly unlike things to enhance the meaning of a situation or theme using like or as.

What happens to a dream deferred, does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

REMEMBER – there are three parts to any figurative comparison:

TENOR VEHICLE GROUND

The tenor is that which is described; the vehicle is that which describes it and the ground is that which they share.

So: JON WAS A LION ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD.

TENOR – Jon

VEHICLE – lion

GROUND – ferocity

Symbolism - when an object is meant to be representative of something or an idea greater than the object itself.

Bulldog - Britain or Patriotism

Owl - wisdom or knowledge

Yellow - implies cowardice or rot

Personification - giving non-human objects human characteristics.

England has thrown her hat into the ring, and will be joining forces with the French.

Metonym - the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant, for example suit for business executive, or the turf for horse racing, or a cross for Christianity.

Imagery - the author's attempt to create a mental picture (or reference point) in the mind of the reader. Remember, though, the most immediate forms of imagery are visual. Strong and effective imagery can be used to invoke an emotional, sensational (taste, touch, smell etc) or even physical response.

Hyperbole – exaggeration

I have a million things to do today.

Litotes – understatement

Well, that was fun.

Foot – grouping of stressed and unstressed syllables used in line or poem

- *Iamb* - unstressed syllable followed by stressed

Made famous by the Shakespearian sonnet, closest to the natural rhythm of human speech

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways

- *Spondee* - stressed stressed

Used to add emphasis and break up monotonous rhythm

Blood boil, mind-meld, well- loved

- *Trochee* - stressed unstressed

Often used in children's rhymes and to help with memorization; gives poem a hurried feeling

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,

- *Anapest* - *unstressed unstressed stressed*

Often used in longer poems or "rhymed stories"

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house

- *Dactyls* - *stressed unstressed unstressed*

Often used in classical Greek or Latin text, later revived by the Romantics, then again by the Beatles, often thought to create a heartbeat or pulse in a poem

*Picture yourself in a boat on a river,
With tangerine trees and marmalade skies.*

*The iamb stumbles through my books;
trochees rush and tumble;
while anapest runs like a hurrying brook;
dactyls are stately and classical.*

Meter – measure or structuring of rhythm in a poem.

Plot – the arrangement of ideas and/or incidents that make up a story.

Theme – the ideas that the story or work seeks to explore. Thus, we could have a story with a plot to do with war but whose themes are brotherhood, jealousy and love.

Foreshadowing – When the writer clues the reader into something that will eventually occur in the story; it may be explicit (obvious) or implied (disguised).

Suspense – The tension that the author uses to create a feeling of discomfort about the unknown.

Conflict – Struggle between opposing forces.

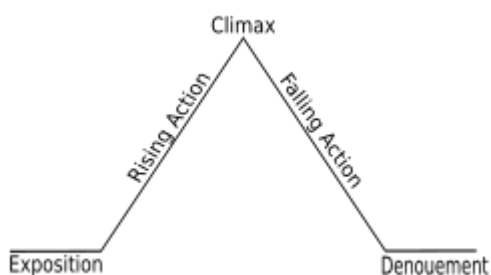
Exposition – Background information regarding the setting, characters, plot.

Rising Action – The process the story follows as it builds to its main conflict.

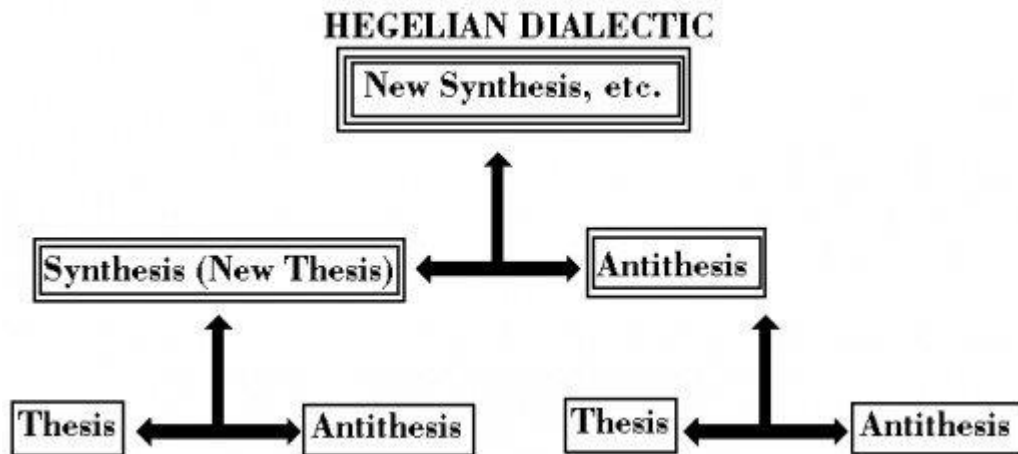
Crisis – A significant turning point in the story that determines how it must end.

Resolution/Denouement – The way the story turns out.

The above is sometimes referred to as FREYTAG'S PYRAMID:



Another model that stories sometimes follow is that of the Marxist Pendulum or Hegelian dialectic – think of *Animal Farm*:



And eight others were described by Kurt Vonnegut

<https://digitalinfluence.com.au/kurt-vonnegut-7-universal-narrative-structures/>

The Shapes of Stories by Kurt Vonnegut

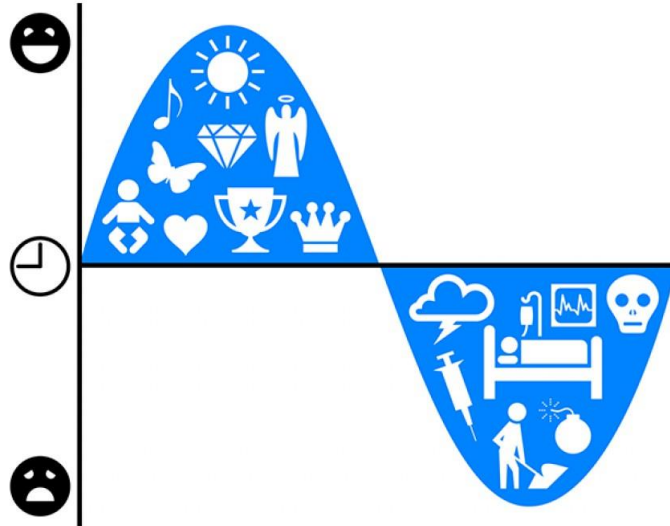
Kurt Vonnegut gained worldwide fame and adoration through the publication of his novels, including *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Cat's Cradle*, *Breakfast of Champions*, and more.

But it was his rejected master's thesis in anthropology that he called his prettiest contribution to his culture.

The basic idea of his thesis was that a story's main character has ups and downs that can be graphed to reveal the story's shape.

The shape of a society's stories, he said, is at least as interesting as the shape of its pots or spearheads. Let's have a look.

Designer: Maya Eilam, www.mayaeilam.com
Sources: *A Man without a Country* and *Palm Sunday* by Kurt Vonnegut



<p>Man in Hole</p> <p>The main character gets into trouble then gets out of it again and ends up better off for the experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arsenic and Old Lace Harold & Kumar Go To White Castle 	<p>Boy Meets Girl</p> <p>The main character comes across something wonderful, gets it, loses it, then gets it back forever.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane Eyre Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind 	<p>From Bad to Worse</p> <p>The main character starts off poorly then gets continually worse with no hope for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Metamorphosis The Twilight Zone 	<p>Which Way Is Up?</p> <p>The story has a lifelike ambiguity that keeps us from knowing if new developments are good or bad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hamlet The Sopranos
<p>Creation Story</p> <p>In many cultures' creation stories, humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity. First major staples like the earth and sky, then smaller things like sparrows and cell phones. Not a common shape for Western stories, however.</p>	<p>Old Testament</p> <p>Humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity, but is suddenly ousted from good standing in a fall of enormous proportions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Expectations 	<p>New Testament</p> <p>Humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity, is suddenly ousted from good standing, but then receives off-the-charts bliss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Expectations with Dickens' alternate ending 	<p>Cinderella</p> <p>It was the similarity between the shapes of Cinderella and the New Testament that thrilled Vonnegut for the first time in 1947 and then over the course of his life as he continued to write essays and give lectures on the shapes of stories.</p>

Setting – the place or location of the action. The setting provides the historical and cultural context for characters. It often can symbolize the emotional state of characters. Example – In Dickens’ *Great Expectations* Miss Havisham’s crumbling, decaying and halted mansion reflects her own poisoned state of mind.

Speaker – the person delivering the poem. Remember, a poem does not have to have a speaker, and the speaker and the poet are not necessarily one and the same.

Structure (fiction) – The way that the writer arranges the plot of a story.

Look for: repeated elements in action, gesture, dialogue, description, as well as shifts in direction, focus, time, place etc.

REMEMBER: **Structure and Form** – in poetry specifically but in all writing generally – are two quite different things. The **form** is the shape of the poem on the page, its silhouette – some of these shapes have names like a sonnet or villanelle – ; in prose this can mean the type of book it is – epistolary, Bildungsroman, roman à clef etc. - and have quite definite rules to follow (or break). Some of these shapes do not have names and are irregular – and a poet or writer may choose to use these forms to give meaning to what they have written in some other way. The **structure** of a poem or anything else, is the order of events – what happens at the beginning, middle and end and why did the writer think that was the best way of doing it?

Tone – the implied attitude towards the subject of the text. Is it hopeful, pessimistic, dreary, worried? A writer conveys tone by combining all of the elements listed above to create a precise impression on the reader.

To successfully analyse literature, you’ll need to remember that authors make specific choices for particular reasons.

Your essay should point out the author’s choices and attempt to explain their significance.

REMEMBER YOU SHOULD APPROACH EACH TEXT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW THAT NOTHING WAS DONE BY ACCIDENT; THAT EACH CHOICE WAS MADE FOR A REASON; THAT IT WAS HOPED THAT IN SOME WAY EACH TECHNIQUE CREATED MEANING.

This should be your English Literature A level mantra:

Technique creates meaning

Each time you spot a feature – pat yourself on the back for remembering some of the stuff above – BUT THEN say this one word to yourself:

‘SO?’

So what? So what if the writer used dactylic tetrameter – why did they bother? You don’t (generally) do that by accident. The writer sat there in a room with a pen carefully making sure that those dactyls lined up in a particular way. WHY? What did they hope that their work would GAIN from being written in that way?

(HINT: it will not be because of ANY of the following reasons:

1. It makes the reader read on
2. It puts a picture in the reader’s head (the only way to do this is to insert a photograph into one of your facial orifices)
3. To make it flow

4. To add effect – this one really annoys an examiner because it means NOTHING! Think of all the different kinds of effects there are, from being happy to sad to being angered or amused! There isn't just one overall 'effect' that authors are reaching for.

And while we are at it DON'T call the writer by their FIRST NAME. You don't know them, and even if you do, still don't do this.

ABSENCE - I love this one

Remember, you can sometimes say as much about something NOT being there as you can about when it is. RHYME, for instance – if a poem doesn't rhyme that's not because the writer was incompetent: it was a CHOICE! A choice that they hoped would hold some meaning for the reader.

BUT this is English Literature – this is what it means to study a text. To offer suggestions as to what the reasons behind a writer's choices may have been.

Look at how tentative the above sentence is. To offer **suggestions** as to what the reasons behind a writer's choices **may have been**.

That's all you have to do. Read the text, engage with it, work out – in discussion with your teacher, your classmates and through independent research – what you think the writer wanted us to take away from it, and then examine the methods by which they sought to achieve those ends and whether or not they were successful.

That's it. That's English Literature. It's as simple – and as complex, lifelong and worthwhile – an endeavour as that.

Context

Read the poem 'Maude Clare' by Christina Rossetti and then answer the questions which follow.

Maude Clare

Out of the church she followed them
With a lofty step and mien:
His bride was like a village maid,
Maude Clare was like a queen.

'Son Thomas,' his lady mother said,
With smiles, almost with tears:
'May Nell and you but live as true
As we have done for years;

'Your father thirty years ago
Had just your tale to tell;
But he was not so pale as you,
Nor I so pale as Nell.'

My lord was pale with inward strife,
And Nell was pale with pride;
My lord gazed long on pale Maude Clare
Or ever he kissed the bride.

'Lo, I have brought my gift, my lord,
Have brought my gift,' she said:
To bless the hearth, to bless the board,
To bless the marriage-bed.

'Here's my half of the golden chain
You wore about your neck,

That day we waded ankle-deep
For lilies in the beck:

'Here's my half of the faded leaves
We plucked from the budding bough,
With feet amongst the lily leaves, -
The lilies are budding now.'

He strove to match her scorn with scorn,
He faltered in his place:
'Lady,' he said, - 'Maude Clare,' he said, -
'Maude Clare,' - and hid his face.

She turn'd to Nell: 'My Lady Nell,
I have a gift for you;
Though, were it fruit, the blooms were gone,
Or, were it flowers, the dew.

'Take my share of a fickle heart,
Mine of a paltry love:
Take it or leave it as you will,
I wash my hands thereof.'

'And what you leave,' said Nell, 'I'll take,
And what you spurn, I'll wear;
For he's my lord for better and worse,
And him I love Maude Clare.

'Yea, though you're taller by the head,
More wise and much more fair:
I'll love him till he loves me best,
Me best of all Maude Clare.'

Christina Rossetti

Activity

1. Why do you think that Rossetti uses pronouns first before introducing names?
2. Why is the speaker anonymous?
3. Why has Rossetti used a third person narrative?
4. Why are the main characters described as 'pale'?
5. What do you think Thomas' 'inward strife' might be?
6. What do you think of Nell's response to Maude Clare in the final stanza? Consider why she begins with 'And'.
7. Why does Nell choose to compliment Maude Clare?
8. Why do you think the narrator remains anonymous?
9. What is the purpose of comparing Thomas with his parents? What do you think that Rossetti was trying to achieve here?
10. What effect does the alternating rhyme scheme have?

Now, read the contextual information below from the article 'Christina Rossetti: gender and power' by Simon Avery, published 15 May 2014, available from <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/christina-rossetti-gender-and-power>.

Marriage and the complexities of relationships

In a number of her poems Rossetti examines women's position in society through consideration of the institution of marriage (see, for example, 'A Triad' and 'Love From the North'). In the ballad-like poem 'Maude Clare', which was written in 1857-58 and published in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* in 1862, this examination takes place just after the wedding service itself. The church here becomes the site of conflict as the newly-wed Thomas and Nell are intruded upon by Maude Clare, Thomas's previous lover. Throughout the poem, Nell and Maude Clare are set up as opposites – 'His bride was like a village maid,/ Maude Clare was like a queen,' we are told in the first stanza (ll. 3–4) – and it is increasingly Maude Clare, rather than the new bride, who is the focus of attention. Indeed, in a poem which is composed principally of dialogue, Maude Clare dominates the meeting as she returns to Thomas the gifts that he has previously given her ('half of the golden chain/ You wore about your neck', ll. 21–22) and then offers Nell her 'share of a fickle heart' (l. 37) – a neat reversal of the friendship and community traditionally associated with the wedding gift.

Thomas remains significantly silent throughout, hiding his face and barely able to stutter Maude Clare's name – a clear critique of dominant masculinity – and it is interestingly left to Nell to confront the intruder. For in the poem's final two stanzas, it is Nell who takes over the speaking voice, directly addressing Maude Clare and asserting, in a phrasing which rings out a challenge, that she will take what Maude Clare spurns:

"Yea, tho' you're taller by the head,

More wise, and much more fair;

I'll love him till he loves me best,

Me best of all, Maude Clare." (ll. 45–48)

Here, Nell both subtly wrestles power back from the ex-lover and asserts her centrality in relation to her husband. Maude Clare might have dominated the scene throughout, yet it is Nell's determination and defiance which strike home at the end.

This idea of a woman's choice and determination in relationships can also be felt in the humorous but forceful 'No, Thank You, John' (written 1860; published 1862). Here the speaker is in no doubt about her mind as she firmly rejects a potential suitor in whom she has no interest. From start to finish, she resists John's entreaties (we 'hear' some of his comments through reported speech) as she deploys impeccable logic and effectively turns his own arguments against him:

I never said I loved you, John:

Why will you teaze me day by day,

And wax a weariness to think upon

With always 'do' and 'pray'?

[...]

I have no heart?—Perhaps I have not;

But then you're mad to take offence

That I don't give you what I have not got:

Use your own common sense. (ll. 1–4; 13–16)

What this poem asserts is the woman's right to say 'no' and to claim independence and agency for herself. Certainly, she is not to be bullied into a relationship because a man or social convention more generally demands it.

What is Avery's interpretation of the poem and its presentation of women?

Does this link with what you already know about women in the Victorian era? Why or why not?

Does this link with your initial ideas about the poem? Why or why not?

Read the two students responses below, which aim to incorporate contextual ideas into an essay. Which one do you think is better? Why?

Example 1

In the poem 'Maude Clare', Maude Clare comes across as quite a strong character as she has waited to take revenge on Thomas until his wedding day when he's marrying another, less pretty girl called Nell. She gets her revenge by returning the items they shared during their relationship. Maude Clare presents Nell with dead flowers 'were it fruit, the bloom were gone' or 'were it flowers, the dew'. This is a symbolic gesture of the love that Maude Clare and Thomas shared and implies intimacy suggesting that Maude is no longer virtuous.

Victorian society would have really looked down on Maude Clare for having been intimate with Thomas. However Thomas wouldn't have been judged harshly at all – society at the time was very hypocritical. The poem is saying that it was permissible for men to have been intimate before marriage but it wasn't the same for women. The Victorians therefore divided women into two categories, those who married and were deemed respectable and those who weren't and were viewed as a threat to society, and Maude Clare demonstrates this perfectly.

Example 2

Maude Clare is portrayed as a bitter and vindictive woman and it is evident in the poem that her 'lord' still holds feelings for her even though he is marrying the innocent and virtuous Nell. Rossetti draws on three differing female perspectives which vary in prominence and in doing this recreates a valuable insight into Victorian conventions. The ambiguity in the identification of the narrator affords the reader the opportunity to draw their own conclusions.

Typically, Victorian women were expected to serve their husbands. The poem 'Maude Clare' overturns this expectation and instead uses the character of Maude Clare as a stereotype that bucks this expectation. She is the most prominent female character, and a strong one at that, who instead of being submissive to her 'lord' puts him in his place and embarrasses him.

Some general advice about context:

- Be careful not to deal with context in a generalised way. Although it's possible to talk about the general beliefs held by Elizabethans for example, you should avoid making sweeping statements which assume that all Elizabethans were racist or misogynist. As a comparison, you might think about all the people you know and consider whether their views can be lumped together as 'what 21st century people think'. Instead, remember that people have a variety of viewpoints, regardless of the times in which they lived.
- It's always far more beneficial to couch any points that you make about context in tentative terms and let the contextual material arise naturally from the play, rather than 'force' contexts into the text. Writing some facts about contexts that you've memorised won't ever be helpful – it always needs to be closely applied to the question and the text you are writing about. As ever, answering the question succinctly will always be the most useful thing you can do.

Wider reading:

- <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/crossetti/harrison2/1.html>
- <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/christina-rossetti-gender-and-power>
- <https://poemanalysis.com/maude-clare-by-christina-rossetti-poem-analysis/>

Remember the importance of 'reading around' the text or task you have been given. It is important to remember though when you are doing this that you are reading another person's opinion, and at A Level we are interested in **your opinion**. Therefore, read as widely as you can, and refer to critical works in your response. Fundamentally though, you must make up your own mind about it all and express this coherently – A level English literature rewards **independent thought**.

Independent research of historical context

Research the social and historical background of each historical period and famous texts and authors.

Use the websites below:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/>

<https://www.history.com/topics/british-history>

<https://www.britannica.com/art/English-literature>

<http://www.bl.uk/englishtimeline>

	<i>Social and historical background</i>	<i>Famous texts / authors of this period</i>
Romans (AD 43 - C. 410)		
Early Medieval (C. 410 - 1066)		
Medieval (1066 - 1485)		
Tudors (1485 - 1603)		
Stuarts (1603 - 1714)		
Georgians (1714 - 1837)		
Victorians (1837 - 1901)		
20th Century (1901 - 2000)		

Note:

If you are unable to print these sections, please just complete it on paper. You will need to bring this work with you in September.

If you are printing, you only really need pages 56 - 57 (the extract from Frasier for you to annotate) and pages 73 - 76 (analysis and commentary of the song Strange Fruit) as much of the rest is reading-based or can easily be completed on paper whilst looking at the notes on your computer.

Section 3: KS5 Preparation: Widening your interpretation of texts

At A Level, there are five Assessment Objectives which we refer to as AOs for short. The first three are fairly similar to what you will recognise to GCSE English Literature, with two new ones.

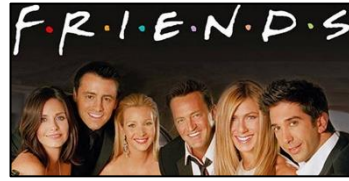
Read through each AO below and annotate what you understand from them.

- **AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.**
- **AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.**
- **AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.**
- **AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.**
- **AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.**

Some ideas/ support:

- **AO1 – Clear written expression. Use of a range of subject specific terms. Having a range of ideas about texts. Essentially, like at GCSE, this is your line of argument or ‘thesis’ in an essay.**
- **AO2 – Comment on the effects of writer’s methods – structural and language. At A Level, ideas across a whole-text and patterns are more important. We call this structural or macro-level analysis, rather than the micro (smaller-scale) analysis at GCSE.**
- **AO3 – Knowledge and application of historical, social and philosophical ideas about a text.**
- **AO4 – Understanding of the genre a text comes from e.g. comedy or political protest. Does it fit or resist the conventions / styles of these texts?**
- **AO5 – Having a range of different ideas about texts, using critics’ ideas and interpretations.**

The genres you will be exploring at A Level are comedy and social and political protest writing. What do you understand from these two topics? What texts have you already read or experienced in these genres?

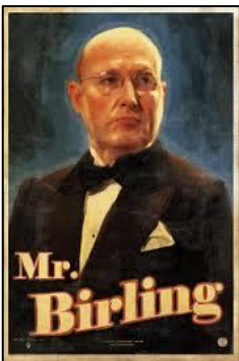


At GCSE in Paper 1 for English Language, and in all of your Literature questions, you are asked to explain the “meaning/s” of texts.

For example, you were asked: what does Thomas Hardy show about love in “Neutral Tones” or what does Priestley show about the class system in Edwardian Britain. The meaning of the whole text and messages about themes or society will also be studied at A Level. You also looked at what characters represent, e.g. Sheila Birling represents the younger generation who are waking up to new socialist ideas in *An Inspector Calls*. Reading meaning through character is also part of A level. This was called AO1 at GCSE and it is also called AO1 at A level.

However, AO1 at A Level allows you to do more than just analyse the meanings offered to you by the writer, it also enables you to evaluate the worldview/version of reality being presented to the reader. Some students start to evaluate at GCSE, these students tend to get Band 8 or 9.

So for example, describing the character of Arthur Birling as arrogant and materialistic is accurate and a good starting point but if I was studying the play at A Level, I *need to think why he is being “drawn” this way, remember he is a construct, not a real person.*



Write down your interpretation of Mr Birling. There are some ideas below.

You could interpret him as a stock type (a literary stereotype), a “flat” character who is rather one dimensional and an obvious villain. I could also make the judgement that Priestley presents a crude stock type who is not nuanced or naturalistic and is therefore an easy target for public hostility in the post-war, Labour-landslide England that the play was first performed in. This AO1 interpretation of character might lead me to make other AO1 interpretations about the plot of *An Inspector Calls* – is it a crude, basic melodrama full of contrived coincidences? Is every upper-middle class person really directly responsible for the oppression of the working class? I’m starting to develop an “argument” (a logical view justified by a series of ideas) about the text. This is AO1 and my success at A Level in this assessment objective is based on my ideas and my ability to express myself clearly and effectively in writing.

Every text is one person's representation of truth or reality – none is ever real. If you were to draw *Little Red Riding Hood*, for example, what choices would you make as an artist – what would you already be imagining about this character and how would your drawing of her encourage the viewer to “see” her? Draw her in the space provided and then consider the questions which follow.

- Did you automatically draw her as European? (It is actually a universal folk tale found in different variations around the world, she does not always meet a wolf for example but similar plot lines featuring young girls exist).
- What age did you make her? (Is she a tiny little 4 year old girl, a pre-teenager, or an adolescent?)
- What did you suggest about her “personality” (as she is not a real person, what this really asks is what values or attitudes would you show her to possess).
- How would you convey her behaviour through language such as verbs, adverbs and adjectives?

What meaning about this character is the viewer being encouraged to see in the illustrations below?



- What world-view is the reader presented with and why?

- What about this version which is another representation of this tale and character?

In the first version, we might anticipate an innocent world view, with a happy ending, a naive and childlike protagonist who is saved by a benevolent fate that is almost like divine intervention/an act of God; a world where the good always end up rewarded and the bad always end up punished.



This is the kind of narrative parents often reassure younger children with, that the world is fair and that there are happy endings – a kind of justice prevails somehow.

We might start to think about audience and context – the fact that this is a cautionary tale with a message in it for young children, a metaphor for following orders and not talking to strangers. We are now thinking about audience and context, and it is called **AO3** at A Level, just as it was at GCSE. Context helps us with our overall interpretation. Sybil Birling might be a monster in our 21st century eyes but she represents right-wing, dominant Victorian ideology about the class system being a reflection of morality (and her assumption is that the poor are poor because they

are bad and lazy). The 1946 audience watching the play would know that she gets her ideas from social norms of the 19th century. It does not mean she is suddenly a “good” or sympathetic character but it helps us to understand what she represents.

The second picture of Red Riding Hood is not from a children’s book of the tale, it is an artist’s impression and is meant for an older audience. The metaphors behind the original folk tale are more apparent here: the main character is teenage, the wolf appears to be a metaphorical sexual predator. This artist’s interpretation draws more on the real origins of the narrative, and it assumes the reader knows of these too.

Now read the article that follows from The National Geographic Website.



Photograph by The British Library Board, Getty Images

What Wide Origins You Have, Little Red Riding Hood!

An anthropologist chases down a tale told around the world.

By Rachel Hartigan Shea November 30th

It's a story told around the world. Little Red Riding Hood goes to visit her grandmother, only to discover that a wolf has eaten the old lady, dressed in her clothes, and now plans to eat the little girl too.

What happens next depends on which version you hear: Was Little Red Riding Hood devoured? Did a passing huntsman cut her from the wolf’s belly? Did she trick the wolf into letting her go outside? In parts of Iran, the child in peril is a boy, because little girls wouldn’t wander out on their own. In Africa, the villain could be a fox or a hyena. In East Asia, the predator is more likely to be a big cat.

Where did the original story come from? Scholars have been puzzling over that for years. [Jamie Tehrani](#), an anthropologist at Durham University in the United Kingdom, thinks he's found the answer. In a paper published this month in the journal *PLOS ONE*, he argues that methods used to track the evolution of biological species can be applied to the evolution of folktales. National Geographic spoke with Tehrani about his hunt for the origins of this famous story.

Why did you think that a scientific method might work to determine the evolution of folk tales?

Folktales are like biological species: They literally evolve by descent with modification. They get told and retold with slight alterations, and then that gets passed on to the next generation and gets altered again.

In many ways the problem of reconstructing folklore tradition is very similar to the problem of reconstructing the evolutionary relationship of species. We have little evidence about the evolution of species because the fossil record is so patchy. Similarly, folktales are only very occasionally written down. We need to use some kind of method for reconstructing that history in the absence of physical evidence.

You used a methodology called [phylogenetics](#). Can you explain what that is?

What you do with phylogenetics is you reconstruct history by inferring the past that's been preserved through inheritance. The descendants of ancestral species will resemble them in certain ways. You can figure out which features of a related group of organisms or folktales could be traced back to a common ancestor.

What are some of the theories about the origins of "Little Red Riding Hood"?

It's been suggested that the tale was an invention of [Charles Perrault](#), who wrote it down in the 17th century. Other people have insisted that "Little Red Riding Hood" has ancient origins. There's an 11th-century poem from Belgium which was recorded by a priest, who says, oh, there's this tale told by the local peasants about a girl wearing a red baptism tunic who wanders off and encounters this wolf.

My results demonstrate that, although most versions that we're familiar with today descended from Perrault's tale, he didn't invent it. My analysis confirmed that the 11th-century poem is indeed an early ancestor of the modern fairy tale.

Don't some scholars argue that the folktale came from Asia?

It's been suggested that the story may have originated in East Asia and spread westward, and as it spread west, it split into two distinct tales, "Little Red Riding Hood" and "The Wolf and the Kids." People have long recognized that there's some kind of relationship between the two stories, but nobody's really been able to demonstrate what the nature of that relationship is. A popular theory is that they're both descended from Chinese tradition, because these Chinese tales have elements of both.

My analysis shows that, in fact, the East Asian versions aren't the source. If the East Asian tales were truly ancestral, we would expect them to resemble the older and ancestral variants of "The Wolf and the Kids" and "Little Red Riding Hood." But instead they are more like the modern fairy tale versions. For example, in the East Asian tales we find a version of the famous dialogue between the victim and the villain which goes, "What big eyes you have!" But my reconstructions of the prehistory of the tale suggest that this dialogue evolved relatively recently. This is supported by the fact that it's missing from the 11th-century poem, which is the earliest known variant.

What is the story of "The Wolf and the Kids"?

A nanny goat leaves her kids at home and tells them not to open the door for anyone. What she doesn't realize is that a wolf is outside the house and overhears her. While she's out, the wolf comes to the door and pretends to be the nanny goat. When he gets in, he eats the kids all up. At the end of the story, the nanny goat tracks him down, kills him, and cuts open his belly and frees her kids.

What makes stories about predators disguised as beloved relatives so appealing to different cultures around the world?

Ultimately, the predator is metaphorical. The stories are really about how people aren't always who they seem to be, which is a really important lesson in life. Even people that we think we can trust can actually be out to harm us. In fact, it's precisely because we trust them that we are vulnerable to what their harmful intentions might be toward us.

Why do the origins of these stories matter?

We could regard folktales as a marker of human history showing how different societies have interacted with one another and how people have moved around the world.

I think there's a bigger and more interesting question about human imagination. These folktales embody fantasies and experiences and fears. They're a really good way of reading, through the products of our imagination, what we really care about.

How has this changed your initial (AO1) interpretations of the story of Little Red Riding Hood – what is the purpose of the story? How has learning the history (AO3) behind the story informed or shaped your thoughts?

So, back to **AO3** – the folk tale of Red Riding Hood is in fact a universal story told around the world which is about the need for adolescents to be wary of exploitative adults. In the European Red Riding Hood version of this tale, the red of the girl's cloak symbolises that she is now menstruating and is physically starting to resemble an adult woman. It is no coincidence that the wolf tries to attack her in bed – he wants to rape her. The warnings she receives from her mother about not straying from the path could be interpreted to mean that she is being told to follow rules, to stick to mainstream convention, to follow tribal codes. If she goes into the wilderness, off the path, she may become more at risk of people who exist on the fringes of the community.

My ability to interpret the text at A Level is also helped if I can bring different ways of understanding “reading”.

This is where **AO5** comes in at A Level. You will learn about new ways of understanding literature. Literature is highly subjective (biased), the view a writer puts across comes from a set of cultural assumptions.

Fiction is not truth, but it contains notions and ideas that create their own claims to the “truth” about our human existence. A right-wing economist would doubt Priestley's ideology in *An Inspector Calls*, they might point out that Birling creates opportunities and jobs, and has climbed the social ladder because of his due diligence. They might also critique Priestley's own arrogance that angels and Gods are socialists (though of course charity and sharing are tenets of all religions) – is God even political?

Similarly, a feminist writer might critique the cultural assumptions that are inherent in fairy tales like Cinderella.

So, you start by interpreting **the meanings of a text (AO1)**, **you consider how context informs your argument (AO3)** and then you can stand back and **consider the validity of the text (AO5)**.

Cinderella **AO1 Ideas**

She is hardworking/dutiful – suggest she will make a good wife

Marriage to a rich man as an escape route

Women compete for men –men are vital to survival,

Men empower women

Beauty is a genetic gift that can bring about luck

The good will always be rewarded

Fate/the gods/spirits will always intervene to help those in distress who deserve happiness

Love at first sight is real

Man chooses the woman – men have the power

Older women will compete ruthlessly for their own children

Promotes the idea of an elite/noblesse oblige – noble/inherently good deserve to be in the aristocracy

Exploits the idea of marriage as the ultimate female goal –ideal enshrined in global patriarchy



The final four ideas in the **AO1** arguments above would be of interest to anyone using a feminist approach to the story of Cinderella. In many ways, the story can only exist if patriarchal views are accepted –so it is very open to a feminist critique. If you were to write an essay arguing about the meanings enshrined in the story of Cinderella, you might well add some feminist ideas towards

the middle or end of your essay and these comments would count towards your AO5 points. AO5 acknowledges that texts can be open to different interpretations and that no writer is presenting a fixed truth.

However, beware – other people’s views and -isms are never your starting point! A lot of A level students make the mistake of over-politicising their essays. Your interpretation (AO1) is your starting point.

AO4 is an assessment objective that encourages students to make “connections across texts” – it could mean you think about the conventions of a genre. This doesn’t mean if you are studying Shakespeare, that you need to go and read all of his plays. However, you would be required to “read up on” them and start to understand the typical features of that genre. So if we were studying fairy tales, we might think about how the wolf is drawn in comparison to other villains across fairy tales, for example, the step-mother in Cinderella, or the witch in Rapunzel.

Finally, if we go back to AO2, this is the one you are already most familiar with. You would construct your AO1 argument, check that it fits the context (AO3), consider how the meanings within the text are typical of the genre it belongs to (AO4), consider some critiques (AO5) – but you would also need to prove your AO1 ideas about the interpretation, and your ideas about the audience’s reactions/writer’s intention and cultural or generic bias of the text are true with evidence. This is where AO2 comes in. Just as you did at GCSE, you may comment on writer’s devices. This is called micro evidence. You will also look at plot and structure, this is called macro evidence. Without AO2, nothing you say can be trusted by the reader. It is as if you are a lawyer in court using evidence to back up your case.

What are essay responses like at A Level?

At Heston, our A Level course studies two separate genres: Comedy, and Social and Political Literature. If the course studied the genre of Folk and Fairy Tales, we would definitely look at the typical ingredients of conventions of this genre fairly early on. You would find out that these include:

- A simple main plot with no sub-plots
- A plot told in chronological order
- A plot with concentrated action, a swift pace of events, where no one moment is lingered over for too long
- A setting, sometimes un-named, that is far away and distant in time from reality
- A young protagonist who faces an obstacle or threat to overcome
- An antagonist who is evil or destructive
- Characters may have supernatural powers/animals may be anthropomorphised
- Dialogue will often be used to reveal intention, there will be little or no interiority
- The “rules” the good authority figures promote will be proved true
- Some elder characters or authority figures may not live by good, mainstream morals or the villain may be a literal outsider, e.g. a lone wolf in the forest living on the edge of normal society
- Repetition is often used, e.g. particularly triples/three part lists, so in Goldilocks, she eats porridge, then sits on each chair, then lies down in each bed, before falling asleep (folk tales were told orally over 1,000 years ago so they needed to be fairly easy to remember and they needed to be passed down generationally)
- Stylized intensification may be used – this is when with each repetition, a new detail is added that creates more tension or accelerates the plot
- Powerful visual images are used symbolically – e.g. the glass slipper represents Cinderella’s elegance and charm, the red cloak represents that Red Riding Hood is now an adolescent, the poisoned apple represents the evil Queen’s jealousy and old age
- The theme is always to do with social survival – accepting struggle as part of life, being resilient, accepting that every action has a consequence; these messages are designed for young people who are becoming a part of their adult community (remember most adolescents did not go to school or college a thousand years ago, they became adults socially by taking on jobs and roles within their community, it was not simply the case that their bodies grew and they inhabited a sort of “waiting room” before joining adult life)

- Virtues such as honesty, patience, determination, loyalty and bravery are always rewarded and they almost always prevail over evil or trickery
- Social order/social harmony and relationships are almost always restored by the end of a folk or fairy tale

Now, read the following version of *Red Riding Hood* by The Brothers Grimm. Think about the AO1 ideas/ arguments suggested about this text e.g. it is a cautionary tale for adolescents which is universal. As you read, highlight and / or annotate any details which link to your knowledge of genre (the information above about fairy tales) and any writer's methods which are used to convey the writer's message.

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by every one who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else. So she was always called Little Red Riding Hood.

One day her mother said to her, "Come, Little Red Riding Hood, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing. And when you go into her room, don't forget to say, good-morning, and don't peep into every corner before you do it."

I will take great care, said Little Red Riding Hood to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red Riding Hood entered the wood, a wolf met her. Little Red Riding Hood did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

"Good-day, Little Red Riding Hood," said he.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Whither away so early, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"To my grandmother's."

"What have you got in your apron?"

"Cake and wine. Yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger."

"Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood. Her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below. You surely must know it," replied Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf thought to himself, "What a tender young creature. What a nice plump mouthful, she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, so as to catch both." So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red Riding Hood, and then he said, "see Little Red Riding Hood, how pretty the flowers are about here. Why do you not look round. I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing. You walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry." Little Red Riding Hood raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought, suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay. That would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time. And so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

"Who is there?"

"Little Red Riding Hood," replied the wolf. "She is bringing cake and wine. Open the door."

"Lift the latch," called out the grandmother, "I am too weak, and cannot get up."

The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother's bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Little Red Riding Hood, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her. She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself, oh dear, how uneasy I feel to-day, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much.

She called out, "Good morning," but received no answer. So she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

"Oh, grandmother," she said, "what big ears you have."

"The better to hear you with, my child," was the reply.
"But, grandmother, what big eyes you have," she said.
"The better to see you with, my dear."
"But, grandmother, what large hands you have."
"The better to hug you with."
"Oh, but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have."
"The better to eat you with."

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Little Red Riding Hood.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself, how the old woman is snoring. I must just see if she wants anything.

So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. "Do I find you here, you old sinner," said he. "I have long sought you."

Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf.

When he had made two snips, he saw the Little Red Riding Hood shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying, "Ah, how frightened I have been. How dark it was inside the wolf."

And after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Little Red Riding Hood, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf's belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf's skin and went home with it. The grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Little Red Riding Hood had brought, and revived, but Little Red Riding Hood thought to herself, as long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.

It is also related that once when Little Red Riding Hood was again taking cakes to the old grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path. Little Red Riding Hood, however, was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and told her grandmother that she had met the wolf, and that he had said good-morning to her, but with such a wicked look in his eyes, that if they had not been on the public road she was certain he would have eaten her up. "Well," said the grandmother, "we will shut the door, that he may not come in."

Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried, "open the door, grandmother, I am Little Red Riding Hood, and am bringing you some cakes."

But they did not speak, or open the door, so the grey-beard stole twice or thrice round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Little Red Riding Hood went home in the evening, and then to steal after her and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts. In front of the house was a great stone trough, so she said to the child, take the pail, Little Red Riding Hood. I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough. Little Red Riding Hood carried until the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down, and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. But Little Red Riding Hood went joyously home, and no one ever did anything to harm her again.

If this was GCSE, your question on such a story might be things like:

- Comment on how the wolf is presented
- Comment on how the author characterises the main character
- Comment on how good and evil are represented in the story
- Comment on how tension is built up throughout the story

At A Level, we would expect you to know and understand the answer to every possible single question there is about a character, a theme, or a device - and then to arrive at the exam ready to present an argument about the text.

This is because questions - whether they are based around an extract, based around an unseen text, or about the genre in general require a thorough overview of the whole text from the student.

Example of an Extract Question (closed text)

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by every one who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else. So she was always called Little Red Riding Hood.

One day her mother said to her, "Come, Little Red Riding Hood, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing. And when you go into her room, don't forget to say, good-morning, and don't peep into every corner before you do it."

I will take great care, said Little Red Riding Hood to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red Riding Hood entered the wood, a wolf met her. Little Red Riding Hood did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

"Good-day, Little Red Riding Hood," said he.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Whither away so early, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"To my grandmother's."

"What have you got in your apron?"

"Cake and wine. Yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger."

"Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood. Her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below. You surely must know it," replied Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf thought to himself, "What a tender young creature. What a nice plump mouthful, she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, so as to catch both." So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red Riding Hood, and then he said, "see Little Red Riding Hood, how pretty the flowers are about here. Why do you not look round. I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing. You walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry."

Comment on the way this extract is typical of its genre. What would you write to answer this question? Mind-map your ideas and write a few sentences in response. Then, read the model answer on the next page.

This extract comes from the exposition stage of the tale, it establishes the protagonist's innocence and therefore her vulnerability. The reader is meant to feel instant sympathy for her by recognising this vulnerability, she is a naïf stocktype. Her loving family's values are also conveyed, the grandmother is generous and the mother is protective; the two older women both nurture family members. Etiquette is prized too, the young girl is advised to show respectful manners to her elders. The author wants the reader to see that the child comes from a virtuous family who uphold social norms. This is a signal to the reader that this family's structure as well as the naïf's life may be put at risk if the antagonist is successful in his treacherous plan. The reader is also shown that the remote destination the little girl is travelling to involves risk, it is far away from the village so the author sets up the theme of survival and the common motif of a journey. As soon as the wolf emerges from the trees, the main character greets him politely and the reader can see that she is gullible but also trying to be obedient to her mother's instructions to be polite. Irony is created as the reader knows the danger that awaits her, but she is oblivious to it. The anthropomorphised villain is simply part of the magical landscape, he has human qualities and seems stealthy and manipulative. The tension increases as he distracts her easily by pointing out how pretty the flowers are, this suggests he has insight into her childlike state of mind and is highly cunning.

Riding Hood discloses to him where she is going, in unwitting error – she is possibly just holding polite conversation. Typically of folk tales, the action is swift, the exposition rapidly turns into the rising action as the wolf then walks alongside the young girl so he can see where her grandmother's house is. His evil plan is instantly disclosed to the reader; the theme of survival must be emphasised early on to the reader.

The first phase of a response would focus mostly on **AO1**, **AO3** and **AO4**.

(Next we then prove the student's interpretation true with **AO2** evidence -both micro and macro- and we also bring other **AO5** "readings" in by critiquing it.

Interpretations and genre:



- Read 'The Werewolf' by Angela Carter. This is one of three shocking re-workings of *Little Red Riding Hood*, each with a slightly different premise. A PDF version can be found here; the story is one page long:

<http://www.strony.toya.net.pl/~cyrillus/new/prose.pdf>

Make a list of your initial **AO1** ideas about the story and any interpretations of it you can come up with.

- Read these articles about Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/jun/24/classics.angelacarter>

<https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/angela-carters-wolf-tales>

This provides you with some **AO5** ideas – other reader's ideas. Has this changed your initial view?

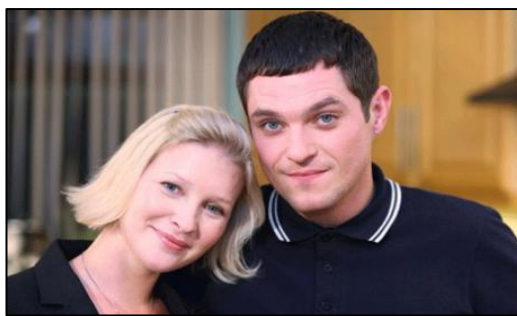
- Write a one page short story which provides a similar treatment of Cinderella. How can you rewrite the story with a feminist or Marxist

message? Perhaps the stepmother is not cruel and it is Cinderella who is vain and narcissistic. Perhaps the Prince is a totally insipid hero (possible given he chooses his bride based on her shoe size!) but Cinderella reluctantly marries him in order to leave her cruel family behind. Perhaps Cinderella is appalled by the rich opulence of the palace and criticises the Prince for his selfish indulgence whilst she (and others) live in abject poverty, before running away from him at midnight.

- Finally, revisit the [list of conventions in fairytales](#) earlier in this section. How far have you met these? How have you changed these and to what effect?

Section 4: Genre Study (comedy)

Which of the characters below do you recognise?



All of them feature in comedy television shows from the past 10 -20 years on television. Yet why and how they are funny is markedly different in each case.

Comedy is a genre – in ancient Greek theatre, it was any play which ended happily with a wedding.

However, the ancient Greeks did not invent the human capacity for a sense of humour – this is something all cultures across the world and throughout time have had.

There are different psychological theories about why human beings have a sense of humour. Viktor Frankl, psychiatrist, author of *Man's Search for Meaning* and a Nazi concentration camp survivor, describes humour as “another of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation.” Some psychotherapists believe humour can be a defence mechanism that allows us to avoid really experiencing our emotions. Humour allows people to cope with harsh or uncomfortable truths, like death, in a communal way. For example, the comedians on *The Monty Python Show* (1970s UK TV show) famously sang a song called “Always Look On The Bright Side of Life” but this happy chorus was preceded by verses that claimed “Life’s a load of shit/If you take a look at it.”

Life is absurd, and we can’t change that. But we can decide how to respond to that absurdity. Treating it entirely as a joke is inhumane. The suffering of the people of Syria, for instance, is tragic, not comic. But being unrelentingly serious is also wrong, as it represents a failure to accept the cosmic insignificance of human endeavour, i.e. that a lot of our actions, words and beliefs may be silly, flawed and vain; that ultimately, none of us is actually as important as we may think we are.

As literature, cinema and television have evolved, so has comedy. There are many sub-genres which fall under the umbrella term “comedy”.

Comedy is very much influenced by the society in which it is produced. For example, Channel 4 Film’s *4 Lions* satirised political and religious extremism in the wake of the London Bombings in 2005. *Little Britain*’s Vicky Pollard character was a stock-type based on some of middle England’s fears about ASBO-holding teenagers. In his plays, Shakespeare often parodies young men who fancy themselves as tragic, doomed lovers and great classical poets (e.g. Lysander in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*), his audience would instantly know that the moment that a young teenage man starts to talk in rhyming couplets and fancy imagery, that romantic poets of the time are being mocked.

Sometimes, norms change with societal change. For example, some stand-up comedians like Jim Davidson of the 1970s made jokes about people of different races, mothers-in-law, women with big breasts etc that just would not be acceptable to most people now. However, in the UK there are no laws governing what a comedian can or can’t say and there is still a small market for this type of humour (told very much from the point of view of a middle-aged, white, heterosexual man) as Roy Chubby Brown and Jethro are still popular – making their living from DVDs and sell-out shows rather than mainstream TV. The Charlie Hebdo magazine cover which displayed a comic strip type depiction of the prophet Mohamed was intended to be funny, and was found funny by some people, whilst offending many others at the same time. Even in Britain, which likes to consider itself a free country, comedians can be criticised for their material, for “going too far”, e.g. Frankie Boyle was sacked in 2009 from *Mock The Week* for comments about the Queen.

Your Opinions About Comedy

- Are any of the following not acceptable as a topic for comedy: **disability** **stupidity**
Religion **war** **politics** **love** **death** **disease** **royalty** **God**
Shopping **school** **parents** **friendship** **tv shows** **social media**
drugs
Alcohol **nature/animals** **space/the universe** **child abuse** **racism**
Murder **theft** **mugging** **burglary**
- Rank in order of your preference (1, most funny in your opinion, down to 10, least funny) :
*Jokes with a question and answer (a punchline, e..g **Knock Knock** jokes)*
Insults that are very cleverly phrased
Sarcasm
Shows where a character is pranked in real life
Sit-coms where a character makes loads of silly mistakes or is tricked
Harsh, cutting, cruel humour where someone is mocked
Political or satirical humour where the hypocrisy or lies of people in authority is exposed
Romantic comedies where couples get together and relationship issues are explored
Sit-coms where a tangle, messy situation arises out of human errors
Comedy stock-types (where a certain kind of person is imitated, their traits are exaggerated)
- Should comedy tell the truth about human nature and life?
- Should comedy play with reality, show certain things about it, purely for the purpose of entertaining?
- Can comedy have a serious message or do serious intentions get in the way of effective comedy?
- Are the things that we laugh at in everyday life always nice and “positive”?

7. If you were to write a comedy, what would you write about? Would you try to do a stand-up routine full of observations about life? Or would you write a script featuring fictional characters – what topics would you want to explore, what would you want to expose or explore?
8. Should a government censor some comedians if they tackle certain topics? Can the state ever police what people talk about or joke about privately?

Read through the key comedic terms below. Highlight in one colour anything you are familiar with and another colour any new terms. You will need to learn these slowly. Look up any terms that you don't fully understand, adding to the definitions.

Black comedy (the Germans have a special word for this type of sense of humour “schadenfraude”):

Comedy which explores the nastier side of human nature, laughs at misfortune, presents people as unrelentingly selfish and dishonest. Julia Davies’ *Nighty Night* on BBC3 in 2003 is an example, in this programme she plays a scheming hairdresser who is desperate to marry her neighbour and kill his wife.

Comedy of Errors – plot-driven and stock-type (stereotypes in literature)-driven comedy where people behave in a stilted, one-dimensional way and make the same mistakes over and over, often resulting in coincidences, mistaken identity, tricks, lies, misunderstandings. Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* is an example.

Comedy of Manners – Like the Comedy of Errors, this type of comedy is plot-driven and features stock-types rather than well-rounded characters. The humour tends to be derived from sophisticated wit and wordplay. Sometimes the playwright may be parodying or satirising classes or groups in society, e.g. *Oscar Wilde’s Importance of Being Earnest*.

Romantic Comedy – plot-driven, the two potential lovers meet, often instantly dislike each other, have to overcome various obstacles to find each other or come to a mutual understanding at the end. There have been countless rom-com movies, e.g. *10 Things I Hate About You*, *Chasing Amy*, *That Awkward Moment*.

Slapstick Comedy – physical humour, where a character has accidents or makes mistakes that can be understood visually, *Mr Bean* is an example of this.

Satirical Comedy – comedy with a social agenda, a political or social message. Panel shows programmes like *Have I Got News For You* and sitcoms like *The Thick Of It* aim to expose the corruption and lies at the heart of government.

Parody – imitation, not just the mimicry of a voice or mannerisms, but the imitation of a genre or literature. Charlie Brooker’s *A Touch of Cloth* for Sky tv was a parody of tv cop shows where there is always a demented serial killer, sexual tension between two of the main cops investigating the mystery, an antagonistic chief constable who doesn’t believe in the main cop etc.

Observational comedy – this is what a lot of stand-up comedians make jokes out of, observations of the funny little foibles and habits of people in everyday life. Some sit-coms progress at a gentle, observational pace such as *Gavin and Stacey*.

Sexual humour – Very few texts tend to be written entirely around this, but strands of sexual humour can be found in many comedy plays, novels, songs, films and tv programmes.

Sit-coms – This is the common term used for half-hour tv comedy dramas that feature the same characters and place, week-in, week-out. The humour may draw on many different sub-genres of comedy, e.g. there are Comedy of Errors elements in *Friends*.

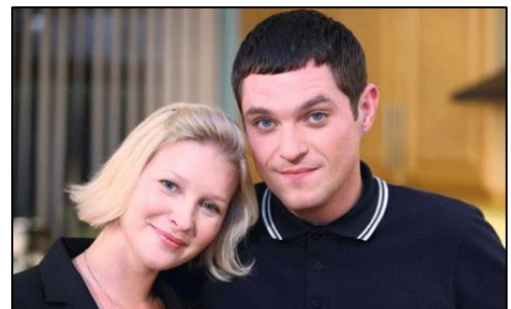
Insult comedy- a stand-up form of comedy, where the performer on stage throws insults at the audience. This was recently also used by the late Joan Rivers on *Fashion Police* but it was also very popular as a type of pub banter between friends in *Shakespeare's* times.

Cringe comedy – a comedy where the foibles, vanities and mistaken ideas of a character steer them into cringe-able situations, force them to make embarrassing faux-pas and trap them in embarrassing predicaments which they can neither deny or escape from, e.g. *The Office*

What AQA (the exam board) Expects You To Study:

- The type of the comedy text itself, whether it is a classic romantic drama, a satire, a comedy of manners
- The settings for the comedy, both places and times
- The journey towards knowledge and happiness for the protagonists, often in relation to their love interest, their mistakes and misunderstandings along their journey, moments of unhappiness and ultimate sense of joy
- The role of the comic villain, or rival, who directly affects the fortune of the hero or heroine, who causes some disruption to the cheerful mood but whose power is finally curtailed · the sense that all will end well and that fortune smiles
- How the behaviour of the hero or heroine affects primarily themselves and perhaps one or two others rather than countries and states, as in tragedy
- The significance of human folly, trickery and gullibility
- The inclusion of clowns, exaggeration, stereotypes, pompous attitudes and posturing
- the use of disguise, escapes and discovery, elements of the supernatural
- The structural patterning of the text as it moves from disorder to order, incorporating rule and misrule, how competition between characters is set up and resolved, how opposites are contrasted and reconciled, leading to comic resolutions
- The use of complex plotting and sub-plots
- The way that language is used to heighten the comedy, particularly wit and linguistic play
- The way that comedy draws attention to itself
- Ultimately how the comedy affects/resonates with the audience

For each of the three characters below, how can you apply the terms you have learnt? What time of comedy do they appear in and to what ultimate purpose? Check your ideas against the teacher ones below when you finish.



Some ideas:

Mr Bean

- Slapstick, visual humour
- He is a comic fool stocktype - a misfit in the modern world
- He makes errors in everyday settings like the swimming pool, a library, a car park.
- He sometimes wins and sometimes loses. When he loses, we don't feel too sorry for him as he is not well-rounded enough for us to empathise with him.
- Universal appeal across the world and age groups.
- *Available to watch via YouTube*

Rachel from Friends

- Ingénue (naïve, young female stocktype), frequently mistaken or muddled.
- Often the romantic interest for other characters.
- *Friends* is like a 20/21st century Comedy of Errors, through it the audience can laugh at modern foibles, vanities and pretensions - particularly those which might affect an insecure 20 something in New York.
- *Available to watch via Netflix*

Gavin and Stacey

- This couple face obstacles to do with subtle misunderstandings, sometimes their relationship takes a background importance and other characters' relationships are at the fore of an episode. Both have flaws and failings, as do their families and friends but the audience is meant to warm to them and feel as if they know them.
- *Available to watch via BBC iPlayer*

If you have never seen an episode, it is well worth doing so in order to obtain a developed perspective on comedies in different forms and for different purposes.

Studying texts starts with an understanding of the genre and the audience relationship towards a character.

It also involves analysis of dialogue and plot (style and structure), and critical reflection on characterisation.

For example, a feminist reading of *Gavin and Stacey* might argue that the text reinforces the idea that one has to be married to achieve happiness in society, which is of course false. The comedy might also be said to be very conservative and too "safe", the comedy lying in the happy ending and the preservation of the family and friendship ties that exist despite life's hardships. A Marxian critique of *Friends* might argue that the text presents a false view of the economic life of a waitress (which is what Rachel is in the series), that her clothes and lifestyle perpetuate a consumerist American dream that is pure fantasy. Yet of course, perhaps that is what audience want from television shows.

Watching Comedy

Please go on to **Youtube**, search for **Frasier Season 1** and the 3rd result should be called Frasier Season 1 Episode 3 (it runs at 35 minutes 12 seconds).

Please watch the episode in its entirety. Next, read this extract from Scene 2.

Dinner At Eight, Frasier Season 1 , Episode 3, Scene 2

Frasier puts the phone down and goes to the door. He opens it: it is Niles, and he has just finished using his mobile phone.

Frasier: Hi Niles, good to see you. Thanks for calling first.

Niles: Well, I heard your show today. I wouldn't dream of popping by unannounced.

Frasier: Ah...

Niles: Actually I was in the neighbourhood, and I've come to beg a favour. Er, my housekeeper Mary is a very big fan of your little radio programme.

Frasier (pleased): Is she?

Niles: Yes. Well, what she lacks in taste, she makes up for in vigour (puts his briefcase down). She'd like an autographed photo.

Frasier: Oh well, it'd be my pleasure. (To Daphne) Daphne, this is my brother Niles. (leaves to get the photo)

Niles sees Daphne for the first time, and is pleasantly surprised to say the least. Daphne just smiles at him.

Niles: Hmm..you're Daphne?

Daphne: Why, yes, I am.

Niles: Well, I...

Niles goes over to her eagerly, and they shake hands; he holds on, a little lost for words.

Niles: When Frasier told me he'd hired an Englishwoman, I pictured someone a little more...not quite so...you're Daphne?

Daphne: It's nice to meet you.

She takes her hand away and gets back to sorting the laundry. Frasier returns with a photo.

Niles: Well, what a lovely accent. Is that, er, Manchester?

Daphne: Yes. How'd you know?

Niles: Oh ha, I'm quite the anglophile; I'm sure Frasier and dad have already told you.

Frasier sits on the couch, preparing to sign the photo. Niles, still enraptured by Daphne, absent-mindedly picks up a pair of Frasier's knickers.

Daphne: No, they didn't mention it.

Niles: Ah...you undoubtedly guessed as much when they said I'd spent a year studying at Cambridge.

Daphne: No, they didn't mention that, either.

Niles: I guess my father and brother don't spend a lot of time talking about me when I'm not around! (starts to feel the knickers)

Daphne: Oh, I wouldn't say that...

Frasier: (gets up, having signed the photo) Niles, here's your picture.

He notices that Niles is pressing the knickers up against his face.

Frasier: Do you MIND?

He grabs the pair of knickers from Niles and throws them back onto the dinner table. While he glowers, Niles takes the photo and walks over to his briefcase.

Niles: (reading) "Mary, here's wishing you good mental health, Frasier Crane."

Niles puts the photo in his briefcase. Martin returns, wearing his new suit; it is an odd, dark red or brown colour and looks distinctly cheap.

Martin: Fits like a glove. Hi, Niles!

Niles: Hey, dad...(notices his suit).Wow.

Martin: How do I look?

Niles: Wow.

Daphne: (To Niles) Dr Crane took your father shopping to Armani this afternoon.

Niles: (incredulous): You got that at Armani?

Martin: Just like I told you, Frasier – he can't tell the difference!

Frasier: Well, we were on our way to Armani, when dad spotted this in the window of a discount clothing store.

Daphne picks up all of the laundry.

Martin: It's sharkskin! (waves his forearm) Look at the way it changes colour when I move my arm.

Niles stares at him, less than impressed. Daphne, carrying the laundry, goes over to Martin.

Daphne: (To Martin) You're going to be the handsomest gent at your friend's retirement party. Now come on, let's go and hang it up before it gets wrinkled.

Martin and Daphne leave.

Niles: Frasier, is he our real father?

Frasier: Now don't start that again – we've been having this discussion since we were children.

Niles: (goes towards the kitchen) But that suit!

Frasier: Well it's not just the suit, it's everything, it's, it's his taste in everything! Clothing, films, music...

Now put a tick or asterisk next to every aspect of comedy in the script, number and annotate them on a separate page to bring to your first A Level lesson.

In your first lesson about aspects of comedy in drama, you will take these annotations and turn them into a paragraph.

We will also discuss: what type of comedy is this, why does it appeal to a contemporary audience, who or what are the comic foci of this scene?

Read the article below from 'USA Today' and complete the tasks which follow.

Is it OK to laugh at coronavirus jokes and memes?

Erin Jensen USA TODAY

Published 8:20 PM EDT Apr 10, 2020

Knock knock.

Who's there?

No one because we're isolating.

The coronavirus pandemic and its deadly wake are no laughing matter. But there are plenty who are finding punchlines amid the pandemic. Seriously, did you think when the (bleep) hit the fan you'd be wondering if you could spare the toilet paper to clean it?

Comedians Norm Macdonald and Patton Oswalt attempted to bring levity to the situation weeks ago.

"Remember the good old days, when washing your hands didn't take three hours?" Macdonald inquired at the Hollywood Improv on March 13.

Oswalt delivered stand-up from the yard in a video shared to Twitter March 16.

"Alright, folks, thanks for staying in tonight," he said. "This COVID-19, I tell ya. I didn't see COVID-1 through 18, so I don't really know what this is all about."



*Comedian Cameron Esposito
Courtesy Cameron Esposito*

Stand-up comic and author Cameron Esposito has also been inspired by the crisis. "Doctors think my girlfriend has COVID-19, and this has really progressed our relationship," she joked in a clip shared to Instagram Sunday. "I mean, we're sleepin' in separate beds, something usually reserved for marriage."

"That is the dumbest joke in the world," Esposito tells USA TODAY, "but it made me laugh."

The funny lady feels "It is always OK to laugh," even now. She suggests comedians stick to "talking about your own life and your relationship to the topic" and believes they can get into trouble when "they're talking about something they have no personal knowledge of."

For her, determining what's off-limits is more "about cruelty, not whether or not the topic can be funny at all."

Peter McGraw, behavioral economist and director of the Humor Research Lab at the University of Colorado Boulder, agrees that sensitivity should be exercised.

"It's easy to make jokes about getting to the end of Netflix because you're quarantined. It's another thing to make jokes about a lack of respirators," he says.

McGraw says while there is some "mild" physical benefit to laughing, it's the positive emotions that humor triggers that do us good because they're "incredibly important for our health and well-being."

Happy feelings can help our immune systems thrive, he says, plus "It's actually easier to solve problems when you're in a positive mood."

Maybe most importantly, laughter can help decrease fear.

McGraw references the benign violation theory to explain how joking about something as awful as the coronavirus pandemic can be beneficial. The theory describes a violation as "anything that threatens one's beliefs about how the world should be." In order for a violation to become humorous it needs to be viewed as not harmful.

"So, when you turn tragedy into comedy, you actually make it less of a tragedy," he says.

Esposito, who spoke about her own sexual assault in her 2018 special "Rape Jokes," sees comedy as an aide, not a cure.

"I don't know that it's ever about getting over (tragedy), because I don't actually think humor can do that," she says. "I think everybody has to heal in their own way. ... I think humor is about keeping going."

Tasks:

1. Make notes on where each comedian thinks the line should be drawn on comedy based on serious issues and why.
2. Why will people have different opinions and experience comedy differently?
3. Research comedy (in the form of stand-up routines, memes, spoof articles from *The Daily Mash* etc) on the topic of coronavirus. What is your personal threshold in terms of what it is acceptable to joke about? Why?
4. Write an opinion piece for a UK newspaper expressing whether you think it is acceptable to joke about the coronavirus, including examples, a range of supported, alternate opinions and factors that would influence how someone receives the comedy. You may wish to read through opinion pieces on *The Guardian* website to get an idea. Please bring this article with you to your first lessons in September.
5. Research the benign violation theory mentioned in the article.

Section 5: Genre study (social and political protest writing)

In Paper 2, you will interpret how political or social messages are conveyed by texts. The exam board would like you to understand a range of reasons why authors use poetry, novels, or plays to put across ideas about the way our social world is ordered.

What are politics?

Politics as a job refers firstly to the debates that our politicians have when they make policies. Politicians debate, vote, then change laws. Policies are laws that are meant to help to make our society better, for example, a law that now exists is that all children in the UK must have an education. This is a 20th century policy. The whole process of Brexit is a legal one, as the UK is no longer legally part of the European Union. New laws around import and export trade will be made in the coming year. However, politics are not simply business issues. People's votes about Brexit were founded on their own sense of identity, and issues to do with nationalism/ethnicity/feelings about immigration/despair at poverty. While some anti-Brexit campaigners felt it was xenophobic or racist to restrict free movement and trade between Britain and other European countries, for others the vote was a reaction to seeing their own communities blighted by unemployment. So politics is public but also deeply personal. It orbits industry and individual lives.

People's beliefs about which laws are best vary widely. In the UK at the moment, there are lots of right-wing Conservative and left-wing Labour voters, some Green party voters, and some Liberal voters. Even within the right-wing and left-wing voter groups, individual beliefs may vary. So two people might share the belief that trade unions should have the power to strike when workers want to complain about money or working conditions, however those same two people might differ on another issues like capital punishment.

Some authors have beliefs and agendas that pertain to a whole ideology, for example, Priestley's texts have a totally socialist agenda. Other authors may not wish their texts to represent entire ideologies or "-isms", they may use their text to comment on one specific issue. So, for example, Charlotte Mew used *The Farmer's Bride* to criticise patriarchy and inequality between the genders but we can't generalise about all of her beliefs – we can't guess whether she would vote Labour, Conservative, Liberal or Green in a general election.

When you study social and political texts, we are not asking you to guess what an author would vote or reduce their beliefs to one *-ism*. You are being asked to consider the different meanings and ideas about society/laws/politics/beliefs that are generated in that one text.

AQA, the exam board, say:

“A crucial word in the title of this option is ‘Elements’ and students need to consider the specific elements that exist in each of their texts. The elements that might be explored, depending on each individual text, include:

- the type of the text itself, whether it is a post-modern novel, science fiction, satirical poetry, historical and political drama
- the settings that are created as backdrops for political and social action and the power struggles that are played out on them. Both places (real and imagined) and time settings will also be significant here
- the specific nature of the power struggle, the behaviours of those with power and those without, those who have their hands on the levers of power
- the pursuit of power itself, rebellion against those with power, warfare
- the workings of the ruling political classes
- corruption, conspiracy, control
- the connection of the smaller world to the larger world
- the focus on human organisation: domestically, in the work place, in local and national governments
- gender politics and issues of social class
- the structural patterning of the text, how political tensions are heightened and perhaps resolved
- the way that language is used in the worlds that are created
- the way that political and social protest writing is used to comment on society, particularly the representation of society at particular historical periods
- ultimately how political and social protest writing affects audiences and readers, inviting reflection on our own world.”

You have already studied some texts with social or political meanings – *Of Mice and Men* in Year 9 is a good one to consider. If you don't remember the book well, read up on it here: <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/micemen/>
You could also watch the film on Netflix.

Steinbeck set it at an unspecified time during the Great Depression.



Just as these photos show the harsh truth, so does Steinbeck's novel.

The main characters' journey is simple – they have one dream which is to have their own home.

He deliberately gives the plot a cyclical structure, showing that the protagonists end up where they began (homeless in the brush, on the run) to signal that the American dream is a myth for most people in the 1930s.

Every chapter starts with scene depiction to suggest the characters' fates are dictated by their environments.

At GCSE, questions about this novel would be about separate characters, themes or devices. For example, you might be asked:

- Comment on what Crooks represents in the novel.
- Comment on how poverty and desperation are shown.
- Comment on how tension is used in the novel.
-

At A level, you are asked to synthesise (bring together/fuse) lots of ideas so that you can create an argument about the novel.

So you might be asked a question like:

Social and political fiction always presents the oppressed as sympathetic victims. Discuss.

You would think about all kinds of ideas – to do with different themes, characters, and devices – before making an overview that summarises your argument. Thinking through the question is very important – there are no quick answers you can rehearse at A Level.

*After you watch, re-read or research the book *Of Mice and Men*, create a mind-map responding to the question above. Which characters are 'oppressed'? Are they all 'sympathetic victims'? What might Steinbeck's purpose be in representing the characters in different ways? Then, read through the teacher ideas which follow.*

Idea in the book	Does this create sympathy or show the oppressed as victims?	What idea about society or politics is being presented?
<p>The ranch is a microcosm of American society. Small-town America is corrupt and violent.</p> 	<p>Yes- It is not a home, it is a workplace; the men there are treated like commodities because their productivity on the ranch is more important than anything else to the boss whose sole aim is to make some personal wealth. The boss however is what Marx would call “petty bourgeoisie”, he is marginally wealthier than most people but by no means is he living an elite lifestyle. The ranch provides plain, basic accommodation and food for its workers, there is no need for manners or social niceties – characters speak bluntly to one another. This is not a workplace where workers have many rights, which is continually emphasised when workers complaint that Curley can get away with bullying others because he can never be sacked as he is the son of the boss.</p> <p>No -Vigilantism thrives, men can take the law into their own hands with guns. This is shown in the flashbacks to the lynch mob in Weed who tried to murder George and Lennie, and shown in the final chapter when Curley manages to get some of the men to come with him to find Lennie, and he also tells Whit to get in touch with the local sheriff to let him know what is about to happen. The police in small towns will allow vigilantism.</p>	<p>Workers have few rights, however they are happy to take part in or watch violence. The oppressed collude with the oppressors. There seems to be no moral code followed by anyone, the only motivation characters have is to survive.</p>
<p>Protagonists represent migrant workers – the American Dream is the opposite of their reality</p> 	<p>Yes- they both seem morally decent, they are trying to gain independence but caught in a cycle of poverty – so they are victims of socio-historical conditions they cannot control, i.e. the economy has crashed and there aren’t enough jobs</p>	<p>Poverty creates a spiral that is impossible to escape</p>

George and Lennie encounter hostility and threats wherever they go



Yes- because they try to keep themselves to themselves, and to avoid conflict. Their involvement in trouble is down to accidents. So they are victims of circumstance

People are hostile because humans behave like animals in a “survival of the fittest” scenario – this is because the economy cannot guarantee security, individuals are more selfish and aggressive in protecting their own interests



George is an “everyman” figure, he is meant to represent the typical working-class labourer



Yes -He is sympathetic as he is fair-minded, he has also undertaken a carer role with Lennie that he is not obliged to take on.

No-However, he is also flawed. He makes weak-willed choices, like going to Suzy’s place and wasting his money on a Saturday night, so some of his problems stem from his own habits.

George is mentally tenacious and tough-talking enough to survive, he is able to find ways out of dilemmas. He is not totally helpless.

George’s attitude to Curley’s wife is casually sexist, he holds the same misogynistic values as the rest of the men. He tells Lennie that some women drive their partners to murder and explains one of his old school friends is doing a life sentence “on account of a broad”. Steinbeck presents this misogyny without intervention or criticism, he shows otherwise “decent” and reasonable men spouting views that suggest women as responsible for men’s anger and violence. This view seems to subliminally suggest that men cannot control their instincts, such as rage, and that women must take responsibility for keeping their partners emotionally stable. Even Slim, whom the reader is meant to represent as Godlike figure of rational thought, tells Curley to “control” his wife. So George is not just oppressed but in some ways an oppressor in terms of gender.

People’s behavioural habits can become unhealthy when they are caught up in poverty, however there is a degree of choice involved. The oppressed can also hold habitually oppressive thoughts about their fellow human beings, opinions that come out of ignorance or detachment from others.


<p>Lennie represents the vulnerable, the mentally weak</p> 	<p>Yes- He is childlike and innocent No- but his unintentional killing of two animals and one human pose a question that is hard to answer. He may be a victim of his own limited mental capacity but others are victims of this too – Curley’s wife loses her life when she is simply trying to be kind to him. The question is that he is not the only victim if he is at liberty to roam around freely, so what should be done? The reader is manipulated into thinking George had to because Slim approves, “you hadda”</p>	<p>Perhaps Steinbeck suggests that there is no system in place to support the most vulnerable – the few mentions of psychiatric hospitals sound grim, there is the suggestion Lennie would just be tied up and left if he was in one. In such a barbaric world, George has to make a barbaric decision.</p>
<p>Candy represents the elderly</p> 	<p>Yes-His market value, in a world where people are reduced to economic commodities, has waned since he lost his hand and became old. He is reduced to doing the most lowly jobs on the ranch and knows he has to accept it as he has no home to retire to. His financial status is desperate, his loneliness is painful hence his dependence on his old dog. He lacks physical power and cannot stand up to Carlson when he insists on shooting the dog dead. No-However, he is spiteful, he relishes the memory of the beating Crooks endured the previous Christmas, he is hesitant to enter Crooks’ living quarters because he knows he has colluded in the racism that Crooks has suffered. He gossips about Curley’s wife, telling the men she is a “tart”. He says she has seen her watch the men, which he thinks is wrong, yet ironically he must have been watching her himself in order to realise this. Like George, Candy can be misogynistic, and he also is a bystander who passively enjoys the misery Crooks is subjected to in racist attacks. He is powerless and oppressed by poverty and homelessness. However he also enjoys seeing other people oppressed.</p>	<p>Steinbeck shows that oppression creates hierarchies of suffering within social groups where people take out their own unhappiness on others and blame anyone who seems different for problems.</p>


Crooks represents the experience of African-Americans



Yes- The men all use the word “nigger” casually, out of habit, which shows that even though slavery has been abolished for almost a century at this point in the U.S.A, the social norms and values held by European Americans are still entrenched in the old beliefs about the racial supremacy of the white person. The men define Crooks’ wholly by his ethnicity, they do not know the individual man. Only Slim seems to have a proper friendship with Crooks, the majority do not which suggests the majority of America is racist. Crooks lives a segregated existence, he is on the fringes of the story until chapter 4, his voice occasionally heard by the door to the bunkhouse that he is not permitted to enter. He lives in a state of anger, loneliness and fear, a shotgun by his side in his room in the barn and copy of an out of date law book about civil rights show he worries about being killed or exploited on a daily basis. He is a man who knows his job well, who is well-read and in a fairer society or prosperous time in history, he would not be reduced to living like an animal in a barn. Crooks’s voice is the most cynical of all the characters in that he rejects Christianity and The American Dream as cultural myths or what Marxists would call “cultural fallacies”. Steinbeck wants the reader to respect Crooks’ views, therefore Crooks has to be depicted as sympathetic to an extent. Perhaps his cynicism is the result of his outsider status and oppression. He cannot believe in the notion of an after-life where the suffering she has faced on earth are rewarded with heavenly justice. He only knows pain. Steinbeck’s narrative use of the word “negro” as if to signal respect and differentiate his own authorial attitudes from those of the men’s seems problematic to a contemporary reader and steeped in old colonial attitudes. He does

Racism is endemic in 1930s America, it is legally outlawed as people in Northern American states like California are supposed to be equal (unlike in the Deep South where segregation is legally imposed through different schools, etc) but the attitudes of the white majority is still that African-Americans are racially inferior and therefore deserving of lower status and exploitation

	<p>however strive to show Crooks as an individual and the cyclical plot of chapter 4 shows that Crooks, Like the protagonists, will never better himself in the social climate of 1930s America.</p> <p>No- He resorts to inflicting mental cruelty on Lennie by getting him to imagine that George is not coming back. This shows he too likes to exert power over others and is capable of abusing it.</p>	
<p>Curley's wife</p>  <p>twinkl.com</p>	<p>Yes- Like Crooks, she is not known by her real name. She is simply defined by her status as someone's wife, effectively their property. She is immature and trapped in a loveless marriage to a man she despises. Her impulsive attempt to annoy her mum has backfired on her. When she dies, Steinbeck explains her "ache for attention" has ceased to exist too, implying that she is now at peace. Her dream of fame and fortune as a Hollywood star is childish, she has no interest in or ability at drama but she is attracted by the thought of "all them nice clothes they wear". She is a victim of the mythologies springing up in America at the time that came out of Hollywood, ideas about fame and celebrity. She dresses as if she is a movie star on the ranch which seems incongruous - it's a dirty, dusty farm. She is also a victim of her own inexperience, she is not worldly wise yet and thinks she is telling Lennie new information when she "confides" in him that Curley "ain't a nice fella"</p> <p>No- Steinbeck's depictions of her focus very much on her body, her face and her clothes in the earlier chapters. She cuts off the light in the doorway when she enters the bunkhouse, which foreshadows the trouble she may bring with her. Steinbeck makes her seem dangerous. He also shows she has no morals like the others, she threatens to "cry rape" and get Crooks murdered. This is in response to him telling her to stop being mean. Like Crooks and</p>	<p>Steinbeck suggests that a ranch is no place for a woman. He implies she is inevitably going to create trouble or tragedy, yet her death is not her fault.</p> <p>The novel shows though that women have to make ruthless decisions to survive, like men. It also shows that loving relationships are rare in economic hardships, people are too focussed on survival to worry about romance.</p>

	<p>Candy, she is happy to abuse power when she can because it gives her a moment of supremacy. Steinbeck's representation of women is problematic. He only alludes to the foster mother figure of Aunt Clara in passing. Besides her, all the other female characters in the book exchange sex for money. Curley's wife is said by George to be likely to "clear out for a dime", i.e. leave Curley if a better option comes along. The women of Soledad that the men go to visit at Suze's place are prostitutes. In reality in the 1930s, many women worked on ranches doing the same jobs as men. Not all women resorted to sex work to survive. Steinbeck presents a very narrow, unnaturalistic view of women in the book.</p>	
<p>Slim represents the moral man</p> 	<p>Yes-Slim is oppressed to an extent as although he has some power on the ranch due to his expertise in his job and his social popularity, he is still ultimately one of the "guys" who have no family, no home, no future. He seems tough and inexpressive, he makes short pronouncements about what is or isn't right. He has an aura that inspires trust, even George tells him secrets when he first meets him. He doesn't join in with racism against crooks, he doesn't join in with the lynch mob who want to kill Lennie at the end. He is sympathetic because he is trying to uphold morality despite being surrounded by aggressors. He is a victim of poverty even though his personal qualities make him seem strong.</p>	<p>Steinbeck has to show some people have morals, but they are in the minority. Therefore, very few of the characters are beyond reproach and totally sympathetic.</p>

The third column represents ideas that might form an **AO1 overview** that a student first outlines as their opening argument before going on to prove their ideas true with **AO2 evidence**.

That means that as an A Level student, you are remembering, analysing and juggling lots of different ideas first before making conclusions of your own that form your **AO1 overview/argument**.

Have a go at writing your first three to four sentences to this question using the table and your own ideas. Then, read through the example below. Highlight AO1 ideas (argument), AO2 (characters, structure, writer's methods) and AO3 ideas (historical or social context).

Social and political fiction always presents the oppressed as sympathetic victims. Discuss.

Steinbeck's novel features the setting of a ranch which, along with the characters on it, is a microcosm of American society during The Great Depression. Workers are legally and financially oppressed, having few rights, and face desperate poverty if they are unemployed. However most of Steinbeck's cast of characters are happy to take part in or watch violence. The oppressed collude with the oppressors, or become the oppressor themselves. There seems to be no moral code followed by anyone, the only motivation characters have is to survive. Small-town America is corrupt and violent. The protagonists represent migrant workers, their plight represents the reality many experienced during this decade – the American Dream of security and wealth is the opposite of their existence. Despite their poverty and low status on the ranch and in society, even the main characters are not totally sympathetic. Poverty and aggression conspire to create an oppressive environment where everyone looks after their own individual interests. Steinbeck shows people are hostile because humans behave like animals in a "survival of the fittest" scenario – this is because the economy cannot guarantee security, individuals are more selfish and aggressive in protecting their own interests. George is a flawed "everyman" figure, he is meant to represent the typical working-class labourer. His behavioural habits can be unhealthy, he seeks escape through alcohol, so there is a degree of choice involved. Like other characters, some of George's opinions are prejudiced; he is casually misogynistic and seems to accept racism. Steinbeck shows the oppressed can hold habitually oppressive thoughts about their fellow human beings, opinions that come out of ignorance or detachment from others. Lennie represents the vulnerable, the mentally weak. George's final act is tragic but presented as inevitable. Steinbeck shows that people cannot survive if they behave as victims therefore they must behave with strength and do whatever is necessary to survive. Perhaps Steinbeck suggests that there is no system in place to support the most vulnerable – the few mentions of psychiatric hospitals sound grim, there is the suggestion Lennie would just be tied up and left if he was in one. In such a barbaric world, George, the main character, has to make a barbaric decision. Through the occasional but extreme cruelty of the minor characters Candy, Crooks and Curley's wife, Steinbeck shows that oppression creates hierarchies of suffering within social groups where people take out their own unhappiness on others and blame anyone who seems different for problems. Steinbeck shows only one character, Slim, who appears to have a strong moral code and is therefore noble or heroic. The others seem ruthless, arguably as result of their environment so whilst they are economically oppressed, their social behaviour makes victims out of other people and adds to the cycle of daily oppression.

Some ideas follow on the next page.

This is an **AO1 overview** – it factors in some ideas about context (**AO3**) and inserts brief references to the text that count as evidence (**AO2**) but most of the sentences pose an argument about the novel that answers the essay question. As **AO1** is worth 7 marks (the most), it needs to come first but it is also the logical starting point.

AO1 ideas arise throughout the essay any time the student uses evidence to answer the question by drawing out the social or political meaning of that evidence.

AO3 ideas are any that talk about context, the reader's reaction, the understanding of a situation within its social or historical setting.

AO4 – any comment about social realism/naturalistic novels, tragedy – these are the genres Steinbeck is consciously using to make his points – any idea about how conventional or not the tragedy or social realism is.

AO5 – any ideas from literary criticism (this could be Marxism, Narratology, Feminism, Post-colonialism, Eco-criticism) that enable the student to critique Steinbeck's vision.

Now let's think about AO2.

You will not use PEEL, though you may analyse some devices or words closely and use their connotations or implications to help to answer the question.

You also would not be able to comment thoroughly with quotations on all of the ideas explored in the table above. The table is really meant to represent the type of thoughts about the book that would be securely in a student's deeper memory by the time of an exam. **The student who has revised thoroughly then selects evidence from their deeper memory to support their AO1 argument.**

Macro evidence based around plot structure is the preferred starting point favoured by AQA. This is because the deliberate engineering of a plot shows what the author is revealing about causality – cause and effect- the way that events create reality or “fate”.

This in turn allows a student to gauge the author's representation of reality or “truth”.

Steinbeck creates a tragedy but it is not a classical tragedy about upper-class kings in war who seek to rule lands. It is an ordinary, modern tragedy, a tale of two migrant workers seeking the most basic form of security – their own home.

Normally a tragedy involves characters with a fatal flaw. e.g. Macbeth is too power-hungry. **Lennie's fatal flaw is his lack of intelligence, his inability to “read” social situations or interact with others. George's fatal flaw is possibly his loyalty to Lennie, he must renounce this in order to live at the end of the novel.**

In classical tragedies like Macbeth, there is an exposition phase where character situation is revealed, then rising action where complications are suggested or introduced, then a climactic turning point where a decision is made or an action performed that will then lead to an inevitable downfall.

The climactic point of Macbeth is when he murders Duncan. It cannot be undone. **In “Of Mice and Men” it is when Lennie kills Curley's wife.**

Steinbeck uses some Aristotelian tragedy devices, he creates what is called “dramatic unity” even though it is not a play. Aristotle believed the best tragedies that impacted audiences most powerfully were concentrated in a short time span, took place within a restricted setting (unlike say an epic adventure where a character might sail around the world and visit many countries) and had just one main plot, uncluttered by sub-plots.

Steinbeck also uses the rule of three by making Lennie's killings increasingly severe – a mouse, a pup, a human.

Steinbeck creates parallels – Carlson's Luger pistol will kill Lennie. Lennie is disposed of, just as Slim gets rid of the pups who cannot survive. A lynch mob drives the two men out of Weed, Curley organises a mob to kill Lennie. Lennie can't resist touching the little girl's dress in Weed, he can't resist touching Curley's wife's hair. It seems instincts and animalistic behaviour are inevitable in the "survival of the fittest".

People seem to fall into repetitive behaviours. George shows he is like one of those men who waste their money in bars when he goes to Soledad with the men in chapter 4, he also goes off for a drink to console himself at the end of chapter 6 when he has killed Lennie. He has become, or perhaps has always been, one of those men. The vision of the dream is repeated three times by George to Lennie, like a prayer.

Steinbeck also opens each chapter with a scene depiction to imply behaviour is dictated/influenced by social environment. He uses a cyclical structure in chapter 4 to show Crooks will never escape his barn, and a cyclical structure in the main plot by showing the two protagonists are back to where they started at the end – in other words, they will never move up socially, they will always be stranded in the brush, moving from one ranch to another.

Only some of these ideas about plot structure might be helpful in answering the question we are looking at today. The emboldened statements would be useful.

Remember characters are devices just like similes. Only certain characters might be worth focussing on too, given that the exam is stressful and time must be used wisely.

Personally, I would use George as he is an "everyman" figure, and Curley's wife as her death is the "inciting incident" or climactic point that makes the plot turn into a definite tragedy, and Crooks and Candy as their attitudes exemplify my central argument that the oppressed can easily become oppressors.

I would use whatever quotations I could remember that might help me prove the central AO1 arguments I am making – life is a survival struggle, people are animalistic, and are therefore not always sympathetic, however their behaviour is worsened by their environment. (Even though it is an open book exam, there is little time to go skimming through pages)

For example, I might use the following evidence:

- "I can get you strung up on a tree so quickly, nigger, it ain't even funny"
- Steinbeck's use of red to connote passion, aggression, sexuality in Curley's wife
- Curley's wife's delusions of grandeur, the way she trails her little finger around to suggest she can act – she thinks acting is merely striking a pose
- George's ironic statements when talking about his future, "With us, it ain't like that...we gotta future," the asyndetic list he dreams up of plentiful food, warmth and leisure time show what he feels he lacks. He also yearns for a partner.
- Crooks, "there's no heaven, just like there's no land."
- Crooks keeps a shotgun and a Californian Civil Code by his side, signal his fear
- Candy talks about the violence Crooks experienced with "relish"
- Candy shouts at Curley's wife corpse and blames her for the failure of his plan, he calls her slurs and demeans her even after she has been killed.

In analysing evidence, I would draw out ideas about what the reader is encouraged to believe or feel, or how evidence links to The Great Depression (AO3).

After I have proved my central argument is true as well as I can (AO2), I would add some ideas about genre/convention/patterns (AO4):

- Repetitive use of aggressive slang creates a ruthless environment and tension
- Threats, fights, memories of fights or near fights and attacks are present in every chapter; violence is inescapable
- The dream is spoken of to dispel tension – after the bus driver has betrayed them, when Curley has behaved nastily and the dog has just been shot, when George is about to kill Lennie – there is never really any sense, other than in the men’s imaginations, that the dream might come true
- Sense of tragic pre-determinism – Lennie is destined to make dangerous mistakes, environment will always influence characters’ behaviour, dreams will always be “just” dreams

Then lastly, I might add some ideas from literary criticism that allow me to critique the novel (AO5). I must make sure these allow me to answer the question and are not just side-tracks where I recount whatever I know about a certain ideology or way of studying books.

I would use ideas from feminism about how Steinbeck presents Curley’s wife as a catalyst for trouble because as a woman, she provokes urges the men can’t control (an unreasonable idea to a modern audience who recognise men and women are equally self-controlled), Steinbeck’s representation of her is misogynistic. I would also make the post-colonial point that Steinbeck uses the word “negro” to label Crooks which suggest Steinbeck is also racist. Lastly, I might make a Marxian point about how the working-class are encouraged by dominant ideology to believe in materialism but are unlikely to ever yield any profit from it, George’s dream that he can reap his own crops and sell them is unrealistic, he will only ever be a labourer working for the profit of others.

So after I have done my overview, I would start to merge points together to provide a “holistic” response.

Read through the response below. Whi

Social and political fiction always presents the oppressed as sympathetic victims. Discuss.

George is morally sympathetic as he is fair-minded, he has also undertaken a carer role with Lennie that he is not obliged to take on. During the exposition phase, the reader can sense his frustration with Lennie who repeatedly lies or makes silly mistakes such as drinking dirty water or hiding a dead mouse. George loses his temper with Lennie when the latter demands ketchup but soon shows remorse and calms down. He has a conscience, later telling Slim in chapter 3 that Lennie almost died because of the way he used to abuse his innocent trust. George’s anger and frustration is with his life in general, but he has a good heart. However, he is also flawed. He makes weak-willed choices, like going to Suzy’s place and wasting his money on a Saturday night, so some of his problems stem from his own habits. George is mentally tenacious and tough-talking enough to survive, he is able to find ways out of dilemmas – he was the one who persuaded Lennie to hide in an irrigation ditch. He is not totally helpless and can behave like a “tough guy” if he needs to. There are ways that this hard exterior makes hi unsympathetic however. George’s attitude to Curley’s wife is casually sexist, he holds the same misogynistic values as the rest of the men. He tells Lennie that some women drive their partners to murder and explains one of his old school friends is doing a life sentence “on account of a broad”. Steinbeck presents this misogyny without intervention or criticism, he shows otherwise “decent” and reasonable men spouting views that suggest women as responsible for men’s anger and violence. This view seems to subliminally suggest that men cannot control their instincts, such as rage, and that women must take responsibility for keeping their partners emotionally stable. Even Slim, whom the reader is meant to represent as Godlike figure of rational thought, tells Curley to

“control” his wife. So George is not just oppressed but in some ways an oppressor in terms of gender.

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AO2

Steinbeck wants the reader to see this is a decent migrant worker, a man whose values may echo their own. He wants the reader to “root” for George.

AO3

However, he is also flawed. He makes weak-willed choices, like going to Suzy’s place and wasting his money on a Saturday night, so some of his problems stem from his own habits. George is mentally tenacious and tough-talking enough to survive, he is able to find ways out of dilemmas – he was the one who persuaded Lennie to hide in an irrigation ditch. He is not totally helpless and can behave like a “tough guy” if he needs to. There are ways that this hard exterior makes him unsympathetic however.

AO1 and AO3

George’s attitude to Curley’s wife is casually sexist, he holds the same misogynistic values as the rest of the men. He tells Lennie that some women drive their partners to murder and explains one of his old school friends is doing a life sentence “on account of a broad”.

AO1, AO2, AO4

Steinbeck presents this misogyny without intervention or criticism, he shows otherwise “decent” and reasonable men spouting views that suggest women as responsible for men’s anger and violence. This view seems to subliminally suggest that men cannot control their instincts, such as rage, and that women must take responsibility for keeping their partners emotionally stable.

AO5

Even Slim, whom the reader is meant to perceive as Godlike figure of rational thought, tells Curley to “control” his wife.

AO2/AO4/AO5

So George is not just oppressed but in some ways an oppressor in terms of gender.

AO1

Your turn: social and political protest writing

Listen to this song: *Strange Fruit* by Billie Holiday,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Web007rzSOI>

Then, read the lyrics on the next page. What do you think the message of the song is? What is being protested? What techniques are used to achieve this?

“Strange Fruit”, lyrics & music by Abel Meerpool, 1937, performed by Billie Holiday

Southern trees bearing a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the Southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Annotate the poem with your initial ideas (AO1)

- *What do you think the message of the song is?*
- *What is being protested?*
- *What techniques are used to achieve this?*

Pastoral scene of the gallant South
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is a fruit for the crow to pluck
For the rain to wither, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Contextual ideas: AO3

The song was inspired by a photograph taken of a ‘lynching’ – mob justice - in reaction to three black men being arrested over a rape and murder case. The mob of angry white people broke into the local jail and hung two of the men from a tree. You can read about what happened and view the photograph (which is graphic, please be warned) at the site below:

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129025516>

You can also read about the historical context lynching in America, which had diminished by the 1930s but hadn’t disappeared.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/emmett-lynching-america/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynching_in_the_United_States

- What real life event inspired the song?
- What is the writer protesting?
- Why might the writer have arranged and written the song for Billie Holiday, as opposed to releasing it himself?

Writer’s methods: AO2

Now that you have read up on the historical background of ‘Strange Fruit’, revisit the lyrics above and consider the questions below:

- What extended metaphor is used? Why this particular metaphor?
- How is juxtaposition between the grotesque imagery of the bodies of lynch victims and the natural beauty of the setting effective?
- Why doesn’t the writer explicitly state what is seen, instead of referring to it through metaphor? What is the effect this creates?

Genre conventions and other readings: AO4 and AO5

Read the article about the song from The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2011/feb/16/protest-songs-billie-holiday-strange-fruit>

Now read up on the history of protest music. In particular, think about the convention of protest in the form of spirituals sung by slaves in America and how that history can be traced into modern music of black origin. How does this further influence your understanding of the song?

<https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/4/12/14462948/protest-music-history-america-trump-beyonce-dylan-misty>

<https://www.timeout.com/newyork/music/best-protest-songs-of-all-time>

Now that you have researched the background and analysed the imagery within the poem, you are ready to write your commentary about 'Strange Fruit'.

- What do you think the message of the song is?
- What is being protested?
- What techniques are used to achieve this?

Strange Fruit

Southern trees bearing a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the Southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant South
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is a fruit for the crow to pluck
For the rain to wither, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

- Write 2 – 3 paragraphs.
- Remember to particularly focus on **AO1 – messages/ interpretation of the text** and **AO2 – analysis of writer's methods**.
- You should also touch on **AO3 – historical context**, **AO4 – genre conventions** and **AO5 – other readings** where relevant.
- When you are finished, highlight or annotate the AOs in your work and do the same in the teacher model below.

Teacher model:

- *AO1 – messages/ interpretation of the text*
- *AO2 – analysis of writer's methods.*
- *AO3 – historical context*
- *AO4 – genre conventions*
- *AO5 – other readings*

The song 'Strange Fruit' critiques lynching, specifically of black people, in the deep South of America. The song utilises the shocking and graphic extended metaphor of 'black bodies' as the fruit on trees to symbolise the cruelty and inhumanity of this behaviour contrasted with the physical beauty of the area. Moreover, the song powerfully draws upon the tradition of protest through music by African Americans – echoing the past of spirituals sung by slaves.

In the first stanza, the writer initially emphasises the brutality in the deep South through introducing the extended metaphor and employing repetition. The "strange fruit" is revealed to be "black bodies", which suggests that this is almost seen as normal or even 'natural' behaviour in the South, a common feature of the landscape. Dorian Lynskey wrote: "It puts the listener in the shoes of a curious observer spying the hanging shapes from afar and moving closer towards a sickening realisation." The repetition of "Southern" further emphasises that this is a practice more associated with the deep South of America, criticising the culture which normalises violence against black people and dehumanises them into 'strange fruit'. Contextually, the song was inspired by a photograph taken in 1930 depicting two young African American men being hung from a tree in Indiana as so-called mob justice, surrounded by a crowd of ordinary Americans which includes women and children. Whilst lynching was no longer common in 1930s America, this incident clearly demonstrates that violence against black people still remained 'acceptable' in many aspects of Southern culture. This may link to the metaphor of "blood on the leaves and... at the root"; this refers both literally to the blood shed by the victims of this attack but also the blood at the 'root' of society, namely the belief still held by many in the South about the superiority of white people and a clear desire to assert power over the African American population.

The writer then continues to violently juxtapose the beauty of the "gallant" South: "pastoral scene... scent of magnolia" with the horror of the attack: "the bulging eyes... twisted mouth... burning flesh." The tone crafted here is sad, as though acknowledging the South is a beautiful area with the adjective "gallant" implying the bravery and goodness which its residents are capable of, juxtaposed with the ugliness of their actions. The grotesque imagery evokes the graphic photograph which inspired the song and reminds the listener of the pain suffered by the victims. The relative simplicity of language choices and rhyme scheme ensures that a listener can access this imagery, whilst not detracting from the beauty of the song. In an online magazine piece about the history of American protest music, Bridgett Henwood writes: "Strange Fruit" drew in listeners with its silky, dark melody and kept their ears with its lyrics about Southern lynchings... Unlike the protest songs of the Civil War era, "Strange Fruit" wasn't a chant or a call to arms. It was a harrowing commentary on the state of the country, designed to make people sit up and pay attention." Henwood's belief that the intention behind the song is to provide 'a harrowing commentary' seems to be a fair interpretation; whilst it is clear that listeners' sympathies are meant to lie with the victims, there is no sense of blame or action in the song, simply a striking sadness about the state of affairs.

The final stanza of the song concludes with a vision of nature continuing to 'attack' the 'strange fruit' – with the rain causing the corpses to "wither" and the sun causing them to "rot." Again, this emphasises the corruption within Southern culture which makes violence towards black people constant and sustained, almost a natural part of life for them. The song can be seen within the context of protest music in America – however, unlike modern artists who can be directly critical, the song must 'code' its criticism to make its subject matter acceptable. This is very clever, given the song draws attention to how racism is completely engrained within the culture of the deep South to the point it has become part of 'nature' so the extended metaphor is able to powerfully represent this idea.

Extension task:

Look at the images below from recent SuperBowl performances by Jennifer Lopez and Shakira in 2020 and Beyonce's feature in Coldplay's SuperBowl performance in 2016.



Links to the performances in full are below:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9cUytejf1k> (Beyonce enters at 7 minutes)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pILCn6VO_RU

- How far do you think these performances can be seen as political protests?
- Why do you think these artists chose to incorporate elements of protest into such a culturally significant and highly viewed event?

Further reading to help with this task:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-35520636>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/feb/14/beyonce-profile-black-power-super-bowl-civil-rights>

These articles explain some of the political references in Beyonce's performance. The one below explains some of the references in Jennifer Lopez's performance.

- <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2020/02/jennifer-lopez-and-shakira-2020-super-bowl-halftime-show>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-51352285>

Social and Political Themes in Poetry

You already know how to analyse poems and realise that poems can be written for many different reasons. Some of the poems about relationships you studied for GCSE have a political or social angle to them, in that they were written to provoke thought about beliefs and norms.

What issues do you think may underlie these poems which you have studied – what social or political issue could the poets be protesting in their work?

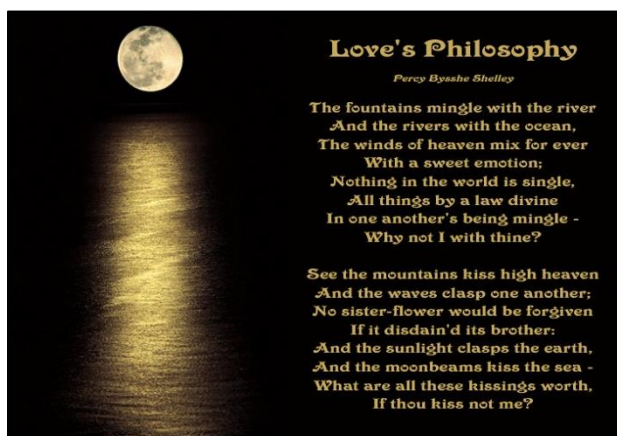
1. 'The Farmer's Bride' by Charlotte Mew



2. 'Sonnet 29' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning



3. 'Love's Philosophy' by Percy Shelley



Some ideas:

Mew's 'The Farmer's Bride' and Barrett-Browning's 'Sonnet 29' are both feminist poems - the former presents the misery of arranged marriages and the patriarchal attitudes of some men in Victorian times who treated women as property, whereas the latter poem is about a woman expressing her desire, which was very taboo in Victorian times. Shelley's 'Love's Philosophy' is

also political in that it challenges Christian notions about sex, Shelley asserts that desire is natural and should be freely expressed.

What you will work on at A Level is drawing out the meanings of a poem and creating your own argument about them.

Your **AO1** overview of a poem needs to link to some understanding of the wider world lived in by the poet and the readers the poem was aimed at, which is **AO3**. This means you need a wide cultural awareness of the past 300 years of UK history.

As an A Level student, if studying Love's Philosophy by Shelley, you would be expected to know about the Enlightenment of the 18th century, its influence on European politics and academic study, and the socio-political beliefs of Romantic poets such as Shelley. You cannot assume every century was like the one we are living in now. You also need to be politically aware about current issues, for example a poem about consumerism in the 20th century, such as Betjeman's "Slough" which prays for bombs to destroy the factories of Slough, actually links still to the world we are living in today. You will need to question your own assumptions.

Think about the political and social implications in the images below:



Were the fruits grown in the factory?
What gives the owners of the factory the right to sell them?



Is this progress? Do we define a culture's value or our own worth by how much money the economy can generate and by how much "stuff" we can produce and sell? Is this inevitably where evolution should be taking humanity? Does this make us more sophisticated or superior to a Hunter-Gatherer tribe living in the jungle in Papua New Guinea?



Is our survival now purely about what we buy? Do we create identities around our possessions and lifestyles or do we have authentic spirits that make us individual?
Do governments allow themselves to be dictated to by powerful corporations?

Abstract terms like “freedom” are very relative, they have a different meaning according to time and place. Freedom to travel is not a “given” in some countries like China or North Korea. Freedom to vote was not automatically a right until 1917 in this country. Freedom of choice is highly subjective, are Americans in Florida who try to crowd onto a beach during the Coronavirus outbreak really protesting about “freedom”? Should they also consider that freedom can also mean “freedom from” and that staying at home would help to free the wider community “from” the virus?

Freedom also does not mean the right to impose your will upon others, if freedom were an absolute, we could go around killing each other if we wanted to.

Poverty too is relative. Is poverty not being able to buy the phone or trainers you want? Is poverty having no food? Is poverty having less than a wealthy neighbour?

A Victorian poet might write a plea for all children to have an education so that children are not exploited in factories; a 21st century poet might write a criticism of the education system and claim it does not help children enough. Freedom, exploitation, the issue of “human rights” are all very dependent on time and place.

An anarchist poet like Benjamin Zephaniah might criticise macro-economics (and their basis in colonialism and corporate capitalism) in his poem “Money” whilst the Pakistani poet Dharker sets her poem “Blessing” in the slums of India and chronicles a moment where people rush to water from a burst pipe, because it is an opportunity for them to wash and drink plentifully.

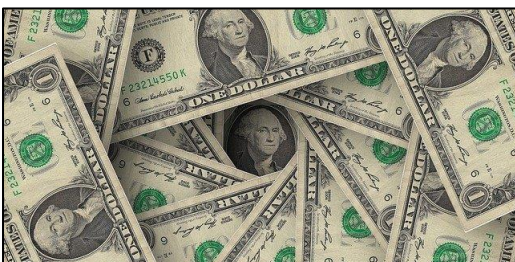


What restrictions rule over our lives, or the lives of the audience a poem is aimed at? Are they physical, legal, mental, spiritual, cultural? Who dictates to us how we live, and what s their agenda?
Are we all trapped inside a financial system? Can we live outside of the economy?

So, you will also start to consider the meanings behind words we often use when debating our beliefs. You will widen your awareness of the world and of the UK’s historical timeline in the past three centuries. You won’t make simple generalisations like “The poet is showing life is unfair” or “The poet is showing the government doesn’t care” – these are immature generalisations that show no understanding of specifics.

Your success as a ‘reader’ is not just dependent on what the writer has written. It depends very much on your own prior knowledge of the world. You can only construct an independent argument about a text if you have knowledge about the time or place the author was writing in. You may also need to start questioning things you take for granted.

For example, what are your views on money? Is money – and wealth – political?



You might assume money is the only way we can keep a society functioning.

It is true that we now operate in a busier and more complicated world than humans did thousands of years ago. The onset of the Industrial Revolution changed the UK, forming more towns and cities, and creating rapid trading and production. Less and less people worked the land as a result and many moved away from the small communities where they previously might have survived by swapping things they made- e.g. a blacksmith might swap horseshoes with a farmer for food, and both would manage to function without the need for money or a bank account. There was money in the UK before the Industrial revolution but it was not the only currency.

Around the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the late 18th century, governments began to use banks to help them fund wars (this still happens today, and is one of the reasons many people are suspicious about international arms trading).

Banking itself is a relatively new phenomenon. Although there has always been a Royal Mint in the Tower of London, with the monarch and the government deciding when and in what quantities money should be smelted out of metal, paper money and big banks that function as a business in themselves (making money out of money) have only been around since the late 18th century.

Have a look at this account of the origins of The Bank of England from Wikipedia

The **Bank of England** is the [central bank](#) of the [United Kingdom](#) and the model on which most modern central banks have been based. Established in 1694 to act as the [English Government's](#) banker, and still one of the bankers for the [Government of the United Kingdom](#), it is the [world's eighth-oldest bank](#). It was privately owned by stockholders from its foundation in 1694 until it was nationalised in 1946.^{[2][3]}

The Bank became an independent public organisation in 1998, wholly owned by the [Treasury Solicitor](#) on behalf of the government,^[4] but with independence in setting monetary policy.^{[5][6][7][8]}

The Bank is one of eight banks authorised to issue [banknotes in the United Kingdom](#), has a monopoly on the issue of banknotes in [England and Wales](#) and regulates the issue of banknotes by commercial banks in [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).^[9]



Sealing of the Bank of England Charter (1694), by Lady Jane Lindsay, 1905

[England's](#) crushing defeat by [France](#), the dominant naval power, in naval engagements culminating in the 1690 [Battle of Beachy Head](#), became the catalyst for England rebuilding itself as a global power. England had no choice but to build a powerful navy.^[citation needed] No public funds were available, and the credit of [William III's](#) government was so low in London that it was impossible for it to borrow the £1,200,000 (at 8% per annum) that the government wanted.

To induce subscription to the loan, the subscribers were to be [incorporated](#) by the name of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England. The Bank was given exclusive possession of the government's balances, and was the only limited-liability corporation allowed to issue bank notes.^[14] The lenders would give the government cash (bullion) and issue notes against the government bonds, which can be lent again. The £1.2 million was raised in 12 days; half of this was used to rebuild the navy.

As a side effect, the huge industrial effort needed, including establishing [ironworks](#) to make more nails and advances^[clarification needed] in agriculture feeding the quadrupled strength of the navy, started to transform the economy. This helped the new [Kingdom of Great Britain - England and Scotland were formally united in](#)

[1707](#) – to become powerful. The power of the navy made Britain the dominant world power in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.^[15]

The establishment of the bank was devised^[clarification needed] by [Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax](#), in 1694. The plan of 1691, which had been proposed by [William Paterson](#) three years before, had not then been acted upon.^[16] 58 years earlier, in 1636, Financier to the king, [Philip Burlamachi](#), had proposed exactly the same idea in a letter addressed to [Sir Francis Windebank](#).^[17] He proposed a loan of £1.2 million to the government; in return the subscribers would be incorporated as **The Governor and Company of the Bank of England** with long-term banking privileges including the issue of notes. The [royal charter](#) was granted on 27 July through the passage of the [Tonnage Act 1694](#).^[18] Public finances were in such dire condition at the time^[19] that the terms of the loan were that it was to be serviced at a rate of 8% per annum, and there was also a service charge of £4,000 per annum for the management of the loan. The first governor was Sir [John Houblon](#), who is depicted in the [£50 note](#) issued in 1994. The charter was renewed in 1742, 1764, and 1781.

Banks have helped governments to finance wars ever since then. Wars are extremely expensive. The Rothschild family started to help the UK government fund war in the 19th century which is where a lot of conspiracy theories about the Illuminati have arisen from.

From Defence of Marxism, Adam Booth, 2016

What is money? Where does it come from? And what does it represent?

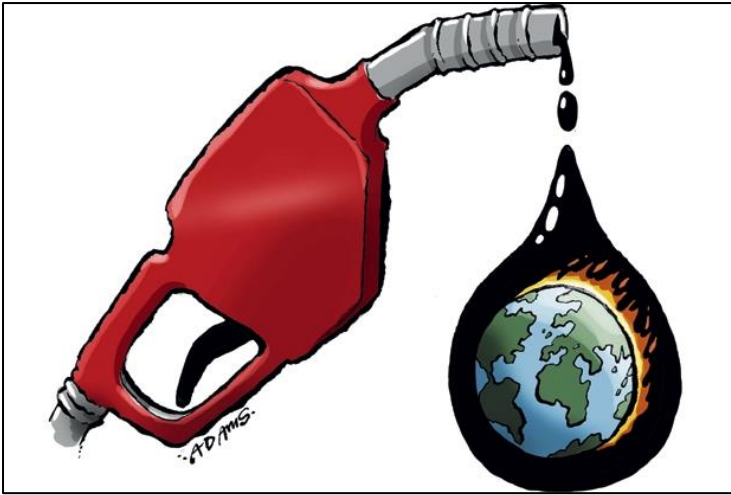
“The love of money,” the Bible tells us, “is the root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). After the financial crash of 2008 and the subsequent global economic crisis that continues to plague society today, it is hard not to empathise with these words from The Good Book.

Similar language is repeated in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, the early 20th century novel by Robert Tressell, which is often considered a modern-day bible for the labour movement. In this fictionalised account of the lives of the working class, the protagonist, a socialist called Frank Owen, asserts to his incredulous peers that, “Money is the principal cause of poverty.” (Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, Wordsworth Classics edition, p175)

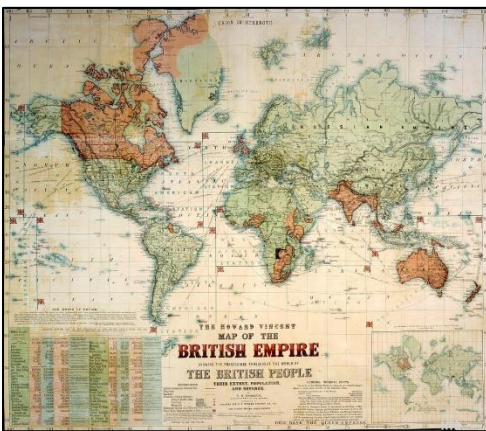
Owen valiantly attempts to explain further to his fellow workers how, “while the present Money System remains, it will be impossible to do away with poverty, for heaps in some places mean little or nothing in other places. Therefore while the money system lasts we are bound to have poverty and all the evils it brings in its train.” (Ibid, p284)

“The present Money System prevents us from doing the necessary work, and consequently causes the majority of the population to go short of the things that can be made of work. They suffer want in the midst of the means of producing abundance. They remain idle because they are bound and fettered with a chain of gold.” (Ibid, p286)

“This systematic robbery has been going on for generations, the value of the accumulated loot is enormous, and all of it, all the wealth at present in the possession of the rich, is rightly the property of the working class – it has been stolen from them by the means of the Money Trick.”



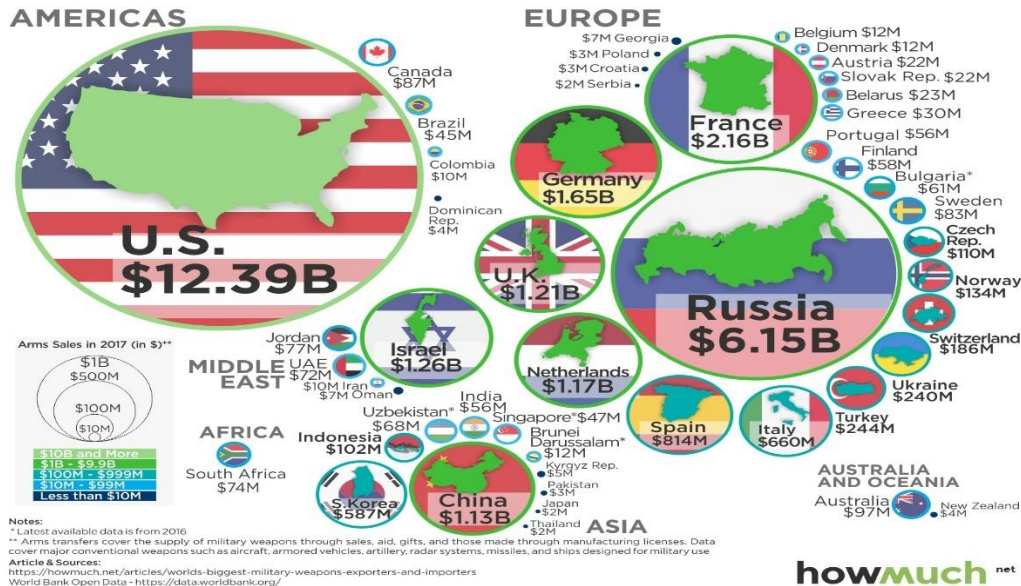
Most wars are fought over territory, and its raw resources, e.g. oil. These wars are funded by central banks who also have a close relationship with major corporations (the very people who trade in raw resources). The colonisation of many countries by European nations in the 19th century was also founded on the quest for raw materials. Naturally, banks also funded these expeditions – through government founded companies like The East India Company.



So rubber from rubber plants in The Congo was useful, as was sugar from sugar cane in The Caribbean (where slavery had been abolished but where West Africans were still effectively trapped as they had to live and work there), as was silk, spices and tea from Asia. Banks enabled England to seize these natural resources and bring them home in the name of “empire building.”

One of the more problematic aspects of banking today is that some countries still profit from war via the Arms race, and wars are still arguably staged when there are raw resources to gain – so it is very unusual for anyone to go to war purely to defend “right”(although throughout history people from all around the world have used religion to justify invasion and killing – there is usually something material to be gained, oil, plants, a mountain range that gives the country a new advantage over a neighbouring country in military terms, control of an industrial passageway like a river or tributaries). So a country like the Netherlands can sit in the EU parliament talking about the humanitarian disasters created by war and displaced people in somewhere like Syria, yet still their country will continue to trade weapons they know are going to be used in war.

The World's Biggest Military Weapons Exporters



The exchange and pursuit of money is not a simple matter at all. Right-wing free market economists say that market forces are as natural and inevitable as the seasons and that we must all learn to adapt to them – work hard, pay our taxes, accept the decisions of those at the top of the hierarchies, adapt to new working conditions or jobs as industry evolves.

Now have a read of this poem by Benjamin Zephaniah. He is an anarchist who believes in communal living, small-scale exchange of goods and services, and the destruction of centralised banking.

Money

Money make a rich man feel like a big man
 It make a poor man feel like a hooligan
 A one parent family feels like a ruffian
 An those who have it won't give you anything

Money makes your friend become your enemy
 You start to see things very superficially
 Your life is lived very artificially
 Unlike those who live in poverty
 Money affects your ego
 But money brings you down
 Money causes problems anywhere money is found
 Food is what we need
 Food is necessary
 Let me grow my food
 An dem can eat dem money

Money can save us
 But yet we feel doomed
 Plenty money burns in a nuclear mushroom
 Money can make you happy
 Money can help you when you die
 An those who have it continually live a lie

Children are dying
Spies are spying
Refugees are fleeing
Politicians are lying
An deals are done
An webs are spun
An no one keeps the third world on the run

An the brother feels better than the brothers next door
Cause his brothers got money an his brothers got more
The brother thinks a brother's not a brother cause he's poor
When a brother kills another that is economic war
Economic war we call it economic war
It may not be the east and west anymore
But the north and south third world far lord
Coffee an isle
That's what it's about
Economic war
Economic war
Shots fired from the stock market floor

So we work for a livin'
An we try an we try
With so little time for chillin'
Like we're livin a lie

Money makes a dream become reality
Money makes real life like a fantasy
Money has a habit of going to the head
I have some for the rainy day underneath me bed

Money problems make it hard to relax
Money makes it difficult to get down to the facts
Money makes you worship vanity and lies
Money is a drug with legal highs

The parents of poor kids
Some are not coping
Some are just managing
Books that need balancin'
Property is theft
No money means death
You pay for your rent
An then nothing left

Some will pick your pocket
Some will pay to stop it
Those who will pay to stop it
They happy cause they got it
Some go out an fight for it
Some claim they got the right to it
An people like my grandparents
Live long but never side it

Money made me go out an rob
Then it made me go looking for a job
Money made the nurse
And the doctor emigrate
Money buys friends you love to hate

Money made slavery seem alright
Money brought the Bible
An the Bible shone the light
Victory to the penniless
The gospel shows us
We come to mash those market forces
The paper giant called market forces

- **What is Zephaniah's message? What does he criticise and what techniques does he use to show this? Annotate the poem.**

The poem is a criticism of the monetary system as we know it. We can only really understand it if we have a wider knowledge of the world.

Extension – further viewing for social and political protest in poetry:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8XTBogqLc0> Interview with Zephaniah
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sg-kBllsM9M> Shelley
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qviM_GnJbOM Angelou
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lJBo9jdUjiY> Teenage Poetry Slam
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD9pjzZ1XGI> Disposable heroes of Hip Hop-crisis
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbiCz5q18cY> Akala
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCWRdp5NAFI> Halsey
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcmWSKqcJro> Blake
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiRWBI0JTYQ> Romanticism
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vv5SqNaY4yE> What is the study of Social and Political Literature