



TRANSITION TO A-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE



This A-Level is an accessible and stimulating course in which you will engage creatively and independently with a variety of spoken, written and multi-modal texts. You'll develop a range of skills. These include the ability to read critically, analyse, evaluate and undertake independent research, which are invaluable for both further study and future employment.

A-Level course outline.

Below is a brief outline of the assessments for the A-Level course. During the first year of the course you'll study a prose text, a collection of poems and a non-fiction anthology.

Subject Content:

- Remembered places
- Imagined worlds
- Poetic voices
- Writing about society
- Critical commentary
- Dramatic encounters
- Making connections

Assessments at the end of the course:

Paper 1: *Telling Stories*

Exam: 3 hours

Weighting: 40% of A-Level

Paper 2: *Exploring Conflict*

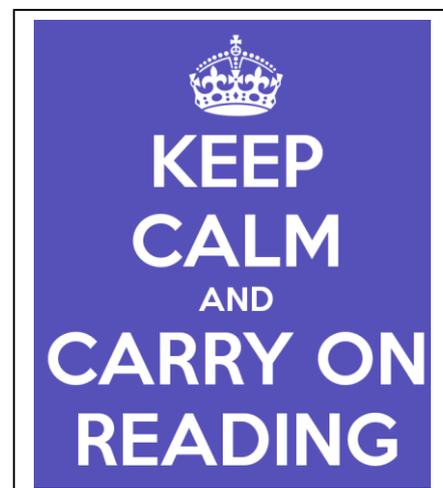
Exam: 2 hours 30 minutes

Weighting: 40% of A-Level

Non-Exam Assessment: *Making Connections*

Assessed by teachers and moderated by AQA

Weighting: 20% of A-Level



TASK ONE

You will be studying a topic called *Imaginary Worlds* where you will explore and learn how language choices and structures help to shape the representations of different worlds.

Please read the extract below from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Examine **how** Shelley presents Frankenstein in this extract. Consider:

- Frankenstein's thoughts and feelings
- The narrative perspective (viewpoint)
- Language choices
- Sentence structures

About this time we retired to our house at Belrive. This change was particularly agreeable to me. The shutting of the gates regularly at ten o'clock, and the impossibility of remaining on the lake after that hour, had rendered our residence within the walls of Geneva very irksome to me. I was now free. Often, after the rest of the family had retired for the night, I took the boat, and passed many hours upon the water. Sometimes, with my sails set, I was carried by the wind; and sometimes, after rowing into the middle of the lake, I left the boat to pursue its own course, and gave way to my own miserable reflections. I was often tempted, when all was at peace around me, and I the only unquiet thing that wandered restless in a scene so beautiful and heavenly -- if I except some bat, or the frogs, whose harsh and interrupted croaking was heard only when I approached the shore -- often, I say, I was tempted to plunge into the silent lake, that the waters might close over me and my calamities for ever. But I was restrained, when I thought of the heroic and suffering Elizabeth, whom I tenderly loved, and whose existence was bound up in mine. I thought also of my father and surviving brother: should I by my base desertion leave them exposed and unprotected to the malice of the fiend whom I had let loose among them?

At these moments I wept bitterly, and wished that peace would revisit my mind only that I might afford them consolation and happiness. But that could not be. Remorse extinguished every hope. I had been the author of unalterable evils; and I lived in daily fear, lest the monster whom I had created should perpetrate some new wickedness. I had an obscure feeling that all was not over, and that he would still commit some signal crime, which by its enormity should almost efface the recollection of the past. There was always scope for fear, so long as anything I loved remained behind. My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed. When I reflected on his crimes and malice, my hatred and revenge burst all bounds of moderation. I would have made a pilgrimage to the highest peak of the Andes, could I, when there, have precipitated him to their base. I wished to see him again, that I might wreak the utmost extent of abhorrence on his head, and avenge the deaths of William and Justine.

TASK TWO

Please read the extract below from Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*. Examine **how** Collins presents Katniss (the narrator) in this extract. Consider:

- Katniss' thoughts and feelings
- The narrative perspective (viewpoint)
- Language choices
- Sentence structures

Sixty seconds. That's how long we're required to stand on our metal circles before the sound of a gong releases us. Step off before the minute is up, and land mines blow your legs off. Sixty seconds to take in the ring of tributes all equidistant from the Cornucopia, a giant golden horn shaped like a cone with a curved tail, the mouth of which is at least twenty feet high, spilling over with the things that will give us life here in the arena. Food, containers of water, weapons, medicine, garments, fire starters. Strewn around the Cornucopia are other supplies, their value decreasing the farther they are from the horn. For instance, only a few steps from my feet lies a three-foot square of plastic. Certainly it could be of some use in a downpour. But there in the mouth, I can see a tent pack that would protect from almost any sort of weather. If I had the guts to go in and fight for it against the other twenty-three tributes. Which I have been instructed not to do.

We're on a flat, open stretch of ground. A plain of hard-packed dirt. Behind the tributes across from me, I can see nothing, indicating either a steep downward slope or even a cliff. To my right lies a lake. To my left and back, sparse piney woods. This is where Haymitch would want me to go. Immediately.

I hear his instructions in my head. "Just clear out, put as much distance as you can between yourselves and the others, and find a source of water."

But it's tempting, so tempting, when I see the bounty waiting there before me. And I know that if I don't get it, someone else will. That the Career Tributes who survive the bloodbath will divide up most of these life-sustaining spoils. Something catches my eye. There, resting on a mound of blanket rolls, is a silver sheath of arrows and a bow, already strung, just waiting to be engaged. *That's mine*, I think. *It's meant for me*.

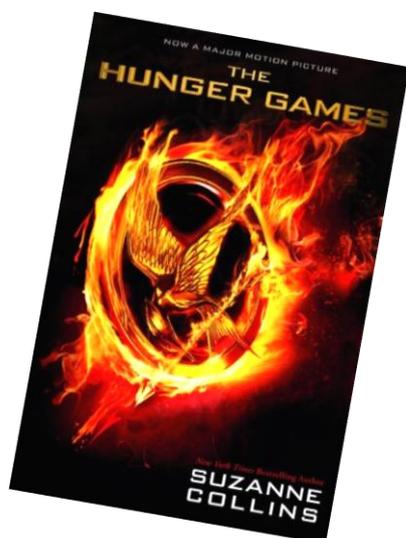
I'm fast. I can sprint faster than any of the girls in our school, although a couple can beat me in distance races. But this forty-yard length, this is what I am built for. I know I can get it, I know I can reach it first, but then the question is how quickly can I get out of there? By the time I've scrambled up the packs and grabbed the weapons, others will have reached the horn, and one or two I might be able to pick off, but say there's a dozen, at that close range, they could take me down with the spears and the clubs. Or their own powerful fists. Still, I won't be the only target. I'm betting many of the other tributes would pass up a smaller girl, even one who scored an eleven in training, to take out their more fierce adversaries.

Haymitch has never seen me run. Maybe if he had he'd tell me to go for it. Get the weapon. Since that's the very weapon that might be my salvation. And I only see one bow in that whole pile. I know the minute must be almost up and will have to decide what my strategy will be and I find myself positioning my feet to run, not away into the surrounding forests but toward the pile, toward the bow. When suddenly I notice Peeta, he's about five tributes to my right, quite a fair distance, still I can tell he's looking at me and I think he might be shaking his head. But the sun's in my eyes, and while I'm puzzling over it the gong rings out.

And I've missed it! I've missed my chance! Because those extra couple of seconds I've lost by not being ready are enough to change my mind about going in. My feet shuffle for a moment, confused at the direction my brain wants to take and then I lunge forward, scoop up the sheet of plastic and a loaf of bread. The pickings are so small and I'm so angry with Peeta for distracting me that I sprint in twenty yards to retrieve a bright orange backpack that could hold anything because I can't stand leaving with virtually nothing.

A boy, I think from District 9, reaches the pack at the same time I do and for a brief time we grapple for it and then he coughs, splattering my face with blood. I stagger back, repulsed by the warm, sticky spray. Then the boy slips to the ground. That's when I see the knife in his back. Already other tributes have reached the Cornucopia and are spreading out to attack. Yes, the girl from District 2, ten yards away, running toward me, one hand clutching a half-dozen knives. I've seen her throw in training. She never misses. And I'm her next target.

All the general fear I've been feeling condenses into an immediate fear of this girl, this predator who might kill me in seconds. Adrenaline shoots through me and I sling the pack over one shoulder and run full-speed for the woods. I can hear the blade whistling toward me and reflexively hike the pack up to protect my head. The blade lodges in the pack. Both straps on my shoulders now, I make for the trees. Somehow I know the girl will not pursue me. That she'll be drawn back into the Cornucopia before all the good stuff is gone. A grin crosses my face. *Thanks for the knife*, I think.



TASK THREE

***Stealing* by Carol Ann Duffy**

The most unusual thing I ever stole? A snowman.
Midnight. He looked magnificent; a tall, white mute
beneath the winter moon. I wanted him, a mate
with a mind as cold as the slice of ice
within my own brain. I started with the head.

Better off dead than giving in, not taking
what you want. He weighed a ton; his torso,
frozen stiff, hugged to my chest, a fierce chill
piercing my gut. Part of the thrill was knowing
that children would cry in the morning. Life's tough.

Sometimes I steal things I don't need. I joy-ride cars
to nowhere, break into houses just to have a look.
I'm a mucky ghost, leave a mess, maybe pinch a camera.
I watch my gloved hand twisting the doorknob.
A stranger's bedroom. Mirrors. I sigh like this - Aah.
It took some time. Reassembled in the yard,
he didn't look the same. I took a run
and booted him. Again. Again. My breath ripped out
in rags. It seems daft now. Then I was standing
alone among lumps of snow, sick of the world.

Boredom. Mostly I'm so bored I could eat myself.
One time, I stole a guitar and thought I might
learn to play. I nicked a bust of Shakespeare once,
flogged it, but the snowman was the strangest.
You don't understand a word I'm saying, do you?

- Briefly, write notes on what you consider this poem to be about
- How do you react to this speaker? What kind of person is he? (I assume a he, do you?) What evidence is in the poem that helps you to describe his character?
- Research the background to this poem
- Consider/research the conventions needed for writing a monologue
- Using what you understand about the speaker's feelings in the poem, create a short monologue that conveys **why** the thief behaves in the way he does. E.g. What feelings/thoughts/ideas lie behind these actions?



TASK FOUR

Summer Reading

Read widely over the summer. Try to read some poetry and read or watch some drama.

Choose a novel or a play.

As you read, add post-its to record your reading experience:

- what do you predict is going to happen?
- what is your response to a character at different points?
- can you interpret a section in more than one way?
- is this an especially interesting or beautiful piece of writing? Why?

Have other people interpreted your text in film or TV adaptations? What is your opinion of them? Do they match your 'vision' of the text?

Can you find out anything about the author that might relate to the text?
What about the time or place in which it was written?



Please complete these tasks over the summer and bring your responses to your first English Language and Literature lesson.

Enjoy your break!

**We'll be reading
Margaret Atwood's
The Handmaid's Tale,
if you want to get
ahead of the game!**