

Moving from GCSE to A Level English Literature

Transition Tasks for Year 11

We have attached a full pack of ideas and resources to get you enthused and prepared for the start of Year 12 – *'Making the Leap to A Level'* by the English and Media Centre. However, there are more tasks in here than you will be able to complete, so here is a list of the tasks that we would like you to focus on.

Task 1 (p7) – 'Let a poem brew over time'

Reason: Due to lockdown, you had less time to consolidate your knowledge of poetry as a form compared with prose and drama, so we want you to focus a good amount of your transition activity on poetry. This is a lovely activity because it emphasises the fact that a poem is not a puzzle to be 'solved' once, but a text whose meaning develops the more you look at it: a poem can have different meanings for you at different times.

Browsing for poems is also a good way of exploring different poems and seeing what you like. Of the sites listed, we would recommend the 'Poetry by Heart' link (you don't have to learn any by heart!) and go to the modern end of the timeline. There is a fantastic range of poets on here, including several poets who are included in the anthology that you will study in Year 12.

The task asks you to make notes as you complete it – keep these notes and bring them along at the start of Year 12.

Task 5 (p11) – 'emag Clips: Experts in the spotlight'

Listen to three or more of these interviews and make notes of the discussion (again, bring your notes at the start of Year 12). What new ideas and perspectives do you pick up from these? What language do you notice them using, which you could incorporate into your critical style?

Recommended interviews:

- Dr David Dwan on Orwell's '1984' – how does this develop your understanding of Orwell, following your study of 'Animal Farm'? What links can you make to 'Animal Farm'?
- Professor Nicolas Tredell on John Steinbeck. 'The Grapes of Wrath' was written less than ten years before 'A Streetcar Named Desire' so will give you some useful literary, historical and cultural context for your study of 'Streetcar'.
- Dr Margaret Reynolds on poetry. These topics (form, the look on the page, and 'voice') will be enormously helpful in your study of poetry in Year 12.
- Dr David Punter on the gothic – although we have covered the gothic before (think Miss Havisham...) this focus on horror and terror will give you very useful literary context for studying 'Frankenstein' at the start of Year 12.

In addition, the clip on post-colonial literature ('Wide Sargasso Sea') would be excellent advance thinking for coursework, and the clip on aspects of narrative (dialogue) is a good close focus on a prose feature, which will be useful for your prose paper.

Task 10 (p16) – ‘Play with a text’

You could complete any of these three tasks, although we particularly recommend the poetry task. You could complete the poetry task using the same poem as you chose for task 1, find a different poem, and / or using one or two of the poems from your GCSE anthology. Keep your work and your notes from this activity, and bring them along at the start of Year 12.

Task 19 (p27) – ‘Put together a short anthology of 6-10 poems’

Please bring along your anthologies and your introduction at the start of Year 12!

We would also recommend:

Task 8 (p14) – ‘Dip a toe into books about books’

Start your reading about critics and critical theory. The links give you the opening pages of these books, which is enough to give you the main ideas and a taster. Make notes as you read, about the ideas that you are reading about, and language that you could absorb into your own critical style. NB: the links take you to the Amazon website – you are not expected to buy the books! The task suggests that you use the ‘Look Inside’ feature to read the first few pages of the book.

Task 12 (p18) – ‘The Art of the Essay’

This activity will really get you thinking about what an essay is, and what a good essay looks like, with lots of excellent examples in the resource pack and the links.

Task 24 (p32) – ‘Experience a University Lecture’

Listen to the lecture on ‘Romeo and Juliet’ – make notes on what you learned that is new, and how you now view the play differently!