



# English Literature GCSE to A level

Bridging Work  
Year 11 into 12 for 2022/23



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_



## English Literature AS Bridging Work 2022

**Summer holiday reading, research and preparation linked to  
*The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood**

and

**Oscar Wilde and the Late Victorian Period – context research**

and

**Teen Poetry 2020-2021 - reflections**

### Set Texts to be purchased for the start of the year

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Prose 1</b> | <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> by Margaret Atwood<br>ISBN 0099740915 Contemporary Classics                     |
| <b>Prose 2</b> | <i>Frankenstein</i> by Mary Shelley<br>ISBN 0141439475 Penguin Classics                                    |
| <b>Poetry</b>  | <i>Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry</i><br>ISBN 0571325408 Faber and Faber |
| <b>Drama</b>   | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> by Oscar Wilde<br>ISBN 1503331741 CreateSpace                       |

## DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE: CONVENTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

**Task 1:** Read 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood



**Task 2:** Research The Author

Find out as much as you can about the life and times of the author, Margaret Atwood.

Below is a list of themes that frequently appear in Atwood's writings. In your research, try to identify the factors that motivated her to write about those themes, and write a few paragraphs that focus on biographical events that influenced any of her writings.



- the social myths of femininity
- the social and economic exploitation of women
- women's relationships with one another and with men
- the ways that art portrays women's bodies
- environmental issues
- human rights concerns
- the dangers of biotechnology
- Canada's national identity
- Canada's relationships with the United States and Europe

Atwood has written and conducted interviews several times about 'The Handmaid's Tale'. Below are two articles she has written. It is very useful to read these, as it is useful to understand how the writer's mind was working as the idea germinated and the book took shape.

**'Orwell and Me' by Margaret Atwood**

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jun/16/georgeorwell.artsfeatures>

**The Handmaid's Tale – The Article by Margaret Atwood**

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jan/20/handmaids-tale-margaret-atwood>

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/handmaids-tale-author-margaret-atwood-sees-a-totalitarian-drift-99820>

### Task 3: Dystopian Literature

#### Make notes on the following questions:

1. What are the problems facing society today? List them.
2. Is it society's aim to eliminate these evils? Is it possible to eliminate them?
3. Is a utopia ever achievable in reality? If not, why not?
4. Where can we find images of utopia in popular culture?
5. Is a dystopian society possible in reality? Where can we find historical or contemporary examples? Where can we find examples in literature and popular culture like television and cinema?
6. Read the quotation from "1984" (see below): then, individually and without consulting anyone else, write down your immediate response to the quotation. What does it make you think or feel?

**"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – for ever."**

("1984", part III, chapter iii)

*Orwell, 2013, "1984" - The Annotated Edition p.30*

7. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of these three ways of thinking about human nature?
  - human beings are essentially good
  - human beings are essentially evil (original sin)
  - human beings are neither essentially good nor evil, but are formed by their environment (tabula rasa)
8. How does the idea of tabula rasa fit with utopian or dystopian literature?
9. Why should writers wish to write dystopian literature in the first place?
10. Is dystopian literature mainly the preserve of male writers? What might this tell us about the difference between the male and female psyche?
11. What do you think of dystopian ideas? Are they alarming, depressing, interesting, exciting...? Would you like to read such literature? Why? Why not?
12. Which other literary genres is dystopia related or similar to?

#### Optional final question: (and how appropriate that there should be 13 questions about dystopia...)

13. Is dystopian writing primarily British, born of the British psyche? Is there such a thing as "the British psyche"? Is American writing more optimistic than British writing (perhaps because of the influence of Hollywood)?

### **Bridging Work: Drama**

- 1) Read, annotate and make notes from the study pack of sources on Oscar Wilde and the context he wrote in.
- 2) Conduct independent research on Oscar Wilde.  
You may wish to use the following links:

**Oscar Wilde – Irish Author:** <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Oscar-Wilde>

**The Importance of Being Wilde:** <http://writersinspire.org/content/importance-being-wilde>

**Life of Oscar Wilde:** <https://www.britishlibrary.cn/en/articles/life-of-oscar-wilde/>

**Reading Gaol: The Battle to save Oscar Wilde's prison cell:**

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/reading-gaol-the-battle-to-save-oscar-wilde-s-prison-cell-1.4586492>

- 3) Using your research, answer the following questions **evaluatively** – think about why the question has been asked, different possible answers, and evidence from your research

- To what extent did Oscar Wilde dislike Victorian upper class society?
- Would it be accurate to identify Oscar Wilde as gay?
- Was Oscar Wilde religious?
- Was Oscar Wilde a socialist?
- Was Oscar Wilde a feminist?
- “Wilde’s plays weren’t meant to have a message behind them, they were just meant to be beautifully constructed.” True or False?

### **Bridging Work: Poetry**

Read the 21<sup>st</sup> Century poetry written by teenagers during 2020-2021. Consider the following:

- ☐ Read the poem through thoroughly
- ☐ What is it about? Does it have a purpose?
- ☐ Annotate any key language that help you understand the poem
- ☐ Identify any linguistic devices employed by the poet. E.g. similes, metaphors
- ☐ Identify any structural devices employed by the poet. E.g. repetition
- ☐ Consider the effect of these devices on the reader and annotate
- ☐ What is the TONE of the poem overall? What does that tell us?
- Make annotations/notes and be ready to **discuss** these poems at the start of the course
- Choose **one** poem which you find you particularly respond to. Write an explanation of why you chose this poem and why you connected with it.

There is no specific format or requirements for what to include, beyond that you should write in paragraphs, should write about half a page, and should be demonstrating that you have thought and reflected on the poem intelligently.