

A-level English Literature – Bridging the Gap

At A-level we look at two literary genres and their significance. These are: *comedy* and *political and social protest writing*.

Over this course you will be introduced to a wide range of texts. These have been carefully selected to ensure that you will continue to enjoy reading (we hope) and always have something to say about each text we study. The texts that we use are:

Comedy – *Twelfth Night*, *William Shakespeare*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Oscar Wilde*, collection of poetry from the AQA poetry anthology (yellow).



PSPW – *The Kite Runner*, *Khaled Hosseini*, *A Doll's House*, *Henrik Ibsen*, *Tony Harrison's* poetry from the AQA poetry anthology (blue).

Task 1 – Aspects of Comedy

You will also be studying texts for their comedic value. Throughout this module you will be exposed to a vast amount of comedic features and begin to analyse how different comedic definitions relate to each text. In order to prepare for this, research the following comedic conventions:

Convention	Definition	How is this significant in comedic literature?	Can you find any pieces of literature that include this?
Parody			
Farce			
Denouement			
Satire			
Degradation			
Comedy of manners			
Slapstick			
Disguise			
Topsy Turvy			
Hyperbole			
Double Entendre			
Pun			
Mistaken Identity			



Once you have done this watch the 'Dead Parrot' clip on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npjOSLCR2hE> (Monty Python clip, first video to show up) and answer the following question: **How does this sketch relate to the definitions of comedy you have just researched?**

Task 2 – Aspects of Comedy: *Twelfth Night*, Research Context

One of the first texts you will study is William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. This is recognised as one of Shakespeare’s greatest ever comedies. Before you begin to read this research and make notes on the following contextual information: theatrical performances in Shakespeare’s time, Elizabethan attitudes towards women and marriage, religious groupings under James I and reformation, social class in Elizabethan times.



Task 3 – Aspects of Comedy: *Twelfth Night*, Independent Reading

Read the Shakespeare text *Twelfth Night*.

As with all Shakespeare texts, it is a challenging text for a modern reader. Due to that, we would advise that you read it alongside modern day translations and summaries – you can find all of these on sites such as SparkNotes: <https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/twelfthnight/>

As you read the text complete the reading log which can be found at the end of this document. It looks like this:

Twelfth Night: Act and Scene Tracking

Aspect of Comedy



Summarise the main event of the scene	Who are the important characters?	A quote that sums up the scene in your opinion.	Which comedic conventions can be applied to this scene?	How do you think Shakespeare intended for his audience to respond to his use of comedy? Is this different for a modern day audience?
Act 1				
Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				
Scene 4				
Scene 5				
Act 2				
Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				
Scene 4				
Scene 5				
Act 3				
Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				
Scene 4				
Act 4				
Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				
Act 5				

Task 4 – Political and Social Protest Writing (PSPW)

You will also be studying texts for how they form a message of protest of social and gender equality etc. Throughout this module you will be exposed to a vast amount of genre specific conventions. In order to prepare for this, research the following PSPW genre conventions:

Convention	Definition	What would you expect an author to protest about regarding this convention?
Power		
Powerless		
Corruption		
Abuse of Power		
Identity		
Patriarchy		
Language and Power		
Authority		
Control		
Defiance		
Dystopian		
Gender Politics		
Voicelessness		

Task 5 – PSPW: *The Kite Runner*, Research Context

To fully appreciate and understand this text it's important to have a basic understanding of:

- The geography of the area where the text is set
- Ethnic groups and religious diversity
- Conflict

Research the following contextual factors:

Geography

1. Where is Afghanistan?
2. Find images that represent the spirit of Afghanistan and Kabul.

Ethnic groups and religion

1. How many major ethnic groups are there in Afghanistan? Create a short summary of each focusing on Hazaras and Pashtuns.
2. Find out about the major religion in Afghanistan.
3. What are the dominant religious groups? What are the key differences between them?
4. What sect do the majority of Muslims belong to in Afghanistan? Has this created any differences between groups?
5. Why are the Pashtuns so influential in Afghanistan?

Conflict

This is perhaps the most challenging and open-ended area for research. You need to research the troubled history of Afghanistan focusing on the novel's time setting and influences in the novel (1970s to the year 2002 including the Soviet invasion and the Taliban seizing control).

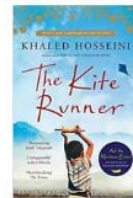
1. What conflicts have the people of Afghanistan faced since the 1970s?
2. Explain what happened in Kabul in the early 1990s, before the Taliban took control, and how this affected the population.

Task 6 – PSPW: *The Kite Runner*, Independent Reading

Read Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.

As you read the text complete the reading log which can be found at the end of this document. It looks like this:

The Kite Runner: Chapter Tracking



Summary of chapter	Important characters	A quote that sums the chapter up - justify your choices	What could the author's intent and message of protest be here?	What genre conventions can be linked to the chapter?
Chapter 1 -				
Chapter 2 -				
Chapter 3 -				
Chapter 4 -				
Chapter 5 -				
Chapter 6 -				
Chapter 7 -				
Chapter 8 -				
Chapter 9 -				
Chapter 10 -				
Chapter 11 -				
Chapter 12 -				
Chapter 13 -				
Chapter 14 -				
Chapter 15 -				
Chapter 16 -				
Chapter 17 -				
Chapter 18 -				
Chapter 19 -				
Chapter 20 -				

Twelfth Night: Reading Log

Aspects of Comedy

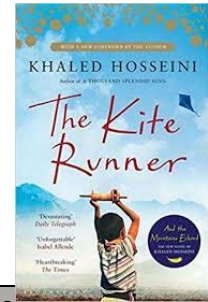
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Summarise the main event of the scene	Who are the important characters?	A quote that sums up the scene, in your opinion.	Which comedic conventions can be applied to this scene?	How do you think Shakespeare intended for his audience to respond to his use of comedy? Is this different for a modern day audience?
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Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				
Scene 4				
Act 4				
Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				
Act 5				
Scene 1				

The Kite Runner: Reading Log

Political and Social Protest Writing. *If you intend to print this out and fill it in, make sure you make the table spaces larger.*



Summary of chapter	Important characters	A quote that sums the chapter up - justify your choices	What could the author's intent and message of protest be here?	What genre conventions can be linked to the chapter?
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Chapter 20 -				
Chapter 21 -				
Chapter 22 -				
Chapter 23 -				
Chapter 24 -				
Chapter 25 -				

