

SUMMER TASKS – GCSE TO A-LEVEL TRANSITION

Subject: A-level English Literature

Title: Exploring genre

Task(s):

Welcome to A-level English Literature!

One of the most important differences between A Level and GCSE is that you will be expected to be more independent in the way you work. In addition to written assignments, you will be asked to read and research outside of lesson time. Between now and the beginning of term we would like you to be prepared for this by completing some reading and research before your first lesson. Please bring your notes with you in September. We'll be using them in class and they will build into your first homework.

- Write a definition of the term “genre”.
- What is the literary definition of a comedy? (You may well come across more than one definition.)
- How many sub-genres of comedy can you think of? For example: commedia dell'arte, romantic comedy, social satire ...
- Which plays by William Shakespeare are considered to be comedies?
- Who were Aristotle and Aristophanes and what do they have to do with comedy?
- Find (and read!) a synopsis (a brief summary) of Shakespeare's play ***The Taming of the Shrew***. When was it first performed? Who was the reigning monarch at the time? What might the issues be when preparing to stage the play for a modern audience?
- Research Oscar Wilde's life. What was his writing renowned for? Why was he considered a scandalous figure?
- Research the gothic genre. What are some of the key themes explored by gothic writers?
- Find and read a synopsis of Bram Stoker's ***Dracula***. Who are the central characters? What are the major themes? When was it written and what was society like at the time?

You should also continue reading widely. Up until Christmas, we'll be studying Shakespeare's ***The Taming of The Shrew*** (Wordsworth Classics edition) and Wilde's ***The Importance of Being Earnest*** (New Mermaid edition). We'll then explore poetry and the supernatural.

How long should I spend on this? Around four hours of research – though you can do a lot more wider reading if you'd like.

How will I get feedback? We'll be using your notes for a group discussion and then you'll be using the information for your first written homework task.

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