

From Slavery to the Civil Rights Movement: the African-American Experience



Name:

English Locked Down in Literature Bridging
Assignment 2021

“What an astonishing thing a book is. It's a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you're inside the mind of another person...an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other.”

- Carl Sagan

The English Department at Shoreham is really pleased you have chosen to study English Literature and we are excited to start working with you in September.

English Literature is the perfect choice of subject at A-Level. The texts you study over the next two years will transport you to different historical periods and far-flung places; you'll see the world through the eyes of writers and their characters; and you will attempt to find answers to the big philosophical and moral questions that are at the centre of all good literature.

You will also develop invaluable analytical skills to take forward in your life. Whether you go on to study English Literature at University or not, future employers will be on the lookout for young people with the skill-set that English Literature can help develop. By the end of the course, you'll be confident analysing detail, researching background and context, approaching a problem logically, and presenting a clear, coherent argument.

The step-up from GCSE to A-Level is difficult and you will need to use your summer break to prepare yourself for the type of work you are going to encounter in September. To help you do this, the English Department have designed a series of tasks that will give you a taste of the demands of A-Level study; they are designed to cover 3 of the core skills we will use across the course as well as some ideas for going the extra mile with your studies. Completing these tasks will not only give you some interesting new ideas, but will also ensure that you'll arrive in September ready to meet the demands of the course.

Please bring in all your work when you start and do not hesitate to email with any questions.

Best wishes,

Mr Wrigley CL KS5 English: jonathan.wrigley@shoreham-academy.org

Task 1: Analysis

Analysing the language writer's use is the cornerstone of English Literature. It not only helps us understand texts more clearly, but also gives us a chance to come up with our own interpretations of literature.

1) Read the attached extracts from the following texts (one of them you will ultimately study for coursework)

- 'Beloved', Toni Morrison (one of your set texts)
- 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings', Maya Angelou
- 'Their Eyes Were Watching God', Zora Neale Hurston
- 'Passing', Nella Larsen

2) As you read, make notes on the questions below:

- What major themes are explored in the extract?
- Can you identify the writer's craft? How have they introduced place or character? Why here, why now?
- How are these themes presented?
- Are these themes relevant to society today?
- What similarities/differences do you notice between the ideas expressed in these texts and the extract from 'The Color Purple' that we looked at on the induction day?
- Why is it so important that these books have been written and that we continue to study them?

Extract 1: 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings', Maya Angelou (1969)

The caged bird "sings of freedom", writes Maya Angelou in her poem "Caged Bird" - a poignant recurring image throughout her work, as she eloquently explores the struggle to become liberated from the shackles of racism and misogyny. This evocative first volume of her six books of autobiography, originally published in 1969 (1984 in the UK), vividly depicts Angelou's "tender years" from the ages of three to 16, partly in the American south

during the depression-wracked 1930s, while offering timeless insights into the empowering quality of books.

Chapter 2 The Store

When I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed— “To Whom It May Concern”— that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson Jr., from Long Beach, California, en route to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson.

Our parents had decided to put an end to their calamitous marriage, and Father shipped us home to his mother. A porter had been charged with our welfare - he got off the train the next day in Arizona - and our tickets were pinned to my brother’s inside coat pocket.

I don’t remember much of the trip, but after we reached the segregated southern part of the journey, things must have looked up. Negro passengers, who always traveled with loaded lunch boxes, felt sorry for “the poor little motherless darlings” and plied us with cold fried chicken and potato salad.

Years later I discovered that the United States had been crossed thousands of times by frightened Black children traveling alone to their newly affluent parents in Northern cities, or back to grandmothers in Southern towns when the urban North reneged on its economic promises.

The town reacted to us as its inhabitants had reacted to all things new before our coming. It regarded us a while without curiosity but with caution, and after we were seen to be harmless (and children) it closed in around us, as a real mother embraces a stranger's child. Warmly, but not too familiarly.

We lived with our grandmother and uncle in the rear of the Store (it was always spoken of with a capital s), which she had owned some twenty-five years.

Early in the century, Momma (we soon stopped calling her Grandmother) sold lunches to the sawmen in the lumberyard (east Stamps) and the seedmen at the cotton gin (west Stamps). Her crisp meat pies and cool lemonade, when joined to her miraculous ability to be in two places at the same time, assured her business success. From being a mobile lunch counter, she set up a stand between the two points of fiscal interest and supplied the workers' needs for a few years. Then she had the Store built in the heart of the Negro area. Over the years it became the lay center of activities in town. On Saturdays, barbers sat their customers in the shade on the porch of the Store, and troubadours on their ceaseless crawlings through the South leaned across its benches and sang their sad songs of The Brazos while they played juice harps and cigarbox guitars.

The formal name of the Store was the Wm. Johnson General Merchandise Store. Customers could find food staples, a good variety of colored thread, mash for hogs, corn for chickens, coal oil for lamps, light bulbs for the wealthy, shoestrings, hair dressing, balloons, and flower seeds. Anything not visible had only to be ordered.

Until we became familiar enough to belong to the Store and it to us, we were locked up in a Fun House of Things where the attendant had gone home for life.

Each year I watched the field across from the Store turn caterpillar green, then gradually frosty white. I knew exactly how long it would be before the big wagons would pull into the front yard and load on the cotton pickers at daybreak to carry them to the remains of slavery's plantations.

During the picking season my grandmother would get out of bed at four o'clock (she never used an alarm clock) and creak down to her knees and chant in a sleep-filled voice, "Our Father, thank you for letting me see this New Day. Thank you that you didn't allow the bed I lay on last night to be my cooling board, nor my blanket my winding sheet. Guide my feet this day along the straight and narrow, and help me to put a bridle on my tongue. Bless this house, and everybody in it. Thank you, in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen."

Before she had quite arisen, she called our names and issued orders, and pushed her large feet into homemade slippers and across the bare lye-washed wooden floor to light the coal-oil lamp.

The lamplight in the Store gave a soft make-believe feeling to our world which made me want to whisper and walk about on tiptoe. The odors of onions and oranges and kerosene had been mixing all night and wouldn't be disturbed until the wooded slat was removed from the door and the early morning air forced its way in with the bodies of people who had walked miles to reach the pickup place.

"Sister, I'll have two cans of sardines."

"I'm gonna work so fast today I'm gonna make you look like you standing still."

"Lemme have a hunk uh cheese and some sody crackers."

"Just gimme a couple them fat peanut paddies." That would be from a picker who was taking his lunch. The greasy brown paper sack was stuck behind the bib of his overalls. He'd use the candy as a snack before the noon sun called the workers to rest.

In those tender mornings the Store was full of laughing joking, boasting and bragging. One man was going to pick two hundred pounds of cotton, and another three hundred. Even the children were promising to bring home fo' bits and six bits.

The champion picker of the day before was the hero of the dawn. If he prophesied that the cotton in today's field was going to be sparse and stick to the bolls like glue, every listener would grunt a hearty agreement.

The sound of the empty cotton sacks dragging over the floor and the murmurs of waking people were sliced by the cash register as we rang up the five-cent sales.

If the morning sounds and smells were touched with the supernatural, the late afternoon had all the features of the normal Arkansas life. In the dying sunlight the people dragged, rather than their empty cotton sacks.

Brought back to the Store, the pickers would step out of the backs of trucks and fold down, dirt disappointed, to the ground. No matter how much they had picked' it wasn't enough. Their wages wouldn't even get them out of debt to my grandmother, not to mention the staggering bill that waited on them at the white commissary downtown.

The sounds of the new morning had been replaced with grumbles about cheating houses, weighted scales, snakes, skimpy cotton and dusty rows. In later years I was to confront the stereotyped picture of gay song-singing cotton pickers with such inordinate rage that I was told even by fellow Blacks that my paranoia was embarrassing. But I had seen the fingers cut by the mean little cotton bolls, and I had witnessed the backs and shoulders and arms and legs resisting any further demands.

Some of the workers would leave their sacks at the Store to be picked up the following morning, but a few had to take them home for repairs. I winced to picture them sewing the coarse material under a coal-oil lamp with fingers stiffening from the day's work. In too few hours they would have to walk back to Sister Henderson's Store, get vittles and load, again, onto the trucks. Then they would face another day of trying to earn enough for the whole year with the heavy knowledge that they were going to end the season as they started it. Without the money or credit necessary to sustain a family for three months. In cotton-picking time the late afternoons revealed the harshness of Black Southern life, which in the early morning had been softened by nature's blessing of grogginess, forgetfulness and the soft lamplight.

Extract 2: 'Their Eyes Were Watching God', Zora Neale Hurston (1937)

One of the most important and enduring books of the twentieth century, 'Their Eyes Were Watching God', brings to life a Southern love story with the wit and pathos found only in the writing of Zora Neale Hurston. Out of print for almost thirty years - due largely to initial audiences' rejection of its strong, black female protagonist - Hurston's classic has, since its 1978 reissue, become perhaps the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of the African-American literature. A Southern love story with wit, beauty and heartfelt wisdom.

1

Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever on the horizon, never out of sight, never landing until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked to death by Time. That is the life of men.

Now, women forget all those things they don't want to remember, and remember everything they don't want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly.

So the beginning of this was a woman and she had come back from burying the dead. Not the dead of sick and ailing with friends at the pillow and the feet. She had come

back from the sodden and the bloated; the sudden dead, their eyes fung wide open in judgment.

The people all saw her come because it was sundown. The sun was gone, but he had left his footprints in the sky. It was the time for sitting on porches beside the road. It was the time to hear things and talk. These sitters had been tongueless, carless, eyeless conveniences all day long. Mules and other brutes had occupied their skins. But now, the sun and the bossman were gone, so the skins felt powerful and human. They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They passed nations through their mouths. They sat in judgment.

Seeing the woman as she was made them remember the envy they had stored up from other times. So they chewed up the back parts of their minds and swallowed with relish. They made burning statements with questions, and killing tools out of laughs. It was mass cruelty. A mood come alive. Words walking without masters; walking altogether like harmony in a song.

"What she doin coming back here in dem overalls? Can't she find no dress to put on -- Where's dat blue satin dress she left here in? -- Where all dat money her husband took and died and left her? -- What dat ole forty year ole 'oman doin' wid her hair swingin' down her back lak some young gal? -- Where she left dat young lad of a boy she went off here wid? -- Thought she was going to marry? -- Where he left *her*? -- What he done wid all her money? -- Betcha he off wid some gal so young she ain't even got no hairs - why she don't stay in her class? -- "

When she got to where they were she turned her face on the bander log and spoke. They scrambled a noisy "good evenin'" and left their mouths setting open and their ears full of hope. Her speech was pleasant enough, but she kept walking straight on to her gate. The porch couldn't talk for looking.

The men noticed her firm buttocks like she had grape fruits in her hip pockets; the great rope of black hair swinging to her waist and unraveling in the wind like a plume; then her pugnacious breasts trying to bore holes in her shirt. They, the men, were saving with the mind what they lost with the eye. The women took the faded shirt and muddy overalls and laid them away *for* remembrance. It was a weapon against her strength and if it turned out of no significance, still it was a hope that she might fall to their level some day.

But nobody moved, nobody spoke, nobody even thought to swallow spit until after her gate slammed behind her.

Extract 3: 'Passing', Nella Larsen (1929)

Generally regarded as Nella Larsen's best work, Passing was first published in 1929, but has received a lot of renewed attention because of its close examination of racial and sexual ambiguities. It has achieved canonical status in many American universities. The novel tells the story of two childhood friends, Clare and Irene, both light skinned enough to pass as white. Reconnecting in adulthood, Clare has chosen to live as a white woman, while Irene embraces black culture and has an important role in her community.

TWO

Presently there were voices, a man's booming one and a woman's slightly husky. A waiter passed her, followed by a sweetly scented woman in a fluttering dress of green chiffon whose mingled pattern of narcissuses, jonquils, and hyacinths was a reminder of pleasantly chill spring days. Behind her there was a man, very red in the face, who was mopping his neck and forehead with a big crumpled handkerchief.

"Oh dear!" Irene groaned, rasped by annoyance, for after a little discussion and commotion they had stopped at the very next table. She had been alone there at the window and it had been so satisfyingly quiet. Now, of course, they would chatter.

But no. Only the woman sat down. The man remained standing, abstractedly pinching the knot of his bright blue tie. Across the small space that separated the two tables his voice carried clearly.

"See you later, then," he declared, looking down at the woman. There was pleasure in his tones and a smile on his face.

His companion's lips parted in some answer, but her words were blurred by the little intervening distance and the medley of noises floating up from the streets below. They didn't reach Irene. But she noted the peculiar caressing smile that accompanied them.

The man said: "Well, I suppose I'd better," and smiled again, and said good-bye, and left.

An attractive-looking woman, was Irene's opinion, with those dark, almost black, eyes and that wide mouth like a scarlet flower against the ivory of her skin. Nice clothes too, just right for the weather, thin and cool without being mussy, as summer things were so apt to be.

A waiter was taking her order, Irene saw her smile up at him as she murmured something--thanks, maybe. It was an odd sort of smile. Irene couldn't quite define it, but she was sure that she would have classed it, coming from another woman, as being just a shade

too provocative for a waiter. About this one, however, there was something that made her hesitate to name it that. A certain impression of assurance, perhaps.

The waiter came back with the order. Irene watched her spread out her napkin, saw the silver spoon in the white hand slit the dull gold of the melon. Then, conscious that she had been staring, she looked quickly away.

Her mind returned to her own affairs. She had settled, definitely, the problem of the proper one of two frocks for the bridge party that night, in rooms whose atmosphere would be so thick and hot that every breath would be like breathing soup. The dress decided, her thoughts had gone back to the snag of Ted's book, her unseeing eyes far away on the lake, when by some sixth sense she was acutely aware that someone was watching her.

Very slowly she looked around, and into the dark eyes of the woman in the green frock at the next table. But she evidently failed to realize that such intense interest as she was showing might be embarrassing, and continued to stare. Her demeanour was that of one who with utmost singleness of mind and purpose was determined to impress firmly and accurately each detail of Irene's features upon her memory for all time, nor showed the slightest trace of disconcertment at having been detected in her steady scrutiny.

Instead, it was Irene who was put out. Feeling her colour heighten under the continued inspection, she slid her eyes down. What, she wondered, could be the reason for such persistent attention? Had she, in her haste in the taxi, put her hat on backwards? Guardedly she felt at it. No. Perhaps there was a streak of powder somewhere on her face. She made a quick pass over it with her handkerchief. Something wrong with her dress? She shot a glance over it. Perfectly all right. *What* was it?

Again she looked up, and for a moment her brown eyes politely returned the stare of the other's black ones, which never for an instant fell or wavered. Irene made a little mental shrug. Oh well, let her look! She tried to treat the woman and her watching with indifference, but she couldn't. All her efforts to ignore her, it, were futile. She stole another glance. Still looking. What strange languorous eyes she had!

And gradually there rose in Irene a small inner disturbance, odious and hatefully familiar. She laughed softly, but her eyes flashed.

Did that woman, could that woman, somehow know that here before her very eyes on the roof of the Drayton sat a Negro? Absurd! Impossible! White people were so stupid about such things for all that they usually asserted that they were able to tell; and by the most ridiculous means, finger-nails, palms of hands, shapes of ears, teeth, and other equally silly rot. They always took her for an Italian, a Spaniard, a Mexican, or a gipsy. Never, when she was alone, had they even remotely seemed to suspect that she was a Negro. No, the woman sitting there staring at her couldn't possibly know.

Nevertheless, Irene felt, in turn, anger, scorn, and fear slide over her. It wasn't that she was ashamed of being a Negro, or even of having it declared. It was the idea of being ejected from any place, even in the polite and tactful way in which the Drayton would probably do it, that disturbed her.

But she looked, boldly this time, back into the eyes still frankly intent upon her. They

did not seem to her hostile or resentful. Rather, Irene had the feeling that they were ready to smile if she would. Nonsense, of course. The feeling passed, and she turned away with the firm intention of keeping her gaze on the lake, the roofs of the buildings across the way, the sky, anywhere but on that annoying woman. Almost immediately, however, her eyes were back again. In the midst of her fog of uneasiness she had been seized by a desire to outstare the rude observer. Suppose the woman did know or suspect her race. She couldn't prove it.

Suddenly her small fright increased. Her neighbour had risen and was coming towards her. What was going to happen now?

"Pardon me," the woman said pleasantly, "but I think I know you." Her slightly husky voice held a dubious note.

Looking up at her, Irene's suspicions and fear vanished. There was no mistaking the friendliness of that smile or resisting its charm. Instantly she surrendered to it and smiled too, as she said: "I'm afraid you're mistaken."

"Why, of course, I know you!" the other exclaimed. "Don't tell me you're not Irene Westover. Or do they still call you 'Rene?'"

In the brief second before her answer, Irene tried vainly to recall where and when this woman could have known her. There, in Chicago. And before her marriage. That much was plain. High school? College? Y. W. C. A. committees? High school, most likely. What white girls had she known well enough to have been familiarly addressed as 'Rene by them? The woman before her didn't fit her memory of any of them. Who was she?

Extract 4: 'Beloved', Toni Morrison (1987)

It is the mid-1800s and as slavery looks to be coming to an end, Sethe is haunted by the violent trauma it wrought on her former enslaved life at Sweet Home, Kentucky. Her dead baby daughter, whose tombstone bears the sing word, Beloved, returns as a spectre to punish her mother, but also to elicit her love. Told with heart-stopping clarity, melding horror and beauty, Beloved is Toni Morrison's enduring masterpiece.

I will call them my people,
which were not my people;
And her beloved,
which was not beloved.

ROMANS 9:25

ONE

124 WAS SPITEFUL. Full of a baby's venom. The women in the house knew it and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims. The grandmother, Baby Suggs, was dead, and the

sons, Howard and Buglar, had run away by the time they were thirteen years old—as soon as merely looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard). Neither boy waited to see more; another kettleful of chickpeas smoking in a heap on the floor; soda crackers crumbled and strewn in a line next to the doorsill. Nor did they wait for one of the relief periods: the weeks, months even, when nothing was disturbed. No. Each one fled at once—the moment the house committed what was for him the one insult not to be borne or witnessed a second time. Within two months, in the dead of winter, leaving their grandmother, Baby Suggs; Sethe, their mother; and their little sister, Denver, all by themselves in the gray and white house on Bluestone Road. It didn't have a number then, because Cincinnati didn't stretch that far. In fact, Ohio had been calling itself a state only seventy years when first one brother and then the next stuffed quilt packing into his hat, snatched up his shoes, and crept away from the lively spite the house felt for them.

Baby Suggs didn't even raise her head. From her sickbed she heard them go but that wasn't the reason she lay still. It was a wonder to her that her grandsons had taken so long to realize that every house wasn't like the one on Bluestone Road. Suspended between the nastiness of life and the meanness of the dead, she couldn't get interested in leaving life or living it, let alone the fright of two creeping-off boys. Her past had been like her present—intolerable—and since she knew death was anything but forgetfulness, she used the little energy left her for pondering color.

"Bring a little lavender in, if you got any. Pink, if you don't."

And Sethe would oblige her with anything from fabric to her own tongue. Winter in Ohio was especially rough if you had an appetite for color. Sky provided the only drama, and counting on a Cincinnati horizon for life's principal joy was reckless indeed. So Sethe and the girl Denver did what they could, and what the house permitted, for her. Together they waged a perfunctory battle against the outrageous behavior of that place; against turned-over slop jars, smacks on the behind, and gusts of sour air. For they understood the source of the outrage as well as they knew the source of light.

Baby Suggs died shortly after the brothers left, with no interest whatsoever in their leave-taking or hers, and right afterward Sethe and Denver decided to end the persecution by calling forth the ghost that tried them so. Perhaps a conversation, they thought, an exchange of views or something would help. So they held hands and said, "Come on. Come on. You may as well just come on."

The sideboard took a step forward but nothing else did.

"Grandma Baby must be stopping it," said Denver. She was ten and still mad at Baby Suggs for dying.

Sethe opened her eyes. "I doubt that," she said.

"Then why don't it come?"

"You forgetting how little it is," said her mother. "She wasn't even two years old when she died. Too little to understand. Too little to talk much even."

"Maybe she don't want to understand," said Denver.

"Maybe. But if she'd only come, I could make it clear to her." Sethe released her daughter's hand and together they pushed the sideboard back against the wall. Outside a driver whipped his horse into the gallop local people felt necessary when they passed 124.

"For a baby she throws a powerful spell," said Denver.

"No more powerful than the way I loved her," Sethe answered and there it was again. The welcoming cool of unchiseled headstones; the one she selected to lean against

on tiptoe, her knees wide open as any grave. Pink as a fingernail it was, and sprinkled with glittering chips. Ten minutes, he said. You got ten minutes I'll do it for free.

Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten "Dearly" too? She had not thought to ask him and it bothered her still that it might have been possible—that for twenty minutes, a half hour, say, she could have had the whole thing, every word she heard the preacher say at the funeral (and all there was to say, surely) engraved on her baby's headstone: Dearly Beloved. But what she got, settled for, was the one word that mattered. She thought it would be enough, rutting among the headstones with the engraver, his young son looking on, the anger in his face so old; the appetite in it quite new. That should certainly be enough. Enough to answer one more preacher, one more abolitionist and a town full of disgust.

Counting on the stillness of her own soul, she had forgotten the other one: the soul of her baby girl. Who would have thought that a little old baby could harbor so much rage? Rutting among the stones under the eyes of the engraver's son was not enough. Not only did she have to live out her years in a house palsied by the baby's fury at having its throat cut, but those ten minutes she spent pressed up against dawn-colored stone studded with star chips, her knees wide open as the grave, were longer than life, more alive, more pulsating than the baby blood that soaked her fingers like oil.

"We could move," she suggested once to her mother-in-law.

"What'd be the point?" asked Baby Suggs. "Not a house in the country ain't packed to its rafters with some dead Negro's grief. We lucky this ghost is a baby. My husband's spirit was to come back in here? or yours? Don't talk to me. You lucky. You got three left. Three pulling at your skirts and just one raising hell from the other side. Be thankful, why don't you? I had eight. Every one of them gone away from me. Four taken, four chased, and all, I expect, worrying somebody's house into evil." Baby Suggs rubbed her eyebrows. "My first-born. All I can remember of her is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and that's all I remember."

"That's all you let yourself remember," Sethe had told her, but she was down to one herself—one alive, that is—the boys chased off by the dead one, and her memory of Buglar was fading fast. Howard at least had a head shape nobody could forget. As for the rest, she worked hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe. Unfortunately her brain was devious. She might be hurrying across a field, running practically, to get to the pump quickly and rinse the chamomile sap from her legs. Nothing else would be in her mind. The picture of the men coming to nurse her was as lifeless as the nerves in her back where the skin buckled like a washboard. Nor was there the faintest scent of ink or the cherry gum and oak bark from which it was made. Nothing. Just the breeze cooling her face as she rushed toward water. And then sopping the chamomile away with pump water and rags, her mind fixed on getting every last bit of sap off—on her carelessness in taking a shortcut across the field just to save a half mile, and not noticing how high the weeds had grown until the itching was all the way to her knees. Then something. The splash of water, the sight of her shoes and stockings awry on the path where she had flung them; or Here Boy lapping in the puddle near her feet, and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes, and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty. It never looked as terrible as it was and it made her wonder if hell was a pretty place too. Fire and brimstone all right, but hidden in lacy groves. Boys hanging from the most beautiful sycamores in the world. It shamed her—remembering the wonderful soughing trees rather than the boys. Try as she

might to make it otherwise, the sycamores beat out the children every time and she could not forgive her memory for that.

Task 2: Critical Theory

A key skill in English Literature is the ability to understand and critique other people's points of view. This not only helps you learn more about how others think, but also helps clarify your own opinions.

Choose two of the articles or TED Talks below to read or watch. For each one, answer the questions below:

- What is the piece about? List each of its main points.
- What is the writer or speaker's point of view?
- How can you tell? Consider headlines, subheadings, language choice etc.
- To what extent do you agree with the writer or speaker's point of view? Justify your response - you may wish to bring in other articles you have read to support your ideas.

1) 'Racism Rising Since Brexit, Nationwide Study Reveals', *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/20/racism-on-the-rise-since-brexit-vote-nationwide-study-reveals>

2) 'The Ears Have It', *Times Literary Supplement* <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/public/the-ears-have-it/>

3) 'Black Flight', *Times Literary Supplement* <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/private/william-kelley-southern-gothic/>

4) 'The African American Experience', *History Today* <https://www.historytoday.com/african-american-experience>

- 5) 'Lynched for Drinking from a White Man's Well', *London Review of Books* <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v40/n19/thomas-laqueur/lynched-for-drinking-from-a-white-mans-well>
- 6) 'Last Known US Slave Ship Found in Alabama', *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/23/last-known-us-slave-ship-found-in-alabama>
- 7) 'We Need to Talk About an Injustice', *TED* https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice?language=en
- 8) 'The Case for Reparations', *The Atlantic* <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- 9) 'Viewpoint: Why Racism in US is Worse than in Europe', *BBC News* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-44158098>
- 10) 'An inclusive Pride flag is the first step in confronting racism in LGBT+ spaces', *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/21/inclusive-pride-flag-confronting-racism-lgbt>
- 11) 'Talks to help you understand racism in America', *TED* https://www.ted.com/playlists/250/talks_to_help_you_understand_r

Poetry

Poetry Tasks

In year 12 you will read an anthology of poetry called 'Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry'. The following three poems come from that anthology and the tasks below help you practice the skills you will require to be successful.

1. Read and annotate the three poems below. They are all about growing up and the relationship we have with our younger selves.
2. Pick your two favourite poems and answer the question below in as much detail as possible. Don't forget to compare them and analyse the use of language, structure and form in your response.

Question – Compare how two of the poets present the ideas of youth and ageing.

To My Nine-Year-Old Self **by Helen Dunmore**

You must forgive me. Don't look so surprised,
perplexed, and eager to be gone,
balancing on your hands or on the tightrope.
You would rather run than walk, rather climb than run
rather leap from a height than anything.

I have spoiled this body we once shared.
Look at the scars, and watch the way I move,
careful of a bad back or a bruised foot.
Do you remember how, three minutes after waking
we'd jump straight out of the ground floor window
into the summer morning?

That dream we had, no doubt it's as fresh in your mind
as the white paper to write it on.
We made a start, but something else came up –

a baby vole, or a bag of sherbet lemons –
and besides, that summer of ambition
created an ice-lolly factory, a wasp trap
and a den by the cesspit.

I'd like to say that we could be friends
but the truth is we have nothing in common
beyond a few shared years. I won't keep you then.
Time to pick rosehips for tuppence a pound,
time to hide down scared lanes
from men in cars after girl-children,

or to lunge out over the water
on a rope that swings from that tree
long buried in housing –
but no, I shan't cloud your morning. God knows
I have fears enough for us both –

I leave you in an ecstasy of concentration
slowly peeling a ripe scab from your knee
to taste it on your tongue.

An Easy Passage
by Julia Copus

Once she is halfway up there, crouched in her bikini
on the porch roof of her family's house, trembling,
she knows that the one thing she must not do is to think
of the narrow windowsill, the sharp
drop of the stairwell; she must keep her mind
on the friend with whom she is half in love
and who is waiting for her on the blond
gravel somewhere beneath her, keep her mind
on her and on the fact of the open window,
the flimsy, hole-punched, aluminium lever
towards which in a moment she will reach
with the length of her whole body, leaning in
to the warm flank of the house. But first she
steadies herself, still crouching, the grains of the asphalt
hot beneath her toes and fingertips,
a square of petrified beach. Her tiny breasts
rest lightly on her thighs. – What can she know
of the way the world admits us less and less

the more we grow? For now both girls seem
lit, as if from within, their hair and the gold stud
earrings in the first one's ears; for now the long, grey
eye of the street, and far away from the mother
who does not trust her daughter with a key,
the workers about their business in the drab
electroplating factory over the road,
far too, most far, from the flush-faced secretary
who, with her head full of the evening class
she plans to take, or the trip of a lifetime, looks up now
from the stirring omens of the astrology column
at a girl – thirteen if she's a day – standing
in next to nothing in the driveway opposite,
one hand flat against her stomach, one
shielding her eyes to gaze up at a pale calf,
a silver anklet and the five neat *shimmering-*
oyster-painted toenails of an outstretched foot
which catch the sunlight briefly like the
flash of armaments before
dropping gracefully into the shade of the house.

The Furthest Distances I've Travelled

By Leontia Flynn

Like many folk, when first I saddled a rucksack,
feeling its weight on my back –
the way my spine
curved under it like a meridian –

I thought: Yes. This is how
to live. On the beaten track, the sherpa pass, between Krakow
and Zagreb, or the Siberian white
cells of scattered airports;

it came clear as over a tannoy
that in restlessness, in anony
mity:
was some kind of destiny.

So whether it was the scare stories about Larium
– the threats of delirium
and baldness – that lead me, not to a Western Union

wiring money with six words of Lithuanian,

but to this post office with a handful of bills
or a giro; and why, if I'm stuffing smalls
hastily into a holdall, I am less likely
to be catching a greyhound from Madison to Milwaukee

than to be doing some overdue laundry
is really beyond me.

However,
when, during routine evictions, I discover

alien pants, cinema stubs, the throwaway
comment – on a post-it – or a tiny stowaway
pressed flower amid bottom drawers,
I know these are my souvenirs

and, from these crushed valentines, this unravelled
sports sock, that the furthest distances I've travelled
have been those between people. And what survives
of holidaying briefly in their lives.

Reading

There is a direct correlation between success at A-Level and students who read regularly. Those who read widely have a greater vocabulary; write more fluently; and show far better understanding of world issues.

To ensure you are among those who are successful at A-Level, **read three of the texts** from the reading lists on the following pages. For each book you read, complete one of the worksheets below. I strongly recommend that you choose at least one of the novels from Task 1. I have made some of the titles bigger, some of these may

come in handy during the course 😊

Title and Author	
Key Themes	
Character Progression (pick one character and explain how they develop across the text including quotations)	
Importance of Setting (pick one setting and explain how it is significant to the narrative including quotations)	
What is the writer's message?	
Did you enjoy the book? Why/why not?	
Title	
Author	
Key Themes	
Character Progression (pick one character and explain how they develop across the text including quotations)	

Importance of Setting (pick one setting and explain how it is significant to the narrative including quotations)	
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Did you enjoy the book? Why/why not?	
Title	
Author	
Key Themes	
Character Progression (pick one character and explain how they develop across the text including quotations)	

Importance of Setting (pick one setting and explain how it is significant to the narrative including quotations)	
What is the writer's message?	
Did you enjoy the book? Why/why not?	

Group 1: Novels Relating to African American Experiences

Ta-Nehisi Coates: Between the World and Me

Sue Monk Kidd: The Invention of Wings, The Secret Life of Bees

Yaa Gyasi: Homegoing

Richard Wright: Native Son, Black Boy

Jesmyn Ward: Sing, Unburied, Sing

Lorraine Hansberry: A Raisin in the Sun

Harper Lee: To Kill a Mockingbird

Michelle Alexander: The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

Colson Whitehead: The Underground Railroad

Kathryn Stockett: The Help

Isabel Wilkerson: The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration

James McBride: The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother

Frederick Douglass: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

William Styron: The Confessions of Nat Turner

Octavia E. Butler: Kindred

Tayari Jones: An American Marriage

W.E.B. Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk

Michelle Obama: Becoming

Jason Reynolds: Long Way Down

Michael Eric Dyson: Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America

Alex Haley: Roots: The Saga of an American Family

Malcolm X: The Autobiography of Malcolm X

Jarvis Baldwin: Another Country, Go Tell it on the Mountain, The Fire Next Time

Toni Morrison: Beloved, Sula, The Bluest Eye, Song of Solomon

Zora Neale Hurston: Their Eyes Were Watching God

Maya Angelou: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Gather Together in Name

Alice Walker: The Color Purple

Chinua Achebe: Things Fall Apart

Wole Soyinka: Petals of Blood

Alan Paton: Cry the Beloved Country

Nadine Gordimer: July's People, A Guest of Honour

Doris Lessing: The Grass is Singing

Rudyard Kipling: Kim

Group 2: Classic Novels

This is a BRIEF list of representative works by some important novelists. You should read some of them, or other novels by the same author.

Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Persuasion, Mansfield Park, Northanger Abbey.

Emily Bronte: Wuthering Heights.

Charlotte Bronte: Jane Eyre

Charles Dickens: Great Expectations, Hard Times, Bleak House, A Tale of Two Cities

George Eliot: The Mill on the Floss, Middlemarch, Silas Marner

Wilkie Collins: The Woman in White, The Moonstone

Mary Shelley: Frankenstein

Bram Stoker: Dracula

Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim

Thomas Hardy: Far from the Madding Crowd, Jude the Obscure, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, The Mayor of Casterbridge

James Joyce: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Dubliners, Ulysses

D.H. Lawrence: Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love, The Fox

E.M. Forster: A Room with a View, Howard's End, A Passage to India

Evelyn Waugh: Brideshead Revisited, A Handful of Dust, Vile Bodies, Decline and Fall

Aldous Huxley: Brave New World

George Orwell: 1984, Animal Farm

Dylan Thomas: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog

Graham Greene: The Power and the Glory, Brighton Rock, Our Man in Havana

Martin Amis: The Rachel Papers, Time's Arrow, Money

Kingsley Amis: Lucky Jim, The Old Devils

Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale, Cat's Eye, The Robber Bride, Hagseed

J.G. Ballard: Empire of the Sun

L.P. Hartley: The Go-Between

Keri Hume: The Bone People

Kazuo Ishiguro: The Remains of the Day, Never Let Me Go

Henry James: Turn of the Screw, Washington Square, The Europeans

Thomas Keneally: Schindler's Ark, The Playmaker

David Lodge: Small World, Nice Work

Alison Lurie: Foreign Affairs, Love and Friendship

Michael Ondaatje: The English Patient

J.B. Priestley: Angel Pavement, Good Companions

Jean Rhys: Wide Sargasso Sea

Salman Rushdie: Midnight's Children, Satanic Verses, The Moor's Last Sigh.

Graham Swift: Waterland

Jeanette Winterson: Orange are not the only fruit, Sexing the Cherry

Virginia Woolf: To the Lighthouse, Mrs Dalloway, The Waves, The Years

Paul Scott: The Jewel in the Crown, The Day of the Scorpion, The Towers of Silence, A Division of Spoils

Dostoevsky: Crime and Punishment, The Brothers Karamazov

Flaubert: Madame Bovary

Hugo: The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Les Misérables

Kafka: Metamorphosis, The Trial, The Castle

Thomas Mann: Death in Venice, The Magic Mountain

Pasternak: Doctor Zhivago

Tolstoy: Anna Karenina, War and Peace

Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter

Herman Melville: Moby Dick

Mark Twain: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court

James Fennimore Cooper: Last of the Mohicans

Sinclair Lewis: Babbitt, Main Street

William Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, Intruder in the Dust

Ernest Hemingway: For Whom the Bell Tolls, A Farewell to Arms, The Sun Also Rises
Edith Wharton: The Age of Innocence, Ethan Frome
Ralph Ellison: The Invisible Man
F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby, Tender is the Night,
J.D. Salinger: Catcher in the Rye
Ken Kesey: One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest
Cathy McCarthy: The Group
Joseph Heller: Catch 22
William Burroughs: The Naked Lunch
Jack Kerouac: On the Road, The Dharma Bums
Sylvia Plath: The Bell Jar
John Steinbeck: The Grapes of Wrath, East of Eden, Of Mice and Men
Kurt Vonnegut Jr.: Slaughter House V, Breakfast of Champions
Vladimir Nabokov: Lolita, Pale Fire
Truman Capote: In Cold Blood
Madeline Miller: The Song of Achilles
Joanna Cannon: Three Things About Elsie
Gail Honeyman: Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine
Rachel Kushner: The Mars Room
Kate Moore: The Radium Girls
Susan Sontag: Death Kit
Tom Wolfe: The Bonfire of the Vanities
Jorge Luis Borges: Labyrinths
Gabriel Garcia Marquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude, Love in a Time of Cholera, Chronicle of a Death Foretold
Isabel Allende: The House of the Spirits, Eva Luna
Vargos Llosa: The Green Door
Clarence Malcolm Lowy: Under the Volcano
Stella Gibbons: Cold Comfort Farm
Anthony Burgess: A Clockwork Orange
Ian McEwan: Atonement, A Child in Time

Your Actual Reading List for the course:

Othello – William Shakespeare
A Streetcar Named Desire – Tennessee Williams
Beloved – Toni Morrison
The Picture of Dorian Gray – Oscar Wilde
The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood (coursework base text)
Poems of the Decade – selected by William Sieghart (some not all)

Feel free to get started on these texts too. You will need to read them more than once!

Above all, this is about the love of Literature. So embrace the challenge!

Task 4: The Extra Mile: If possible! (if not, there are online tours you can take!)

Literature influences so much in our day to day lives that to be a true student of English Literature you must take an interest in the world around you.

Use some of your summer holiday to explore literature in its broadest sense by visiting some of these incredible exhibitions or events.

- 1) Visit this exhibition at the British Library (Free entry!)
<https://www.bl.uk/events/treasures-of-the-british-library>
- 2) Visit one of Brighton's book shops (Treat yourself)
- 3) Skip the cinema and go to The Globe Theatre (Tickets are only £5 if you book in advance).
<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/whats-on/#>
- 4) Go on a literary walk around London
<https://www.walks.com/blog/virtual-tours-online-with-london-walks/>
- 5) Start your own reading blog or book group (This can be a great way to motivate yourself to read and to get into the habit of reflecting)
https://www.blogger.com/about/?r=1-null_user

