



# English Literature GCSE to A level

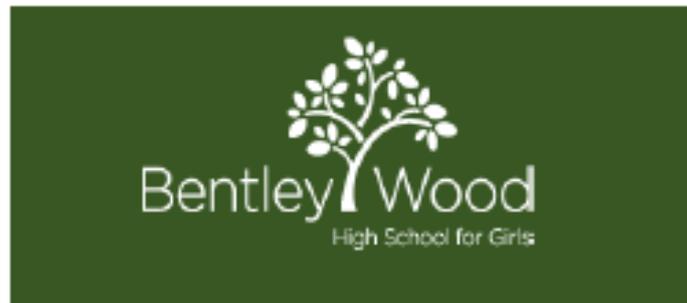
Bridging Work  
Year 11 into 12 for 2021/22



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

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

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



English Literature AS Bridging Work 2021

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

and

**Poems of the Decade – analysis and presentation**

and

**Wider Reading**

**Mrs Azad and Ms Mouskis**

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

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

## DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE: CONVENTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Ms Azad

**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: Poems of the Decade

### Ms Mouskis

Prepare a presentation and handout on a poem of your choice from the 'Poems of the Decade' Anthology.

1. Read the poem through thoroughly
2. Who is the poet? What information about their lives is **relevant** to our reading of the poem?
3. What is the poem about? Does it have a **purpose**?
4. Annotate any key language that help you understand the poem
5. Identify any **linguistic/poetic devices employed** by the poet. E.g. similes, metaphors.
6. Identify any structural devices employed by the poet. E.g. repetition
7. Consider the effect of these devices on the reader and annotate. How do these **influence** our reading of the poem?
8. What is the **TONE** of the poem overall? What does that tell us? Is there a **message** behind the poem?

YOU MUST **NOT** PICK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING POEMS:

**Eat Me** Patience Agbabi

**Chainsaw Versus the Pampas Grass** Simon Armitage

**Material** Ros Barber

**History** John Burnside

**An Easy Passage** Julia Copus

**The Deliverer** Tishani Doshi

**The Lammas Hireling** Ian Duhig

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

**A Minor Role** U A Fanthorpe

**The Gun** Vicki Feaver

**The Furthest Distances I've Travelled** Leontia Flynn

**Giuseppe** Roderick Ford

**Out of the Bag** Seamus Heaney

**Effects** Alan Jenkins

**Genetics** Sinéad Morrissey

**From The Journal of a Disappointed Man** Andrew Motion

**Look We Have Coming to Dover!** Daljit Nagra

**Please Hold** Ciaran O'Driscoll

**On Her Blindness** Adam Thorpe

**Ode on a Grayson Perry Urn** Tim Turnbull

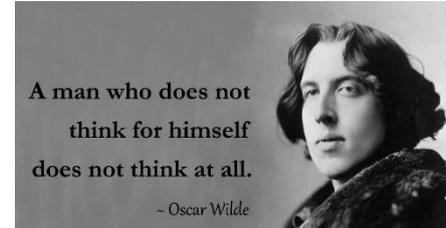
**Inheritance** Eavan Boland *Inheritance*

***Or any poem shorter than 14 lines***

### **Bridging work: The Importance of Being Earnest**

**Task 1:** research the playwright, Oscar Wilde. Focus on Wilde's life and what social and historical issues existed that could have shaped his experiences and thus influenced his literary works.

The play we will be studying is a comedy, why might Wilde have chosen this genre, additionally, consider the messages and intentions of his works. Below are a few links to help you.



**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>