



English Literature



Staff members

- Miss L Kelly
- Mrs M Peden
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Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy-Sixth Form



Y12 content

Autumn

- Hamlet
- Dystopian Fiction- A Handmaid's Tale
- Dystopian Fiction- 1984

Spring

- Hamlet
- Dystopian Fiction- A Handmaid's Tale
- Dystopian Fiction- 1984

Summer

- Hamlet
- Dystopian Fiction- A Handmaid's Tale
- Dystopian Fiction- 1984
- Introduction to coursework

Y13 content

Autumn

- Play- An Ideal Husband
- Poetry- Christina Rossetti
- Dystopian Fiction- A Handmaid's Tale
- Dystopian Fiction- 1984
- Coursework

Spring

- Play- An Ideal Husband
- Poetry- Christina Rossetti
- Dystopian Fiction- A Handmaid's Tale
- Dystopian Fiction- 1984
- Coursework

Summer

- Revision and exam preparation

Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy-Sixth Form



Sample of student work.

"Literature is overly negative in its portrayal of women's lives; the positive is overlooked"

In some literature, women are portrayed as fragile objects to feel sorry for. However, this isn't the case in all literature- often the pigeonhole of people thinking literature does this makes people think this is real for women, therefore feeding into the stereotype that women have been trying to shake off for centuries. Though some literature does portray some women's lives as negative, I'd argue that the positive portrayal of women in literature overall is overlooked.

The appearance of women as strong and powerful in No Thank You John by Rossetti battles stereotypical presentations of women, and instead twists this archetype onto men. In the Victorian era women "had to" present themselves as hard to get, making men propose to them multiple times before they said yes, in order to make sure they weren't seen as sleazy. However, this tradition could be argued to merely make the men look desperate. Rossetti's poem No Thank You John is a prime example of this- the narrator says that she "never said [she] loved you John", showing the embarrassing arrogance of men. She even mentions "pity", clearly twisting the stereotypes of what literature is expected to be- it could be argued that literature is overly negative of women's lives but this shows quite the opposite, suggesting that men are the ones to have sympathy for. Despite Rossetti's stance opposing suffrage for women, she could be seen as somewhat of a feminist of her time- No Thank You John is a symbol of the power of women and rebellion from literature's typical view of women. Rossetti, herself, fell in love many times but never got married, despite proposals; she felt love for men but was never the predictable literature character, dependent on men, and this shines through in her poems. Mrs Cheverly from Oscar Wilde's An Ideal Husband is also a non-stereotypical woman. Wilde shows her power in particular through the structure of the play- not only is she the "villain" in the play, but she is the "villain" in a play full of men, creating struggles for them, not just other women. In Victorian times this beats the gender stereotypes, as women are seen as merely aid to help men get to where they need or want to be- Cheverly, a woman, is the thing stopping them from doing this. Wilde was a feminist who believed in equality for all, but before anything else he was always seen as an individualist who believed in self-determination. In a way this is more feminist than feminism- he didn't treat them as things to purely feel sorry for and

Desire is destructive.

In light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore temptation and desire in your chosen texts.

There is a strongly held belief surrounding 19th century literature, that the view on romantic love was extremely negative because it would eventually lead to ruin. Rossetti's poetry too often presents desire to be damaging in the long term, a poison of sorts, through the contrast with divine love in poems such as 'Soeur Louise de la Misericorde' and 'Twice', supported by her religious devotion and dedication to God. However in other poems such as 'A Birthday', romantic love is presented as something that brings a newfound vitality to the speaker's life. Through closer analysis of these three poems, it becomes possible to see a conflicted ideology as to whether desire was positive. Rossetti seems to have shifted her perspective depending on the time of her life, and the prospects that she faced. Given different conditions, it is not inconceivable to think that Rossetti herself may have ended in a romantic relationship with one of her three suitors over the years. Wilde too presents desire as a weapon, and in that sense it is certainly destructive and effective. Mrs Chevelly, as we will see, is his embodiment of desire's danger. Yet, both writers demonstrate, fleetingly, that in a more progressive society, desire may be more acceptable. Until that society came along however, the constructs in the poems and play generally suffer by expressing or pursuing raw love.

Moodboard of Hamlet (1996) and the BBC Hamlet (David Tennant)



The 1996 Hamlet is set in the 19th century but they speak Elizabethan English.



The 2009 Hamlet create their on setting of a modern society that speaks Elizabethan English.



In the 2009 and 1996 Hamlet, when there is a depressing scene they would utilise no light to make it look dark. When there are comical and gleeful scenes the brighter the lights.



In the 1997 Hamlet, they would stand closer to royalty as they have the same class.



The 1996 Hamlet uses costumes of the upper class Victorians



The 2009 Hamlet uses modern clothes as their costumes



The 2009 Hamlet would make characters be distant from other when there's a scene of isolation or distrust and will use less of the space there is in the room

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Similarities and differences between Nineteen Eighty Four and The Handmaid's Tale



Similarities

There are many similarities between Nineteen Eighty Four and the Handmaid's Tale. Both are set in a dystopian time in which a dictatorial government imposes restricting laws. Both show a leading character to disobey these laws in a quest for love. Both show a loss of identity among the characters. Both show a certain hope that their stories can be told to a future generation that will no longer be under the rule of their current government. Both of the main characters in the novel had a life, which they can remember both the changes.

Differences:

The Handmaid's Tale focuses heavily on Feminism where as Nineteen Eighty Four heavily focuses on how much power the government has over the people of Airstrip One. In Nineteen Eighty Four it's people do not necessarily have a sole purpose - they have to follow the laws but nothing too conforming. Whereas, in the Handmaid's Tale the women have a sole purpose - to breed.

Both Russell and Hines delve into the varying world of friendship as they present it as a form of escapism within their literature. Hines once stated "I thought I would like to show that these kids can do something which is in fact very skillful - not the old tale about them being cobblers and joiners, but something that means they have to get books out of the library." Through this friendship Hines was making a point about working class children showing that they don't necessarily fall in to the typical. Within his novel Kes, his protagonist Billy forms a friendship with his hawk because he doesn't feel he fits in with any of the other students at school. He mentions how people would say "Look, there's Billy Casper there w/ his pet hawk. I could shout at 'em; it's not a pet, Sir, hawks are not pets." The noun "pet" suggests that Billy has more than just a friend in his hawk. He has a companion, something to work on and focus on. He was able to train Kes and care for it. It was his escapism from the hate in the world that he was forced to endure. The hawk was injured, and Billy nursed it back to life, perhaps a metaphor of Billy's true potential. If he were to be nursed, taken care of properly then he would be able to fly again, able to escape the trapping claws of the working class 'stereotype' that society has placed upon him. Russell presents a similar escapism with the friendship of Mickey and Eddie. Mickey and Eddie were never supposed to cross paths, split at birth because of societies money grabbing nature, the two lived very different lives and yet they were able to find common ground, friendship. In a trance of excitement Mickey asks "Ey, we were born on the same day ... that means we can be blood brothers. Do you wanna be my blood brother Eddie?". Adolescence allows them to be blind and not acknowledge the issue of a class divide. They are free to be friends and cling on to every happiness. The 1960s saw the emergence of 'youth culture'. Teenagers became a recognised age group, for the first time and it was accepted that young people had their own culture and ways of behaving. Both novels share this wider contextual feature and while Mickey and Eddie find happiness and friendship in each other and Billy finds happiness and friendship with his bird, both allow the characters to be free in their own personalities, not conformed to society's 'ideal'.

Exam board: OCR

Exam specifics :

The course is comprised of 2 examined and one non-examined unit.

H472/01- 2 hour 30 minutes Drama and Poetry pre 1900

**H472/02- 2 hour 30 minutes Comparative and Contextual
Study**

**H472/03- non-examined Literature post 1900 Independent
Study**



Entry requirements

English Literature- Grade 6 or above

English Language- Grade 6 or above

Applicants with a Grade 5 in one of the above may be considered for the course subject to interview.

Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy-Sixth Form



Career pathway link





**Thank you for visiting our subject.
If you have any questions, please contact**

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