

English Literature

Year 11 into year 12 Transition work

Welcome to the “A” Level English Literature course.

Throughout the two years of this course you will read – **a lot**.

You will read many texts covering different genres, topics and time periods. So the pre-requisite is that you enjoy reading!

The purpose of the course, other than to enjoy reading classic texts written by great writers, is to develop your own critical skills – *why are these such great texts? Why are the writers so admired? What makes a successful writer?*

“Excellent Foppery – Comedy in Shakespeare’s Tragedies”

- Attached is a copy of a booklet “**Making the Leap**”
- Read the articles it contains.
- Read and annotate “*Excellent Foppery – Comedy in Shakespeare’s Tragedies*”. Focus particularly on the references to “**King Lear**”.
- Research the nature of “**Tragedy**” in its most general form.
- Conduct some research into Shakespeare’s tragedies, again with the focus upon “**King Lear**”.
- Now narrow down your focus to “**King Lear**” explicitly. Gain a good understanding of the play (see next slide)

King Lear: Areas for Focus

- The shifting sympathy we feel for the characters as they progress through the play. (At any point in the play you need to be able to explain how you feel about the individual characters, and why – it will change)
- The justice and injustice of each characters fate
- The nature of Lear's tragedy
- The way the subplot of Gloucester and his sons gives dramatic support to the story of Lear and his daughters.
- The role of the Fool
- The symbolism of blindness and sight
- The relevance of the Gods
- The conflicting views of nature held by the characters
- The significance of the key word "Nothing"

“As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport”

Shakespeare: King Lear Act 4 sc1

These are the words spoken by the Earl of Gloucester as he wanders over the heath.

Have a go at this task.

“As flies to wanton boys, they kill us for their sport” How far do you agree with this statement?

You can approach this from any angle – at this stage, the process is more important than the outcome.