

A Level English Literature: Preparation Tasks 2020

Please complete the three tasks and have them ready for your first Advanced Level English Literature lesson in the autumn term!

Task 1: read the following poem by Phillip Larkin and complete the activities that follow.

An Arundel Tomb

By Philip Larkin

Side by side, their faces blurred,
The earl and countess lie in stone,
Their proper habits vaguely shown
As jointed armour, stiffened pleat,
And that faint hint of the absurd -
The little dogs under their feet.

Such plainness of the pre-baroque
Hardly involves the eye, until
It meets his left-hand gauntlet, still
Clasped empty in the other; and
One sees, with a sharp tender shock,
His hand withdrawn, holding her hand.

They would not think to lie so long.
Such faithfulness in effigy
Was just a detail friends would see:
A sculptor's sweet commissioned grace
Thrown off in helping to prolong
The Latin names around the base.

They would no guess how early in
Their supine stationary voyage
The air would change to soundless damage,
Turn the old tenantry away;
How soon succeeding eyes begin
To look, not read. Rigidly they

Persisted, linked, through lengths and breadths
Of time. Snow fell, undated. Light
Each summer thronged the grass. A bright

Litter of birdcalls strewed the same
Bone-littered ground. And up the paths
The endless altered people came,

Washing at their identity.
Now, helpless in the hollow of
An unarmorial age, a trough
Of smoke in slow suspended skeins
Above their scrap of history,
Only an attitude remains:

Time has transfigures them into
Untruth. The stone fidelity
They hardly meant has come to be
Their final blazon, and to prove
Our almost-instinct almost true:
What will survive of us is love.

Task One: Poetry Research Task

1. Research task: why did Larkin write this poem?
2. Research task: what was **The Movement** and what views did its members hold about poetry?
3. Find and read two other poems by Larkin: can you see any common themes, ideas or images that he often uses?
4. Annotate the poem for language, structure and ideas. Ensure you identify how the theme of love is explored and developed in the poem.
5. Is the poem just about a tomb? What might the real meanings be?
6. Create a PowerPoint presentation to show your findings.

Suggested Websites:

These two may prove useful but use your research skills to find other material too:

<https://www.litcharts.com/poetry/philip-larkin/an-arundel-tomb>

<https://poemanalysis.com/philip-larkin/an-arundel-tomb>

Task Two: Tragedy Research Task

During the course, you will study two tragic plays: the Shakespeare classic *Othello* and Tennessee Williams' modern American tragedy, *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

To prepare for this, use the internet and the recommended texts below to research *tragedy* and its history. Use your research to create a 3-4 page booklet about tragedy. You have the freedom to lay out your work in a way that is useful to you.

Useful Research Resources:

1) *The British Library*

The British Library's website is a treasure trove of information and they have a huge number of articles and resources on tragedy:

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/themes/tragedies>

2) *The RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company)*

The RSC have lots of information about Shakespeare's tragedies on their website:

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-plays/tragedies-comedies-histories>

If possible, we also highly recommend seeing an online performance of the play *Othello* as it will also help you understand the original dramatic context of Shakespeare's plays.

Task Three: Literary Movements Research Task

Research the following literary movements:

- The Renaissance
- Neo-Classical
- The Romantic
- Victorian
- Modernist
- Post-Modernist

Create a short presentation that informs the reader about how each movement shaped English literature.

Suggested Websites:

<https://crossref-it.info>

<https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature>