

English Language and Literature  
Introduction to A-level  
Bridging Unit



The following tasks will help you to prepare for some of the work you will undertake as part of your English Language and Literature A-level. During Year 12, you will have the opportunity to study a range of both fiction and non-fiction texts. Your studies will allow you to develop your analytical skills and result in a mature appreciation of the power of language.

**Task 1**

For one of your A-level exam units, you will be required to study a collection of non-fiction texts in the form of an anthology. All of the texts in the anthology are about Paris. Read the information about one of the anthology texts below and complete the task. Refer to the extract at the end of the booklet.

*The extract is from a book entitled **From Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe** by Bill Bryson. Bill Bryson is an American author who has written a number of travel memoirs, as well as popular books on science and languages. **Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe** tells the story of his journey through Europe in 1990. The chapter on Paris includes memories of an earlier trip he made to the city in the 1970s.*

What impression of Paris is conveyed in this extract? How does Bryson use language to convey this impression?

Your response should be at least 300 words.

**Task 2**

During Year 12, you will also study a collection of poetry. The collection chosen will depend on your English teacher. Use the copy of '**Never Go Back**' by **Carol Ann Duffy** at the end of this booklet to complete the task below.

Produce an analytical summary of the poem, using the following bullet points to structure your answer:

- Explain briefly what you think the poem is about;
- Comment on the attitudes and emotions of the speaker and how these are revealed through the use of language;
- Discuss any particular images, words or phrases you believe to be significant in illuminating your interpretation of the poem;
- Comment on what you think is the overall message of the poem.
- Your response should be at least 500 words.

### **Task 3**

To ensure you can meet the demands of studying English Language and Literature at A-Level, you must read widely. Choose one text from the list below (not one you will study for A-level) to read for pleasure over the summer holiday.

- 'The Catcher in the Rye' - J.D. Salinger
- 'The Great Gatsby' by F.Scott Fitzgerald
- 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime' by Mark Haddon
- 'Rebecca' by Daphne Du Maurier
- 'Paddy Clarke, Ha ha ha' by Roddy Doyle
- 'Beloved' by Toni Morrison
- 'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Bronte

We hope you enjoy a restful break after your GCSE examinations, and return to us in September enthusiastic and excited about embarking on your A-level studies! We look forward to seeing you.

If you have any questions or concerns about English Language and Literature A-level, please see **Mrs Sullivan**.

### **Texts for Tasks 1 and 2**

#### **Task 1 From Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe** by Bill Bryson.

In the morning I got up early and went for a long walk through the sleeping streets. I love to watch cities waking up, and Paris wakes up more abruptly, more startlingly, than any place I know. One minute you have the city to yourself: it's just you and a guy delivering crates of bread, and a couple of droning street-cleaning machines. (It might be worth noting here that Paris spends £58 a year a head on street-cleaning compared with £17 a head in London, which explains why Paris gleams and London is a toilet.) Then all at once it's frantic: cars and buses swishing past in sudden abundance, cafes and kiosks opening, people flying out of Metro stations like flocks of startled birds, movement everywhere, thousands and thousands of pairs of hurrying legs.

By half-past eight Paris is a terrible place for walking. There's too much traffic. A blue haze of uncombusted diesel hangs over every boulevard. I know BaronHausmann made Paris a grand place to look at, but the man had no concept of traffic flow. At the Arc de Triomphe alone thirteen roads come together. Can you imagine that? I mean to say, here you have a city with the world's most pathologically aggressive drivers – drivers who in other circumstances would be given injections of thiorazine from syringes the size of bicycle pumps and confined to their beds with leather straps – and you give them an open space where they can all try and go in any of thirteen directions at once. Is that asking for trouble or what?

**Task 2 Never Go Back** by Carol Ann Duffy

In the bar where the living dead drink all day  
and a jukebox reminisces in a cracked voice  
there is nothing to say. You talk for hours  
in agreed motifs, anecdotes shuffled and dealt  
from a well-thumbed pack, snapshots. The smoky mirrors  
flatter; your ghost buys a round for the parched,  
old faces of the past. Never return  
to the space where you left time pining till it died.

Outside, the streets tear litter in their thin hands,  
a tired wind whistles through the blackened stumps of houses  
at a limping dog. God, this is an awful place  
says the friend, the alcoholic, whose head is a negative  
of itself. You listen and nod, bereaved. Baby,  
what you owe to this place is unpayable  
in the only currency you have. So drink up. Shut up,  
then get them in again. Again. And never go back.

The house where you were one of the brides  
has cancer. It prefers to be left alone  
nursing its growth and cracks, each groan and creak  
accusing as you climb the stairs to the bedroom  
and draw your loved body on blurred air  
with the simple power of loss. All the lies  
told here, and all the cries of love,  
suddenly swarm in the room, sting you, disappear.

You shouldn't be here. You follow your shadow  
through the house, discover that objects held  
in the hands can fill a room with pain.  
You lived here only to stand here now  
and half-believe that you did. A small moment  
of death by a window myopic with rain.  
You learn this lesson hard, speechless, slamming  
the front door, shaking plaster confetti from your hair.

A taxi implying a hearse takes you slowly,  
the long way round, to the station. The driver  
looks like death. The places you knew  
have changed their names by neon, cheap tricks  
in a theme-park with no name. Sly sums of money  
wink at you in the cab. At a red light,  
you wipe a slick of cold sweat from the glass  
for a drenched whore to stare you full in the face.

*Turn over*

You pay to get out, pass the Welcome To sign  
on the way to the barrier, an emigrant  
for the last time. The train sighs  
and pulls you away, rewinding the city like a film,  
snapping it off at the river. You go for a drink,  
released by a journey into nowhere, nowhen,  
and all the way home you forget. Forget. Already  
the fires and lights come on wherever you live.

**Useful terminology – write a definition for each**

**Word classes**

Noun  
Verb  
Adverb  
Adjective  
Pronoun

**Imagery**

Simile  
Metaphor  
Personification

**Sentence types**

Simple  
Compound  
Complex  
Imperative  
Declarative  
Interrogative  
Exclamatory

**Phonological techniques**

Alliteration  
Assonance  
Cacophony  
Sibilance  
Onomatopoeia

**Rhetorical devices**

Antithesis  
Rhetorical question  
Triplet  
Hyperbole  
Parallelism