

English Literature 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 Literature A-level. During Year 12, you will have the opportunity to study a variety of literary texts. Your studies will allow you to develop your analytical skills and result in a mature appreciation of the writer's ability to craft engaging, thought-provoking stories.

Task 1

For one of your A-level exam units, you will be required to study two novels in full for an essay question, as well as arrange of literary extracts to prepare you for the unseen prose question. Read the information about the novel **Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier** below (one of the possible set texts) and complete the task. Refer to the extract at the end of the booklet.

Rebecca begins with the sentence, "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." The heroine, dreaming, sees herself as a ghost, flitting through the charred ruins of the once-beautiful mansion Manderley, where she once lived. When she awakes, she resolves not to speak of the dream, for "Manderley was ours no longer. Manderley was no more." The only person to whom she could speak of it, we realize shortly, is her husband, whose name we have not yet learned. Together, the couple is traveling through Europe, staying in small hotels to avoid meeting people they both know. They have recently been through a period of great suffering, connected to the destruction of Manderley, but the heroine does not reveal the nature of their predicament.

What impression of Manderley is conveyed in this extract? How does the writer 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 **'Sonnet 116' by William Shakespeare** 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. Read **Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy** and *one other* from the list below over the summer holiday:

- Jane Austen **Persuasion**
- Charlotte Brontë **Jane Eyre**
- Emily Brontë **Wuthering Heights**
- Jonathan Coe **The Rotters' Club**
- George Eliot **The Mill on the Floss**
- F. Scott Fitzgerald **The Great Gatsby**
- E.M. Forster **A Room with a View**
- L.P. Hartley **The Go-Between**
- Daphne Du Maurier **Rebecca**

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 Literature A-level, please see **Mrs Sullivan**.

Texts for Tasks 1 and 2

Task 1 From Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier.

Last night I dreamed I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me that I was passing through the iron gates that led to the driveway. The drive was just a narrow track now, its stony surface covered with grass and weeds. Sometimes, when I thought I had lost it, it would appear again, beneath a fallen tree or beyond a muddy pool formed by the winter rains. The trees had thrown out new low branches which stretched across my way. I came to the house suddenly, and stood there with my heart beating fast and tears filling my eyes.

There was Manderley, our Manderley, secret and silent as it had always been, the grey stone shining in the moonlight of my dream. Time could not spoil the beauty of those walls, nor of the place itself, as it lay like a jewel in the hollow of a hand. The grass sloped down towards the sea, which was a sheet of silver lying calm under the moon, like a lake undisturbed by wind or storm. I turned again to the house, and I saw that the garden had run wild, just as the woods had done. Weeds were everywhere. But moonlight can play strange tricks with the imagination, even with a dreamer's imagination. As I stood there, I could swear that the house was not an empty shell, but lived and breathed as it had lived before. Light came from the windows, the curtains blew softly in the night air, and there, in the library, the door stood half open as we had left it, with my handkerchief on the table beside the bowl of autumn flowers.

Task 2 Sonnet 116 by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Useful terminology

Word classes

Noun
Verb
Adverb
Adjective
Pronoun

Rhetorical devices

Antithesis
Rhetorical question
Triplet
Hyperbole
Parallelism

Imagery

Simile
Metaphor
Personification

Sentence types

Simple
Compound
Complex
Imperative
Declarative
Interrogative
Exclamatory

Phonological techniques

Alliteration
Assonance
Cacophony
Sibilance
Onomatopoeia