

Moving on day pack

Summer 2017

Name:

Welcome to A Level English Literature



This pack contains:

Today's Task

Course information

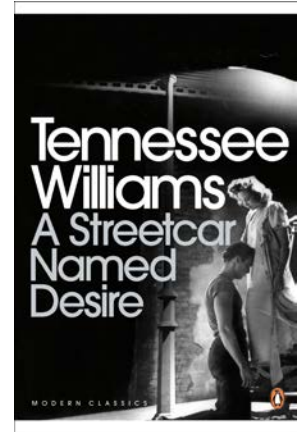
Holiday work

BHASVIC ENGLISH DEPARTMENT 2017

CLASS DISCUSSION:

Look at the plot ingredients of Scene One of *A Streetcar Named Desire*:

- A younger sister
- An unexpected visit from an older sister
- The husband of the younger sister
- A one-bedroomed flat
- A bottle of whisky
- A confession
- A secret
- A game of bowls
- The music of the 'blue piano' from a nearby jazz bar



Can you predict any conflicts and themes from this list?

Now talk about 'the playness of plays' - what can the playwright (Tennessee Williams) use in order to convey his plot to the audience? *(These terms will help you to begin to collate your own glossary of literary terms required on the course)*

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Read the brief extracts from the opening of *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- Highlight words and phrases which help to create the setting and atmosphere
- Highlight words and phrases which help to create characters (and relationships)
- What themes and conflicts are introduced?
- What 'ingredients' of plays can you see here?



Extracts from Scene One

The exterior of a two-storey corner building on a street in New Orleans which is named Elysian Fields and runs between the L & N tracks and the river. The section is poor but, unlike corresponding sections in other American cities, it has a raffish charm. The houses are mostly white frame, weathered grey, with rickety outside stairs and galleries and quaintly ornamented gables. This building contains two flats, upstairs and down. Faded white stairs ascend to the entrances of both. It is first dark of an evening early in May. The sky that shows around the dim white building is a peculiarly tender blue, almost turquoise, which invests the scene with a kind of lyricism and gracefully attenuates the atmosphere of decay. [...] In this part of New Orleans you are practically always just around the corner, or a few doors down the street, from a tinny piano [...] This 'blue piano' expresses the spirit of the life which goes on here.

[...]

Two men come round the corner, STANLEY KOWALSKI and MITCH. They are about twenty-eight or thirty years old, roughly dressed in blue denim work clothes. STANLEY carries his bowling jacket and a red-stained package from a butcher's [...] They stop at the foot of the steps.

STANLEY *[bellowing]*: Hey, there! Stella, Baby!

STELLA comes out on the first-floor landing, a gentle young woman, about twenty-five, and of a background obviously quite different from her husband's.

STELLA *[mildly]*: Don't holler at me like that. Hi, Mitch.

STANLEY: Catch!

STELLA: What?

STANLEY: Meat!

He heaves the package at her. She cried out in protest but manages to catch it: then she laughs breathlessly. Her husband and his companion have already started back around the corner.

[...]

BLANCHE comes around the corner, carrying a valise. She looks at a slip of paper, then at the building, then again at the slip and again at the building. Her expression is one of shocked disbelief. Her appearance is incongruous to this setting. She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and ear-rings of pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a summer tea or cocktail party in the garden district. She is about five years older than STELLA. Her delicate beauty must avoid a strong light. There is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes, that suggests a moth.



A Level English Literature: The course at a glance

Component 1: Poetry

Written examination: 2 hours

30% of the qualification

You will answer **one** question from two sections. Section A will be in 2 parts. You will have a choice between 2 questions in Section B

Section A: The Poetry of John Donne

Section B: The Poetry of Thomas Hardy & T S Eliot

Component 2: Drama

Written examination: 2 hours

30% of the qualification

You will answer **one** question from two sections. Section A will be in 2 parts. You will have a choice between 2 questions in Section B

Section A: *King Lear*

Section B: *The Duchess of Malfi* & *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Component 3: Unseen texts

Written Examination: 2 hours

20% of the qualification

You will answer one question from each section. Section A has one question. You will have a choice between 2 questions in Section B.

Section A: Unseen Prose Analysis

Section B: Unseen Poetry Analysis

Component 4: Prose Study

Coursework essay of between 2500 – 3000 words

20% of the examination

You will study a 21st century prose text and compare it to a pre-21st century prose text chosen from a list. **The essay is completed in your own time**

Holiday Homework

Please complete the following tasks and bring this pack to **YOUR FIRST ENGLISH LITERATURE LESSON** next term where your teacher will check the work has been done.

Checklist

1. Buy and read *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, published by Penguin Modern Classics, ISBN: 9780141190273
2. Buy *The Duchess of Malfi*, by John Webster, published by Bloomsbury Methuen, ISBN: 9781472520654
3. Complete the tasks (A – E) outlined below on *A Streetcar Named Desire*
4. Buy a small notebook to use as your own literary glossary and enter the key terms encountered today. Bring this to every lesson next year. A small address book works well as this is arranged alphabetically
5. Finally, read some books this summer - we've included a list at the end of this booklet of books (old and modern) we think you might enjoy!

A. Buy and read *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

The action the play is set within the French Quarter of New Orleans in Louisiana, one of the 'Deep South' states of America. It is set soon after the end of World War 2, around the same time it was written in 1946-7. New Orleans had a diverse, often immigrant population; it was a city with liberal values and morals, the home of jazz music. Unseen but referred to throughout the play is another setting - Mississippi and the 'Deep South', a name which stands not simply for a geographical location but also for a set of values and a way of life. This 'South' is a place looking backwards to a period when white plantation owners had made fortunes from black slave labour. Although this life no longer really existed by the 1940s, there continued to be a romantic view of both the past and its decline. New Orleans had little in common with these values and way of life and *A Streetcar Named Desire* brings together into a small one-bedroom flat the values and beliefs associated with these two very different worlds.

- B. As you read the play (and having read the information above) please complete the tasks on the last sheet of this pack on themes, characters, motifs and the set design. We recommend that you use 1 sheet per task and motif as you will be adding to these tasks once the course begins.**
- C. Having read the play, look closely at the 10 statements below on what it might be about and decide on 1 that you think is particularly useful in helping you to understand it. Write a brief paragraph in the box provided (100 – 200 words) explaining why you have chosen this view of the play.**

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Consider your response to the following one-sentence statements about the play (look up any terms you are unsure about). Select ONE statement you find most helpful and write a brief paragraph explaining your reasoning.

The play is:

- i. An overwrought melodrama not a tragedy.
- ii. A play about class.
- iii. A play dramatising clashing beliefs and ideologies.

- iv. A criticism of the old South, showing it to be based on a lie and a celebration of new cosmopolitan way of life.
- v. The tragedy of a flawed and fragile individual.
- vi. A grittily realistic play exploiting theatrical and dramatic devices in order to express this fully.
- vii. A domestic tragedy dramatising conflict within families.
- viii. A play that explores the power of the imagination for good and bad, in both its themes and the form of the play.
- ix. A play that pits masculinity and femininity against each other.
- x. A play with sexuality and sexual desire at its heart.

Write your paragraph outlining the reasons for your choice below:

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D. Buy a notebook, sort the pages alphabetically and enter the literary terms encountered in today's session, with brief definitions of each one. (The terms are: antagonist, asides, dialogue, dramatic irony, protagonist, soliloquy, stage directions)

E. Finally, we expect our Literature students to enjoy reading widely - for the course and for pleasure. Make sure you read books this summer. Below is a list of books we think you might enjoy – some come from periods of literature you will encounter on the course; others are books we've enjoyed and would recommend. **Read at least one of them (or one(s) of your own choice).** We've included a brief blurb of each one to help you choose something you feel you would like to read. Enjoy it – and if you don't, then choose something else! **Whatever you read, be prepared to talk about the book(s) in your first lesson next term. (Use your local library to access these books)**

Books we've enjoyed:

***Himself* - Jess Kidd**

"Diabolical deeds, ferociously kept secrets, black humour and magical realism abound in Jess Kidd's richly textured, thronging debut . . . Kidd



has imagination to die for and a real command of plot and character." (Guardian)

***Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* - Jeanette Winterson**

This is the story of Jeanette, adopted and brought up by a woman who decides her daughter is destined for life as a missionary, but then she falls for one of her converts. "A novel that deserves revisiting...Winterson maintains a balance of tone, a trueness of voice... It remains one of the finest things Winterson has written." (Observer)

***The Great Gatsby* – F Scott Fitzgerald**

Through the narration of Nick Carraway, the reader is taken into the superficially glittering world of the mansions which lined the Long Island shore in the 1920s, to encounter Nick's cousin Daisy, her brash but wealthy husband Tom Buchanan, Jay Gatsby and the mystery that surrounds him.

***A Handful of Dust* – Evelyn Waugh**

After seven years of marriage, the beautiful Lady Brenda Last is bored with life at Hetton Abbey, the Gothic mansion that is the pride and joy of her husband, Tony. She drifts into an affair with the shallow socialite John Beaver and forsakes Tony for the Belgravia set. Brilliantly combining tragedy, comedy and savage irony, *A Handful of Dust* captures the irresponsible mood of the 'crazy and sterile generation' between the wars.

***The Road to Wigan Pier* – George Orwell**

A searing account of George Orwell's observations of working-class life in the bleak industrial heartlands of Yorkshire and Lancashire in the 1930s, *The Road to Wigan Pier* is a brilliant and bitter polemic that has lost none of its political impact over time. It remains a powerful portrait of poverty, injustice and class divisions in Britain.

***The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood**

The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one function: to breed. If she deviates, she will, like dissenters, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire - neither Offred's nor that of the two men on which her future hangs.

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***The Essex Serpent* – Sarah Perry**

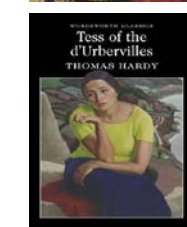
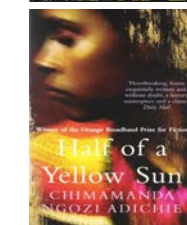
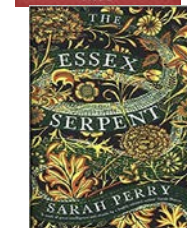
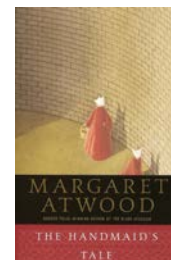
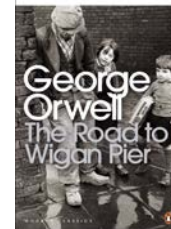
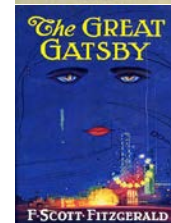
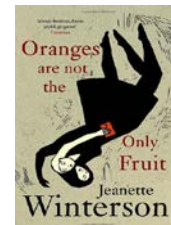
London, 1893. When Cora Seaborne's controlling husband dies, she steps into her new life as a widow with as much relief as sadness. Along with her son Francis - a curious, obsessive boy - she leaves town for Essex, in the hope that fresh air and open space will provide refuge. *The Essex Serpent* is a celebration of love, and the many different shapes it can take.

***Half of a Yellow Sun* – Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's masterpiece, winner of the Orange Prize for Fiction, is a novel about Africa in a broad sense: about the end of colonialism, ethnic allegiances, class and race – and about the ways in which love can complicate all of these things.

***Tess of the d'Urbervilles* – Thomas Hardy**

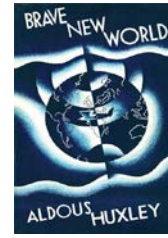
Tess is a moving novel of hypocrisy and double standards. It explores Tess's relationships with two very different men, her struggle against the social mores of the rural Victorian world which she inhabits and the hypocrisy of the age.



Brave New World – Aldous Huxley

Far in the future, the World Controllers have created the ideal society. Through clever use of genetic engineering, brainwashing and recreational sex and drugs all its members are happy consumers. Bernard Marx seems alone harbouring an ill-defined longing to break free. 'A masterpiece of speculation... As vibrant, fresh, and somehow shocking as it was when I first read it.'

(Margaret Atwood)



As you read *A Streetcar Named Desire*, record your impressions of the following aspects of the play (use a page per section/motif as you will be adding to these next term):

Make a list of key themes and concerns evident in the play

Choose **5** key quotations from across the play for **Blanche** and **5** for **Stella** (these can also be stage directions/costume and so on). Your choices should reflect what you think are important aspects of the characters.

<p>Make brief notes about what you think is the significance of each of the following motifs in the play (a motif is a recurring symbol)</p> <p>Bathing</p> <p>Light</p> <p>The polka</p> <p>The telephone</p> <p>The streetcar</p> <p>Colour imagery</p> <p>Blanche's trunk</p>	<p>Choose 5 key quotations for Stanley and 5 for Mitch (these can also be stage directions/costume and so on). Your choices should reflect what you think are important aspects of the characters.</p>