

English Literature A-Level Transition Tasks

TASK 1

Create a detailed literary timeline, chronicling the following literary periods:

- Classical
- Old English / Medieval
- Renaissance
- Enlightenment
- Romantic
- Gothic
- Victorian
- Modernism
- Post-modernism

For each period, find out the following:

- What, specifically, characterized this period in Literature? i.e. The Victorian period refers (mostly) to literature written during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). It is largely characterized by the struggle of working people and the triumph of "right" over "wrong". It is also often concerned with...

- Which writers were particularly prominent during this period? Is there anything interesting to be mentioned about these writers/texts? What were the most important texts written during this period? (And what were they about?) i.e. The Renaissance period was dominated by the works of Early-Modern playwright William Shakespeare who wrote plays such as 'Macbeth' and 'Othello'...

- Did any interesting historical/social/political events occur at the time which might have impacted the literature produced at this time? i.e. Shakespeare's writing reflects society's anxiety about a fear on invasion - perhaps as a consequence of The Spanish Armada's threat of attack in 1588. As Queen Elizabeth did not have an heir - and as there was not a clear successor to her throne - people feared that a "foreigner" would come and take the English throne. Your timeline can be produced in any format that you like; we would encourage you to be creative!

Useful resources which may help:

English Literature: Literary Periods and Genres

<https://mc.libguides.com/eng/literaryperiods>

The Literature Network - <http://www.online-literature.com/periods/>

Introduction to the literary Canon - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEUR8-r-n7Q>

TASK 2

Read '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-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring 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.

Write one side of A4 answering the question: *How does Shakespeare present love in this poem?*

TASK 3:

Watch the A&E Video Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vT1MrFW_EGo

Questions for A&E Video Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald

1. How did the failures of F. Scott's father affect his life and attitudes?
2. Why are the 1920s known as the "Roaring Twenties." What made this decade so different from the decade before or after it?
3. How did the "Jazz Age," a moniker Fitzgerald coined, provide a climate favorable to his work?
4. Although he attended the finest schools, Fitzgerald came from a modest background. How did he use his budding literary talents to gain social acceptance during his schooldays?
5. Zelda Fitzgerald was the quintessential "Southern belle" during her youth. What is a "Southern belle?" How does it reflect cultural differences between the northern and southern regions of the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries?
6. How was Fitzgerald a spokesperson for his generation? Can you compare him with any celebrity today who is a spokesperson for his/her generation?
7. Although Ernest Hemingway and Fitzgerald were friends, why was there a jealous tension between them? Had they collaborated, how could they have used their jealousy to create a great work?
8. The "Roaring Twenties" gave way to the Great Depression of the 1930s. How did F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald's lives mirror the historical timeline of their era?
9. How did Fitzgerald draw on his own life experiences to create his characters and plot lines?
10. How did alcoholism play a role in the destruction of Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald's lives?

Watch a film production of *The Great Gatsby*

Read Chapter 1 of *The Great Gatsby*: <https://americanliterature.com/author/f-scott-fitzgerald/book/the-great-gatsby/chapter-1>

1. What does the narrator's dad mean when he says, "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had"?
2. Describe the differences between East and West Egg, and between Nick Carraway (the narrator) and his neighbors. How does Nick fit into this world?
3. How does Nick know Tom and Daisy Buchanan?
4. Describe Tom Buchanan, both in his physical attributes, and his personality.
5. What is your impression of Daisy? How is she described?
6. What kind of discussions do the Buchanans and Jordan Baker have? What does that tell us about them?
7. What does Jordan tell Nick about the Buchanan's marriage?
8. Daisy tells Nick "I'm pretty cynical about everything." Define CYNICAL:
9. At the end of Chapter 1, who do we see for the first time?