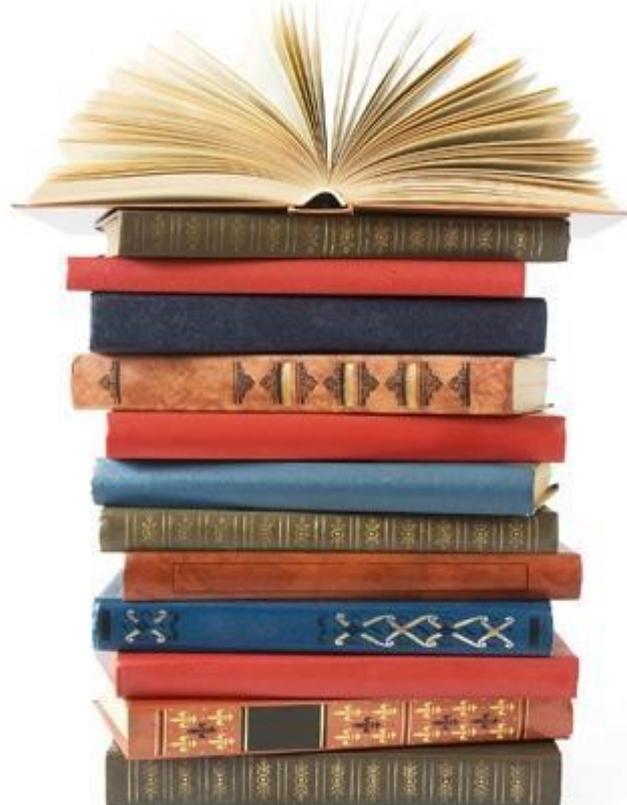


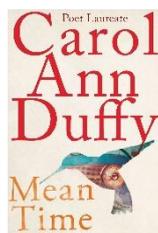


Approaching A-Level English Literature Induction Booklet

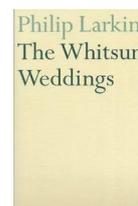


If you are studying English Literature A-Level at CLCC, you will need to purchase the following texts before the start of year 12:

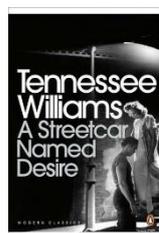
Carol Ann Duffy
Mean Time
(Picador)



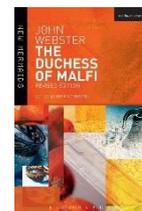
Philip Larkin
The Whitsun Weddings
(Faber)



Tennessee Williams
A Streetcar Named Desire
(Penguin Modern Classics)

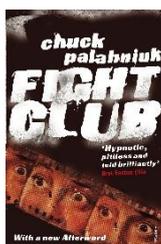


John Webster
The Duchess of Malfi
(Methuen)

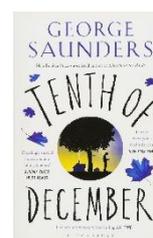


You will also study these texts later in year 12 and in year 13. You do not necessarily need to purchase these straight away:

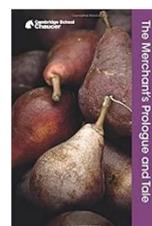
Chuck Palahniuk
Fight Club



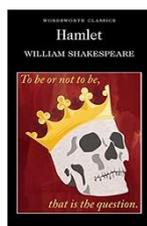
George Saunders
Tenth of December

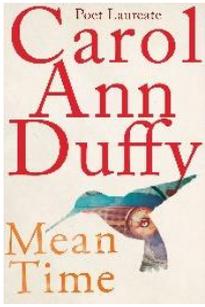


Geoffrey Chaucer
The Merchant's Prologue and Tale (Cambridge)

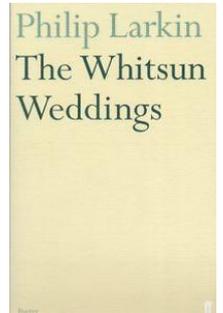


William Shakespeare
Hamlet





Component 1: Poetry



Mean Time (1993) and The Whitsun Weddings (1964)

Component 1B: Comparative Poetry (open-book) 1 hour

Paired texts: *Mean Time by Carol Ann Duffy and The Whitsun Weddings by Philip Larkin*

In this unit of the induction pack, you will be starting your study of these two fantastic poetry anthologies. You will look at individual poems and compare similarities and differences between the poets' work.

Learners will need to demonstrate their ability to:

- analyse how meanings are shaped in poetry anthologies
- show understanding of the cultural and contextual influences on readers and writers
- use accurately a range of literary concepts and terminology, including knowledge of the principles and conventions of poetry.
- reflect on different interpretations of literary texts, including, where relevant, critical interpretation; debate alternative ideas about a text and consider multiple readings
- identify and consider how attitudes and values are expressed in texts
- organise responses in a clear and effective academic style and register with coherent written expression
- explore productive connections and contrasts between poems from different periods
- use accurately quotations and references to texts and sources.

As you read the poems, you need to be thinking about:

- the key themes and ideas being explored;
- characterisation;
- context;
- language, imagery and symbolism;
- poetic structure and devices;
- how other readers (critics, directors or audiences) might interpret the poem.

POETRY TASK 1:

Get to grips with a poem

'Valentine' by Carol Ann Duffy

Not a red rose or a satin heart.
I give you an onion.
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.
It promises light
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.
It will blind you with tears
like a lover.
It will make your reflection
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

I give you an onion.
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,
possessive and faithful
as we are,
for as long as we are.

Take it.
Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring,
if you like.
Lethal.
Its scent will cling to your fingers,
cling to your knife.

1. Read the poem and think about it. What are your first impressions? What mood does it create?

2. Annotate the poem for ideas and the methods the poet has used to create those ideas.

3. Research this poem. Is there else anything important in terms of context which helps with interpreting this poem?

4. This poem is a free verse dramatic monologue. Research what this means and why it is important to understanding the poem?

POETRY TASK 2:

Understanding Context

Research Carol Ann Duffy, her personal and professional life.

Create a **timeline** of her life and work and put all of your findings into an **information booklet** that you can use at a later date.



POETRY TASK 3:

Link a poem with context

'Litany' by Carol Ann Duffy

The soundtrack then was a litany – candlewick
bedspread three piece suite display cabinet -
and stiff-haired wives balanced their red smiles,
passing the catalogue. Pyrex. A tiny ladder
ran up Mrs Barr's American Tan leg, sly
like a rumour. Language embarrassed them.

The terrible marriages crackled, cellophane
round polyester shirts, and then The Lounge
would seem to bristle with eyes, hard
as the bright stones in engagement rings,
and sharp hands poised over biscuits as a word
was spelled out. An embarrassing word, broken

to bits, which tensed the air like an accident.
This was the code I learnt at my mother's knee, pretending
to read, where no one had cancer, or sex, or debts,
and certainly not leukaemia, which no one could spell.
The year a mass grave of wasps bobbed in a jam-jar;
a butterfly stammered itself in my curious hands.

A boy in the playground, I said, told me
to fuck off; and a thrilled, malicious pause
salted my tongue like an imminent storm. Then
uproar. I'm sorry, Mrs Barr, Mrs Hunt, Mrs Emery,
sorry, Mrs Raine. Yes, I can summon their names.
My mother's mute shame. The taste of soap.

1. Read and annotate the poem with your ideas – you can search online for more analysis if you would like some help – but have a go by yourself first.

2. Consider the contextual information you have found out about Duffy – what does this knowledge help you to understand about this poem?

Is this a personal poem?

Does it tell us something of Duffy's feelings as a child?

POETRY TASK 4:

Comparing to other poems/poets

Now have a look at this poem by Philip Larkin. Larkin is somewhat critical of the working class lifestyle here.

'Afternoons' by Philip Larkin

Summer is fading:
The leaves fall in ones and twos
From trees bordering
The new recreation ground.
In the hollows of afternoons
Young mothers assemble
At swing and sandpit
Setting free their children.

Behind them, at intervals,
Stand husbands in skilled trades,
An estateful of washing,
And the albums, lettered
Our Wedding, lying
Near the television:
Before them, the wind
Is ruining their courting-places

That are still courting-places
(But the lovers are all in school),
And their children, so intent on
Finding more unripe acorns,
Expect to be taken home.
Their beauty has thickened.
Something is pushing them
To the side of their own lives.

1. Read and annotate the poem with your ideas – you can search online for more analysis if you would like some help – but have a go by yourself first.

2. Larkin creates a **tableau vivant** with his description in this poem – this literally means 'living picture' (like a freeze frame where everything has a set position). Sketch out a drawing of the scene with everything in the right position.

What do you think Larkin is trying to show about working class people?

3. Explain how far you think 'Afternoons' is similar to 'Litany' in showing a lack of fitting-in and a critique of society. Use a range of quotations in your response.

'Take One Home for the Kiddies' by Philip Larkin

On shallow straw, in shadeless glass,
Huddled by empty bowls, they sleep:
No dark, no dam, no earth, no grass -
Mam, get us one of them to keep.

Living toys are something novel,
But it soon wears off somehow.
Fetch the shoebox, fetch the shovel -
Mam, we're playing funerals now.

4. Now look at this poem about keeping pets.

- What is Larkin critical of?
- Does Larkin show more empathy for humans or animals?
- Are there bigger ideas in this poem or is it just about pets?
- How does Larkin create both an accusatory and cynical tone?

POETRY TASK 5:

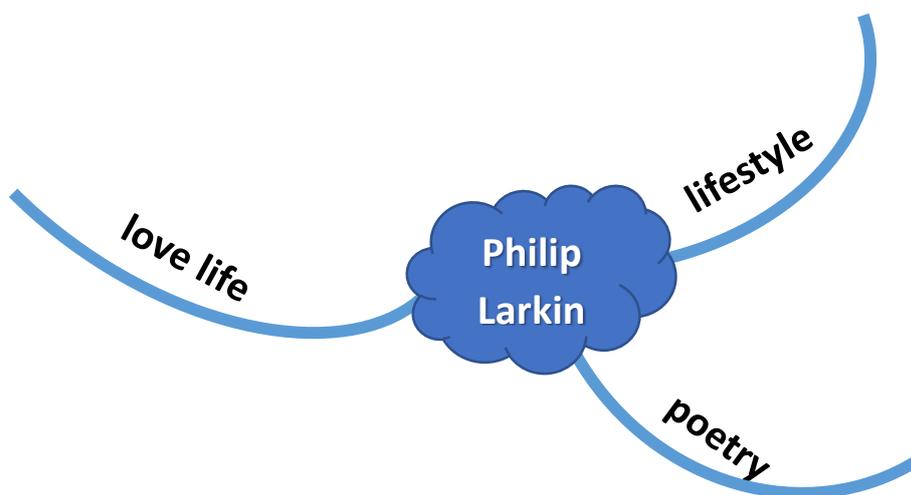
Understanding Context

Watch the documentary: 'Philip Larkin: Love and Death in Hull'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqa6L22m0rY>

Make a mind map of the things you have found out about him.

Use the headings below:



See what else you can find out about him and make a **timeline** of his life and work.

POETRY TASK 6:

Engagement with a critic

One of the main differences between English literature at GCSE and A-Level is that you need to consider other critical opinions in your a-Level responses. Consider this:

Brian Appleyard has argued that Larkin is “a hopeless and inflexible pessimist.”

Explain in 200-300 words whether or not you agree with this viewpoint. Make sure you include a range of quotations from either of Larkin’s poems in your response. Think specifically about the meaning of each of the words ‘hopeless’, ‘inflexible’ and ‘pessimist’. How and where could these apply to Larkin’s poems? – Can you also find evidence to argue against this critic?

POETRY TASK 6:

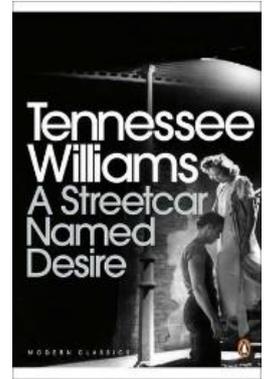
Making connections

Begin to make some connections cross the four poems. Complete this table or write out the connections you make.

Point	Idea & Quote from Duffy	Idea & Quote from Larkin
<i>The poets seem to feel like outsiders.</i>		
<i>The poets are critical of the society which they observe.</i>		
<i>The poets use natural imagery to express their opinions</i>		
Write your own:		
Write your own:		
Write your own:		

Component 2: Drama

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams (1949)



Component 2B: Comparative Drama (closed-book) 1 hour

Paired texts: *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams and *The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster

In this unit of the induction pack, you will be starting your study of a brilliant twentieth century American play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Eventually, this play will be paired with the Jacobean revenge tragedy, *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Learners will need to demonstrate their ability to:

- analyse how meanings are shaped in drama texts
- show understanding of the cultural and contextual influences on readers and writers
- use accurately a range of literary concepts and terminology, including knowledge of the principles and conventions of drama and dramatic verse
- reflect on different interpretations of literary texts, including, where relevant, critical interpretation; debate alternative ideas about a text and consider multiple readings
- identify and consider how attitudes and values are expressed in texts
- organise responses in a clear and effective academic style and register with coherent written expression
- explore productive connections and contrasts between plays from different periods
- use accurately quotations and references to texts and sources.

As you read the play, you need to be thinking about:

- the key themes and ideas being explored;
- characterisation;
- context;
- language, imagery and symbolism;
- dramatic structure and devices;
- how other readers (critics, directors or audiences) might interpret the play.

DRAMA TASK 1:

Stage Directions

The exterior of a two-story 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 a turquoise, which invests the scene with a kind of **lyricism** and gracefully **attenuates** the atmosphere of decay. You can almost feel the warm breath of the brown river beyond the river warehouses with their faint **redolences** of bananas and coffee. A corresponding air is **evoked** by the music of Negro entertainers at a bar-room around the corner. 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 being played with the **infatuated** fluency of brown fingers. This "Blue Piano" expresses the spirit of the life which goes on here.

Two women, one white and one coloured, are taking the air on the steps of the building. The white woman is Eunice, who occupies the upstairs flat; the coloured woman a neighbour, for New Orleans is a **cosmopolitan** city where there is a relatively warm and easy intermingling of races in the old part of town.

1. Research the definition of the vocabulary highlighted.
2. Analyse the opening stage directions. Consider the atmosphere Williams creates and what we can infer about the setting from these details. Make at least five points, including quotation for each.



Can you analyse language use within each point –using terminology if possible?
Example:

Williams' use of the adjective 'infatuated' to describe the fingers of the piano players suggests the depth of importance music has in New Orleans and the devotion to it that musicians feel. It also gives a slightly manic quality to the description, suggesting an atmosphere of creativity but also, perhaps, obsession.

DRAMA TASK 2:

Context Research

Tennessee Williams, original name **Thomas Lanier Williams**, (born March 26, 1911, Columbus, Mississippi, U.S.—died Feb. 25, 1983, New York City): American dramatist whose plays reveal a world of human frustration in which sex and violence underlie an atmosphere of romantic gentility.

More than with most authors, Tennessee Williams' personal life and experiences have been the direct subject matter for his dramas. He uses his experiences so as to universalize them through the means of the stage.

Produce a context sheet about the life of Tennessee Williams and how his experiences, attitudes and environment influenced his plays. Look especially at his sister's experience of mental illness.

Important: Please do not simply cut and paste chunks from websites. Organise your research into sections and/or bullet points.

DRAMA TASK 3:

Scene 1 Analysis

Read the opening scene of the play, either in book form or use this PDF version online:

http://seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/MaracziGeza/Topic10_WilliamsAStreetcarNamedDesire.pdf

Answer the following questions as fully as you can. They guide you through the scene chronologically. Use **quotation and include analysis of language** as you go. You can quote stage directions as well as dialogue, just like we did with *An Inspector Calls*.

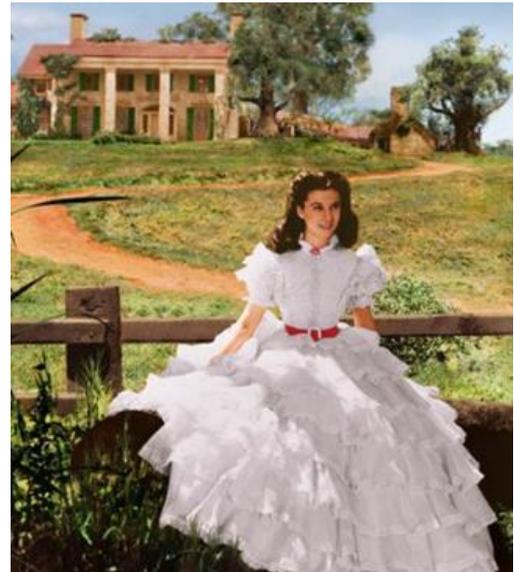
1. How is Stanley's character presented at the start of the scene? What does the stage direction "carries his bowling jacket and a red-stained package from a butcher's" suggest about his character and what he might symbolise?
2. Look at the stage directions preceding the entrance of Blanche. What does her clothing and mannerisms suggest about her? What qualities does a "moth" have and what might the comparison suggest about her?
3. Research the phrase Elysian Fields. Why might Williams have used it as the streetcar stop?
4. What do we find out about Blanche's background from her conversation with Eunice?
5. When Blanche and Stella meet, Blanche refuses to be seen in bright light. What might that suggest about her? Think about metaphorical ideas associated with bright light as well as more practical reasons.

6. How would you describe the dynamics of the sisters' relationship? Use quotation as evidence for your ideas. For example, who takes the lead in the relationship?
7. What are the signs that Blanche is "*not very well*"?
8. How does Stella describe Stanley and her feelings for him?
9. What does Blanche reveal about their family and estate at Belle Reve? How does she feel about it?
10. Describe the encounter between Blanche and Stanley at the end of the scene.

DRAMA TASK 4:

Understanding Context

The character of Blanche Dubois is often described by critics a Southern belle. The image of the Southern belle developed in the South during the **antebellum** era. It was based on the young, unmarried woman in the plantation-owning upper class of Southern society.



Antebellum era (1783–1861)

The **Antebellum era** was a period in the history of the Southern United States, from the late 18th century until the start of the American Civil War in 1861, marked by the economic growth of the South.

Watch the following clips:

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LexQPM44taM>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oO5c8AJGJBY>

Create a context poster with the title: Southern Belle. Go into detail about:

- ▶ What characteristics a Southern belle exhibits
- ▶ Attitudes and values of the Southern States in the antebellum era
- ▶ The Civil War
- ▶ What historical factors challenged or changed the American South

DRAMA TASK 7:

Writing an Essay

Analyse Williams' presentation of the relationship between Stella and Blanche in the extract below. [20 marks]

[During the pause, Blanche stares at her. She smiles at Blanche.]

BLANCHE [looking down at her glass, which shakes in her hand]: You're all I've got in the world, and you're not glad to see me!

STELLA [sincerely]: Why, Blanche, you know that's not true.

BLANCHE: No? --I'd forgotten how quiet you were.

STELLA: You never did give me a chance to say much, Blanche. So I just got in the habit of being quiet around you.

BLANCHE [vaguely]: A good habit to get into... [then, abruptly] You haven't asked me how I happened to get away from the school before the spring term ended.

STELLA: Well, I thought you'd volunteer that information--if you wanted to tell me.

BLANCHE: You thought I'd been fired?

STELLA: No, I--thought you might have--resigned...

BLANCHE: I was so exhausted by all I'd been through my--nerves broke. [Nervously tamping cigarette] I was on the verge of--lunacy, almost! So Mr. Graves--Mr. Graves is the high school superintendent--he suggested I take a leave of absence. I couldn't put all of those details into the wire... [She drinks quickly] Oh, this buzzes right through me and feels so good!

STELLA: Won't you have another?

BLANCHE: No, one's my limit.

STELLA: Sure?

BLANCHE: You haven't said a word about my appearance.

STELLA: You look just fine.

BLANCHE: God love you for a liar! Daylight never exposed so total a ruin! But you--you've put on some weight, yes, you're just as plump as a little partridge! And it's so becoming to you!

STELLA: Now, Blanche--

BLANCHE: Yes, it is, it is or I wouldn't say it! You just have to watch around the hips a little. Stand up.

STELLA: Not now.

BLANCHE: You hear me? I said stand up! [Stella complies reluctantly] You messy child, you, you've spilt something on the pretty white lace collar! About your hair--you ought to have it cut in a feather bob with your dainty features. Stella, you have a maid, don't you?

STELLA: No. With only two rooms it's--

BLANCHE: What? Two rooms, did you say?

STELLA: This one and-- [She is embarrassed.]

BLANCHE: The other one? [She laughs sharply. There is an embarrassed silence.] How quiet you are, you're so peaceful. Look how you sit there with your little hands folded like a cherub in a choir!

STELLA [uncomfortably]: I never had anything like your energy, Blanche.

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression [10]

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts [10]

Please write 2 to 3 sides, or 600-800 words. Use the PETA formula to ensure you are analysing language and techniques using terminology.

Example:

Point

From the first stage direction given here, we see that Stella is the character who tries to reassure her sister and make her feel comfortable:

Evidence

'She smiles at Blanche'

Terminology in Analysis

The simplicity and warmth of the stage direction shows that Stella wants to put her sister at her ease. The verb reveals her genuine happiness at being reunited but also her desire to make things well between the two of them and smooth over any awkwardness created by her sister's nervous energy.

Component 3: Unseen Texts

Component 3A: Unseen Prose

Component 3B: Unseen Poetry

In this unit of the induction pack, you will look at examples of poems and prose (fiction) extracts. In this exam, you are given an extract and poem that you have not seen before and you have to write an analysis of it. No comparison – just pure analysis.

In Section A (Prose), you will be asked to read an unseen extract and create a response in light of the time period it was written in. You will need to specifically build your knowledge of the inter-war period 1918-1939.

In Section B (poetry), it's all about you and the poem. No context or critics needed for this: it's just a case of analysing the poem to reveal what you think the poet is trying to achieve.

Learners will need to demonstrate their ability to:

- analyse how meanings are shaped in texts with no prior input on the text
- show understanding of the cultural and contextual influences on readers and writers (prose only)
- use accurately a range of literary concepts and terminology, including knowledge of the principles and conventions of poetry and literary prose
- identify and consider how attitudes and values are expressed in texts
- organise responses in a clear and effective academic style and register with coherent written expression
- use accurately quotations and references to texts and sources.

As you read the text, you need to be thinking about:

- the key themes and ideas being explored;
- characterisation;
- context;
- language, imagery and symbolism;
- poetic structure and devices;

UNSEEN PROSE TASK 1:

Researching context

Research the following areas online and make general notes on lined paper under the following headings. The more detail you add the better!

1. Key events in world history between 1918-1939.
2. Key events in British history between 1918 and 1939.
3. Notable writers and works of literature produced and published during the inter-war period.

UNSEEN PROSE TASK 2:

Analysing a prose extract

1. Read the extract on the following pages from Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* – it is an extract from a dystopian text written during the interwar period. It offers and insight into an imagined future.
2. Research the text online and work out a) what year it was written in b) what is the text about generally.
3. Highlight the meanings of words you are unsure of.
4. Highlight words and phrases and annotate what they suggest about the setting in the hatchery and conditioning centre.
5. Highlight words and phrases and annotate what they suggest about the atmosphere in the hatchery and conditioning centre.
6. Highlight words and phrases and annotate what they suggest about the characters and how they behave.
7. Write down any other observations you make. Be confident in your thoughts.



Can you link this text to world events in any way? Think about keeping mass control of human beings?



Write two extended paragraphs with multiple embedded quotations answering the following question. How does Huxley create a sterile and frightening image of the future? Analyse the language and structure.

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

A SQUAT grey building of only thirty-four stories. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY.

The enormous room on the ground floor faced towards the north. Cold for all the summer beyond the panes, for all the tropical heat of the room itself, a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose-flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse-coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead, a ghost. Only from the yellow barrels of the microscopes did it borrow a certain rich and living substance, lying along the polished tubes like butter, streak after luscious streak in long recession down the work tables.

"And this," said the Director opening the door, "is the Fertilizing Room."

Bent over their instruments, three hundred Fertilizers were plunged, as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning entered the room, in the scarcely breathing silence, the absent-minded, soliloquizing hum or whistle, of absorbed concentration. A troop of newly arrived students, very young, pink and callow, followed nervously, rather abjectly, at the Director's heels. Each of them carried a notebook, in which, whenever the great man spoke, he desperately scribbled. Straight from the horse's mouth. It was a rare privilege. The D. H. C. for Central London always made a point of personally conducting his new students round the various departments.

"Just to give you a general idea," he would explain to them. For of course some sort of general idea they must have, if they were to do their work intelligently—though as little of one, if they were to be good and happy members of society, as possible. For particulars, as every one knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils. Not philosophers but fret-sawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.

"To-morrow," he would add, smiling at them with a slightly menacing geniality, "you'll be settling down to serious work. You won't have time for generalities. Meanwhile ..."

Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse's mouth into the notebook. The boys scribbled like mad.

Tall and rather thin but upright, the Director advanced into the room. He had a long chin and big rather prominent teeth, just covered, when he was not talking, by his full, floridly curved lips. Old, young? Thirty? Fifty? Fifty-five? It was hard to say. And anyhow the question didn't arise; in this year of stability, A. F. 632, it didn't occur to you to ask it.

"I shall begin at the beginning," said the D.H.C. and the more zealous students recorded his intention in their notebooks: *Begin at the beginning*. "These," he waved his hand, "are the incubators." And opening an insulated door he showed them racks upon racks of numbered test-tubes. "The week's supply of ova. Kept," he explained, "at blood heat; whereas the male gametes," and here he opened another door, "they have to be kept at thirty-five instead of thirty-seven. Full blood heat sterilizes." Rams wrapped in thermogene beget no lambs.

"Still leaning against the incubators he gave them, while the pencils scurried illegibly across the pages, a brief description of the modern fertilizing process; spoke first, of course, of its surgical introduction—"the operation undergone voluntarily for the good of Society, not to mention the fact that it carries a bonus amounting to six months' salary"; continued with some account of the technique for preserving the excised ovary alive and actively developing; passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity; referred to the liquor in which the detached and ripened eggs were kept; and, leading his charges to the work tables, actually showed them how this liquor was drawn off from the test-tubes; how it was let out drop by drop onto the specially warmed slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to a porous receptacle; how (and he now took them to watch the operation) this receptacle was immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa—at a minimum concentration of one hundred thousand per cubic centimetre, he insisted; and how, after ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents re-examined; how, if any of the eggs remained unfertilized, it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; how the fertilized ova went back to the incubators; where the Alphas and Betas remained until definitely bottled; while the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bokanovsky's Process.

"Bokanovsky's Process," repeated the Director, and the students underlined the words in their little notebooks.

One egg, one embryo, one adult-normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.

"Essentially," the D.H.C. concluded, "bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding."

The pencils were busy.

He pointed. On a very slowly moving band a rack-full of test-tubes was entering a large metal box, another, rack-full was emerging. Machinery faintly purred. It took eight minutes for the tubes to go through, he told them. Eight minutes of hard X-rays being about as much as an egg can stand. A few died; of the rest, the least susceptible divided into two; most put out four buds; some eight; all were returned to the incubators, where the buds began to develop; then, after two days, were suddenly chilled, chilled and checked. Two, four, eight, the buds in their turn budded; and having budded were dosed almost to death with alcohol; consequently burgeoned again and having budded—bud out of bud out of bud—were thereafter—further arrest being generally fatal—left to develop in peace. By which time the original egg was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos— a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature. Identical twins—but not in piddling twos and threes as in the old viviparous days, when an egg would sometimes accidentally divide; actually by dozens, by scores at a time.

"Scores," the Director repeated and flung out his arms, as though he were distributing largesse. "Scores."

But one of the students was fool enough to ask where the advantage lay.

"My good boy!" The Director wheeled sharply round on him. "Can't you see? Can't you see?" He raised a hand; his expression was solemn. "Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!"

UNSEEN POETRY TASK 1:

Getting to grips with new poems

Analysing a poem you have never seen before can be a bit daunting, but it's nothing to be scared of. Everyone brings their own experiences and opinions to their interpretation, so we don't always have the same ideas, thoughts or feelings when reading a poem.

Every week, Carol Rumens selects a poem for The Guardian. Read this week's poem here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/series/poemoftheweek>

Read the analysis at the end of the poem. Consider your thoughts on it: do you agree with this analysis or did the poem give you different ideas? Is anything missing from the analysis that you think is important to the poem?

If you can, discuss this poem with another person (perhaps someone else who is taking English A-Level, or just someone at home). Do their feelings about the poem differ from yours?

Hopefully, you can see that we all see poems in our own way. As long as you can justify how you have formed your analysis of a poem, then you can't go too wrong.

UNSEEN POETRY TASK 2:

Get onto poetry!

Find a poem online that you like – it should appeal to you for some reason.

(make sure it's not too simple)

Here are some good websites for finding poems:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

<https://www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk/online-poetry>

<https://www.poemhunter.com/>

Complete detailed annotations of the poem. Look for ideas, techniques (language, form, structure), the poet's message and don't forget to try to consider different layers of meaning.

Write an analysis (like Carol Rumens) of the poem.

OPTIONAL: Share your analysis with someone else (friend/family/teacher) – do they agree with your interpretation?

UNSEEN POETRY TASK 3:

Have a go at an exam question

Analyse the following poem. Your response must include detailed discussion of how meanings are shaped in the poem.

[30 marks]

Walking in Moonlight

'Dirty old town, dirty old town' – the song reminds me
of our walk, with moonlight never so bright
on sullied scruffiness, the streets of home. My mind
skimmed forward to unbelievable old age,
to looking back. And here it is, just as I thought,
or nothing like it.

Here am I, having leapt
so many chasms, clawed back from some,
sauntered or struggled along so many roads,
stony, slushy, grassy-smooth, crazily steep,
finding nothing as unexpected as the loves
along the way, nothing as predictable
as tonight, this moonlight, this magical
sameness, this surprise, back again, everlasting.

Ruth Bidgood

UNSEEN POETRY TASK 4:

Have a go at an exam question

Analyse the following poem. Your response must include detailed discussion of how meanings are shaped in the poem.

[30 marks]

Urban Pastoral

More domestic than elegant, leaves and pigeons
Hedge the dazzle beyond. Green, dust,
A purple strutting, screen the river's march.
The walks are for pigeons and ladies
Like parched pigeons, avoiding the bench where a tramp
Rustily sleeps. The carriages in the park
Are babies' now; children make all the traffic.
Spring brightly traveling, summer half awake,
Here the afternoon city plays at being
A dream of summer's: gaiety in repose,
Lazily festive as poster holidays,
A dream. Crossed by the tramp, rousing.
On paths where sparrows edge to snatch the bread
Crumbed for the humbled pigeons, the holiday
Is broken and scattered. Yet a strong green still
Throngs the boughs; and the river, preened, goes twinkling
Past all these birds, on to the salt sea.
Babette Deutsch

That's all for now – just a taster of the exciting things we have install for you during your English literature A-Level studies.

Just keep reading...

Books
are
uniquely
portable
magic.
-Stephen King



We lose
ourselves in
books,
we find
ourselves
there too.

