

English Transition Work: Preparation



Throughout your GCSEs, in both Language and Literature, the courses have been very prescriptive: you have been told which texts you are doing: 'A Christmas Carol', 'Macbeth', 'An Inspector Calls' and an anthology of poetry. In the last of these, it was the only time when you had a choice of comparison ... 'which poem would you choose to compare ..?' Even this though was prepared – and indeed one of the most difficult, important but interesting things to do is give the reason for your comparison – it can be highly subjective. Generally, however, the approach, how best to get you successfully through the exams and assessment was very formulaic. Why? Because there are really only a limited number of questions to ask about those texts. Prepare these questions, follow these assessment objective and you will attain a creditable mark. Even in Language when the texts are unseen you are still trained how to use each and every minute in your responses to comprehension questions. Effective? Maybe ... but does it instil you with a real appreciation of English?

This subject, in its purest form, is about the human condition, so surely the studying of it should open your mind to a vast breadth of experiences and worldviews? Ultimately, it only by being well read that you can make connections between texts – but even in those few pieces of literature you have studied at GCSE, you can make thematic links between them ... because it is the humanity of the characters within them which connects them across time and space. There are those obvious ones: the similarities of the overall messages of 'A Christmas Carol' and 'An Inspector Calls' ... be kinder to one another – or else you will go to hell! And then characters, Birling and Scrooge, themes of justice and redemption or even the existential nature of Macbeth and Ozymandias! Trust me, there is a connection! Moving into sixth form, studying English, is all about independence of work and thought, wider reading, always maintaining a record of your ideas and opinions, becoming critical in both analysis but more importantly, what you like and don't like and what you have learnt.