**English Literature AS Project**

Before you start your new course with us, we would like you to undertake some independent reading and writing that will prepare you for the texts we will be enjoying together.

Please use your study time at home to read and research as widely as possible – and to use your creativity to construct the most informative and entertaining responses imaginable. We’re looking for original, insightful and stimulating work that you have enjoyed putting together and that will help new members of our Sixth Form understand these key concepts.

You may collaborate online with no more than two other people – using Teams on Office 365. You should find you are a member of 11 A Eng.

**Part One**

The History of **Comedy** – from Ancient Rome to the present day:

**An investigation into what constitutes comedy - especially in drama texts (Big Tip: Comedy does not ALWAYS make you laugh, but it will have other key ingredients.)**

**Do you know what the first joke was? Do you know when, how and why it was delivered?**

**Do you know when, how and why comic plays were first presented?**

**What characteristics do all comic dramas and situation comedies share?**

Some useful resources are available in the following places:

1. EMCS School Files/English/Year 12 Literature/Twelfth Night/EMC Comedy Terms
2. https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare
3. **English and Media Magazine (A Level student access)**

https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/e-magazine

Username: englishmartyrs

Password: stmary1

1. https://crossref-it.info/articles/category/12/drama-developments

**The Key Tasks:**

1. Present your research in an engaging, creative way. Perhaps move away from the ubiquitous PowerPoint with too many words – to one that has video links. Could you create a podcast or video a mini documentary? Could you create some kind of interactive model to display your findings? (We think you have time to make this really exciting!)
2. Using your newly acquired knowledge of what comedy is (EMCS School Files/English/Year 12 Literature/Twelfth Night/EMC Comedy Terms is particularly useful here), watch or listen to some **situation comedies (aka sitcoms).** There are many classics such as *Dad’s Army* on TV, as well as many brand new ones. On Radio 4Extra (via BBC Sounds) you will discover countless old and contemporary sitcoms. Try *Clare in the Community* – about a social worker who says all the politically correct things, but behaves terribly.
3. After you have listened/watched a few – choose **ONE** of the following activities (you may do **BOTH** if you wish)
4. Choose ONE episode of ONE situation comedy series and evaluate the extent to which this fulfils the conventions that make drama comic. You could present this as a grid, as an essay, or as a podcast or video, in both of which you could include snippets of the comedy to support your ideas.

**OR**

1. Write (and possibly perform on video or audio) your own scene from a comedy. This could be an additional scene for one of the comedies you studied – or something completely original. **You must use the comic conventions you have researched**.

**Part Two**

The History of **Fairy Tales**

**An investigation into the origins and purposes of fairy tales – from their exploration of taboo subjects for adults, through dark warnings and moral lessons for children, and way beyond Disney!**

**Do you know when and where fairy tales originated? How many are there? Do they vary across different countries – or are there common tropes?**

**Do you know their different purposes and audiences? (Tip – they were not intended for children…)**

**Do you feel their messages are appropriate for children growing up today?**

Some useful resources are available in the following places:

1. EMCS School Files/English/Year 12 Literature/The Bloody Chamber/Fairy Tale Genre
2. https://www.bl.uk/childrens-books/themes (you can also search for fairy tales on the whole of this site)
3. The resources mentioned for Part One – or just search online

**The Key Tasks:**

1. Present your research in the form of a picture book or video for children. We want you to show clearly how fairy tales have developed over time – using a combination of words and images. A timeline will help!
2. Take one story (such as ‘The Mermaid’ by Hans Christian Anderson or ‘Beauty and the Beast’) and explore how the story has been transformed in different times and countries. This should lead you to consider different genres as well. (For example, ‘Beauty and the Beast’ is transformed by Jean Cocteau in 1946 into an art film known as ‘La Belle et la Bête’ – extracts available on YouTube. Forgive it being in black and white and in French: – it takes a different view from any of the pretty Disney films, offering stunning Gothic images. Don’t forget the musical!).

Try to consider WHY this story has undergone different transformations – for example, was there a particular threat at that time? Present your findings imaginatively again – podcast? Mini documentary? PowerPoint? An essay for *The London Review of Books*?

1. After you have finished all your research, choose one of the following creative tasks:
2. Write a fairy tale relevant to today’s young people and the problems they face.

**OR**

1. Take a well-known fairy tale and transform it in some way. You may, for example, turn the roles upside down so that the stepmother is loving and her step daughter obnoxious, OR see how the story would work in a different cultural context (*Blancanieves* (2012) is a Spanish version of *Snow White* – with bullfights and flamenco dancing; the stepmother is evil!!)