

# Preparing for GCSE English!



Dear Student,

Congratulations on completing Key Stage 3! Hopefully you've enjoyed the texts and topics you've studied with us so far: from Shakespeare to Sherlock, from Dystopias to Dreams!

One thing that's certain is that the knowledge and skills you've learned over the last three years will be hugely important to your success now at GCSE.

Over the next two years you'll be preparing for not one, but two English GCSEs: English Language and English Literature.

English Literature mostly involves reading, discussing, and writing essays on various poems, plays and novels that you'll study in depth.

English Language requires you to study and answer questions on a range of fiction and non-fiction extracts, but also to write your own fiction and non-fiction too.

We will be starting with English Literature in September. To help you hit the ground running, we would like you to complete the following activities ready for the first day back.

Good luck!

## Romeo and Juliet Preparation

### Language, Form, and Structural Features

William Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, of which *Romeo and Juliet* is one. In every play, however, he makes use of the same techniques. Find definitions for each of the technical terms below, which you will need for the next task.

Once you have finished stick these in to your pink books.

<b>Language Device</b>	<b>Definition</b>
imagery	
simile	
metaphor	
personification	
alliteration	
consonance	
hard/soft consonants	
assonance	
long/short vowels	
oxymoron	
pun	
innuendo	
foreshadowing	
dramatic irony	

<b>Structural Device</b>	<b>Definition</b>
juxtaposition	
antithesis	
fragment	
simple sentence	
clause	
complex sentence	
enjambéd lines	
end-stopped lines	
long, uninterrupted lines	
short, interrupted lines	

<b>Formal Device</b>	<b>Definition</b>
sonnet	
soliloquy	
monologue	
dialogue	
prose	
blank verse	
rhymed verse	
iambic pentameter	

### **Part (a): Extract analysis**

William Shakespeare begins *Romeo and Juliet* with a prologue delivered by the Chorus, as you will see below. In it, he seeks to introduce the play:

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

#### **Tasks:**

- 1) In your pink books in bullet points, write down the title The Prologue and underneath list 5 pieces of information about the setting, characters, or plot that we are told here.
- 2) Using the list of language, form and structural devices on the first two pages, annotate the extract.
- 3) In your pink books, write an extended paragraph which answers the question: 'Explore the effect of Shakespeare's use of language and structure in the prologue'. You should use quotations in your response, and should try to make links to key themes.

### **Part (b): Whole text question**

In order to get the top marks in part (b) of the question, you will need to understand the world in which Shakespeare was writing.

This is hard, as we very often make huge generalisations about historical context: ‘in the past, people were always very religious’ etc.

To ensure you’re accurate, you need to make sure you use reliable sources, such as *Shakespeare* by Bill Bryson, or the British Library’s website: <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/themes/context>.

Using these, or other reliable sources, research the following topics, making notes in the box provided.

#### William Shakespeare’s Life

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#### Tragedy as a Genre

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