

Year 8 – Literary Heritage – English Knowledge Organiser

Expectations and content

What is this unit about and why do we teach it?

- This unit introduces students to the texts and writers that have shaped our nation's literary heritage, allowing them to experience 'classic' literature that they may have never come across. Students will also trace the origins of some of the most celebrated texts of Old and Middle English history, before researching and critiquing whether such texts are still as timely as they were in decades gone by.

Key Vocabulary taught:

- Revered
- Ephemeral
- Timeless
- Commercial
- Canonical texts

Key terminology taught:

- Ampersand
- Palindrome
- Pangram
- Creating comparisons

If your child needs support

Literary Heritage Support:

- Watch 'Why Did They Make Me Read This in High School?' on Youtube (by PBS Voices)
- Most literary classics have been turned into Hollywood blockbusters. Look up and watch some of them for a wider understanding of the context.
- Old English texts were created as a part of oral tradition - draw a storyboard of the plot in order to trace and unearth the action taking place.

Summary skills:

- If your child struggles to summarise information, try to use extracts of either fiction or non-fiction and ask your child to reduce the information first into 50 words, 25 words, then into 10.
- Your child could also use a highlighter to find the 5 most important words on a page and then make sentences out of those five words for context and reflection.

Historical help:

- Create a timeline of the texts we explore within our lessons and use this to understand how our tastes in literature have evolved.
- Take a look at the RSC learning homepage and explore the time period and famed playwright that shaped much of our nation's literary heritage.

If your child needs extension

Questions to discuss with your child:

- How has literature evolved over time?
- How have our tastes in literature changed?
- Why might our literary canon be criticised?

Challenging activities to complete:

- Read 'classic' material that is contained within the literary canon and compare it with literature you read today.
- Take a piece of text we have been exploring within our lessons and adapt the storyline to make it more current in today's society (either through a creative writing task or by designing a short play-script).
- Visit the National Trust website and explore the homes and destinations that inspired many of our famed writers today. Nationaltrust.org.uk

Suggested further reading:

- ***Agatha Christie: A Very Elusive Woman***

Lucy Worsley takes readers through the life and times of one of the world most famed writers and mystery novelists. There is also a three part series available on the BBCiPlayer.

- ***'Heroes,' 'Mythos' and 'Troy'***

Stephen Fry re-writes some the most famed Greek mythological classics in these stunning three books. Amazon read alongs are also available.