

**A Level English Language**

**Bridging Work**

**Summer 2024**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Welcome to the start of your A Level English Language course!**

Now that you’ve ended the compulsory study of English for GCSE, it’s time to start exploring some of the diverse theoretical and technical aspects of English that we study in the A Level course. This term will give you a super opportunity to start exploring the subject further and to make a flying start with us in September.

**The course:**

At KCC, we study the AQA syllabus for A Level English Language. I’ve attached a course outline below as a reminder. The work in the bridging units all links to different aspects of the course, and is designed to give you a taste of the various elements that you’ll study. It’s much broader (and far more interesting) than GCSE. Units within the A Level course are as follows:

* Methods of analysis: using linguistic frameworks to explore the construction of meanings within texts
* Language Diversity: exploration of language in relation to gender, social class, occupation, region and social groups.
* Language Change: exploration of the evolution of English across time and its adaptation as a global language.
* Language Acquisition: exploration of the processes through which children learn to communicate.
* Language Investigation: personal research study into an area of language use in society
* Language Discourses: exploring the attitudes towards diversity and developments in language
* Expression: developing personal writing skills

**Bridging Work Deadlines:**

You need to complete **Task 1 and the three different parts of Task 2** in this booklet ready for the start of Year 12. Please bring your completed booklet to your lesson in the first week back.

**Help and Support:**

You might find some aspects of the bridging units challenging. If you do, don’t worry. Please email Miss Renshaw (liz.renshaw@kingsbridgecollege.org.uk) if you are stuck or need support. The work will give us a useful idea of your starting point so please try your best and show us what you can do.

 **Let’s get down to the tasks…**

**Task 1: Speaking the Right Language**

As part of the A Level English course, you need to develop a good grasp of the technical vocabulary that is used to identify different linguistic features in texts. Some of this will be familiar from GCSE; other terms will be new to A Level. Use the grid below to create a glossary of key words by finding definitions and examples for each one. Start by filling in ones that you already know, and then use the sites listed at the bottom of the document to research the rest. Use the internet to find examples from literature.

You could always start to make them as flashcards and quiz yourself on the words and their meanings. Knowing these terms and being able to apply them will help you to make a swift start in September!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Key Term: | Definition: | Example from a literary text: |
| noun |  |  |
| verb |  |  |
| adjective |  |  |
| modal verb |  |  |
| comparative adjective |  |  |
| superlative adjective |  |  |
| discourse marker |  |  |
| declarative sentence |  |  |
| interrogative sentence |  |  |
| imperative |  |  |
| exclamatory sentence |  |  |
| main clause |  |  |
| subordinate clause |  |  |
| multi-clause sentence |  |  |
| listing |  |  |
| colloquial language |  |  |
| metaphor |  |  |
| simile |  |  |
| personification |  |  |
| audience positioning |  |  |

Helpful websites: <https://www.slideshare.net/BCALevels/alevel-english-glossary>

 <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/about/practical-english-usage/language-terminology#S>

**Task 2: Exploring literary non-fiction**

In English Language, we spend a lot of time looking at non-fiction, some of which we class as ‘literary non-fiction’. Literary non-fiction is writing based on real-life events which uses the sort of literary style and methods associated with poetry and prose.

**2.1 Exploring literary non-fiction 1**

Read the example below, taken from Nick Hornby’s *31 Songs,* a collection of pieces in which he reflects on the music tracks that have shaped his life. As you read, look up the meanings of any unfamiliar vocabulary. As a minimum, ensure that you can define the words that are underlined.

I’m Like a Bird’ -Nelly Furtado taken from Nick Hornby’s *31 Songs*

Oh, of course I can understand people dismissing pop music. I know that a lot of it, nearly all of it, is trashy, unimaginative, poorly written, slickly produced, inane, repetitive and juvenile (although at least four of these adjectives could be used to describe the incessant attacks on pop that you can still find in posh magazines and newspapers); I know too, believe me, that Cole Porter was ‘better’ than Madonna or Travis, that most pop songs are aimed cynically at a target audience three decades younger than I am, that in any case the golden age was thirty-five years ago and there has been very little of value since. It’s just that there’s this song I heard on the radio, and I bought the CD, and now I have to hear it ten or fifteen times a day . . .

That’s the thing that puzzles me about those who feel that contemporary pop (and I use the word to encompass soul, reggae, country, rock - anything and everything that might be regarded as trashy) is beneath them, or behind them, or beyond them - some preposition denoting distance, anyway: does this mean that you never hear, or at least never enjoy, new songs, that everything you whistle or hum was written years, decades, centuries ago? Do you really deny yourselves the pleasure of mastering a tune (a pleasure, incidentally, that your generation is perhaps the first in the history of mankind to forgo) because you are afraid it might make you look as if you don’t know who Harold Bloom is? Wow. l’ll bet you’re fun at parties.

The song that has been driving me pleasurably potty recently is ’l’m Like a Bird’ by Nelly Furtado. Only history will judge whether Ms Furtado turns out to be any kind of artist, and though I have my suspicions that she will not change the way we look at the world, I can’t say that l’m very bothered: I will always be grateful to her for creating in me the narcotic need to hear her song again and again. It is, after all, a harmless need, easily satisfied, and there are few enough of those in the world. I don’t even want to make a case for this song, as opposed to any other although I happen to think that it’s a very good pop song, with a dreamy languor and a bruised optimism that immediately distinguishes it from its anaemic and stunted peers. The point is that a few months ago it didn’t exist, at least as far as we are concerned, and now here it is, and that, in itself, is a small miracle.

Dave Eggers has a theory that we play songs over and over, those of us who do, because we have to ‘solve’ them, and it’s true that in our early relationship with, and courtship of, a new song, there is a stage which is akin to a sort of emotional puzzlement. There’s a little bit in ’l’m Like a Bird’, for example, about halfway through, where the voice is double-tracked on a phrase, and the effect especially on someone who is not a musician, someone who loves and appreciates music but is baffled and seduced by even the simplest musical tricks - is rich and fresh and addictive. Sure, it will seem thin and stale soon enough. Before very long I will have ‘solved’ ’l’m Like a Bird’, and I won’t want to hear it very much any more - a three-minute pop song can only withhold its mysteries for so long, after all.

So, yes, it’s disposable, as if that makes any difference to anyone’s perceptions of the value of pop music. But then, shouldn’t we be sick of ‘Moonlight’ Sonata by now? Or Christina’s World? Or The Importance of Being Earnest! They’re empty! Nothing left! We sucked ’em dry! That’s what gets me: the very people who are snotty about the disposability of pop will go over and over again to see Lady Bracknell say ’A handbag?’ in a funny voice. They don’t think that joke’s exhausted itself? Maybe disposability is a sign of pop music’s maturity, a recognition of its own limitations, rather than the converse.

And anyway, I was sitting in a doctor’s waiting-room the other day, and four little Afro-Caribbean girls, patiently sitting out their mother’s appointment, suddenly launched into Nelly Furtado’s song. They were word-perfect, and they had a couple of dance moves, and they sang with enormous appetite and glee, and I liked it that we had something in common, temporarily; I felt as though we all lived in the same world, and that doesn’t happen so often.

 A couple of times a year I make myself a tape to play in the car, a tape full of all the new songs l’ve loved over the previous few months, and every time I finish one I can’t believe that there’ll be another. Yet there always is, and I can’t wait for the next one; you need only a few hundred more things like that, and you’ve got a life worth living.

\*Optional Extras

As an aside, *31 Songs* is an interesting and relatively straightforward read which I highly recommend, especially if you appreciate the power of music. Nick Hornby also wrote *About A Boy* and *High Fidelity* which come equally recommended. Both were made into films some time ago but they’re still worth watching if you’re looking for things to fill the time between now and September…

You can also catch an interview with Nick Hornby at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmzdBSsgboM> and hear him discussing the process of writing for screen.

**2.2 Exploring literary non-fiction part 2**

The questions below will all help you to get an understanding of some of the key aspects of Hornby’s style in *31 Songs*. Answers them as thoughtfully as you can.

1. In paragraph 1, Hornby uses the **discourse markers** ‘Oh, of course’ and ‘believe me’. What impact does the use of discourse markers have on the text’s style or tone?
2. In line 2, Hornby lists 7 **adjectives**. Why do you think he used so many?
3. At the end of line 2, Hornby includes a **subordinate clause** in brackets. How does the inclusion of the information help to support his line of argument?
4. Hornby writes ‘Cole Porter was ‘better’ than Madonna or Travis’. Who do these **references** relate to? By including them, what is Hornby assuming about his reader’s knowledge and/or opinions?
5. What **tone** is created through the **interrogative** ‘Do you really deny yourself the pleasure of mastering a tune…?’
6. What **tone** is created by the inclusion of ‘Wow. I’ll bet you’re fun at parties’?
7. Why do you think Hornby mixes **formal, sophisticated vocabulary** with more **colloquial phrases?**
8. How does the **term of address** ‘Ms. Furtado’ (in paragraph 3) show the writer’s attitude towards the singer?

**2.3 Writing literary non-fiction**

As your final task, you need to write your own piece in the style of *31 Songs*. Choose a song, album, film, book or place that you feel has importance. This could be one that’s important to you personally, reminds you of a particular event, has a wider significance in the world or just one that you enjoy. Use it as the basis of your own writing, exploring the importance of your choice.

Your writing doesn’t need to be as long as the extract from Hornby: around 300 words is plenty. Focus on trying to include some of the language features you considered in the previous task. In particular, try to include listing of adjectives, bracketed information, and a mix of sophisticated and colloquial phrases.

There is space to write your response here. If you prefer to type it, please ensure that it is printed off and securely attached to this booklet. Make sure you proofread and edit before you submit your work.

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**Feedback:**