TEXT STUDY ASSIGNMENTS

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For your convenience, these assignments are also ‘bookmarked’. This facility appears on the left-hand side of your screen. To retrieve a study assignment, simply click on the text title. The study assignment selected will then appear on the main screen.
Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970) belonged to a family of French extraction who emigrated to Germany at the time of the French Revolution (1789) and settled in the Rhineland in Germany’s west. In 1914, Remarque went straight from school into the army and was sent to the Western front. During the course of the war, his mother died and all his friends were killed. At the end of the war, he found himself completely alone.

Remarque wrote this book, which is about his own and his friends’ experiences in the war. The book arose out of the consideration that so many men of his generation, who were still young, lived a friendless, embittered, resigned life without knowing why.

All Quiet on the Western Front magnificently describes three things: war, the fate of a generation, and true comradeship. It was first published in Germany in 1929 and translated into English two months later. The novel tells of war experiences from the point of view of a German soldier, but the main character, Paul Baumer, and his comrades could easily be English or French or Russian. Thus the novel is a testament to the universality of experiences of war.

Pre-reading activities

Test your knowledge of World War I (1914–1918) by completing the following statements using words from the list below.

shortages  
surrendered  
poison  
trenches  
bayonet  
mortars  
Gallipoli  
Allies  
armoured  
Germany

1 The basic weapon used by soldiers was a rifle with a _______________ attached.
2 Other weapons included revolvers, machine guns, grenades, trench _______________ and flamethrowers.
3 _______________ gas was used by both sides.
4 British inventors devised an _______________ vehicle, called a tank, which was immune to bullets – it could destroy machine guns and trample through barbed wire barriers.
5 Armies dug themselves into the ground for protection. These underground tunnels were called _______________.
6 The ‘Western Front’ of the war was an area west of _______________, from the north of France down to the Swiss border.
7 Australian soldiers first fought in 1915 in an area of Turkey called _______________. 
Due to the harsh, wintry conditions, which led to food, fuel, shelter and ammunition ______________, Russia signed a treaty with Germany in 1917 and left the war.

USA entered the war in 1917 on the side of the ______________, with fresh troops and supplies.

Germany ______________ on 11 November 1918, thus ending a war in which about eight million men were killed.

Notes on the book

Discuss the following questions with your classmates and then record your answers.

1. Why do countries go to war?

2. Have you ever had first-hand experience of war? What about members of your family? Give details.

3. Should it be compulsory for all young adult males to spend a year or two in the army (national service)? Why/why not?

4. Should women be allowed to fight in the front line of a war? Why/why not?
Vocabulary

In order to write about this text, you will need to familiarise yourself with some key terms. In groups or pairs, investigate the meanings of the following words and phrases, and share your findings with the rest of the class. Give a sentence or two to illustrate each meaning. If you have already read the novel, try to relate your sentences to its characters and themes.

a  Alienation, alienated from …

b  Authoritarianism, authoritarian attitude towards …

c  Breakdown of established/former values …

d  Comradeship

e  Cynicism, a cynic, cynical attitude towards something

f  Dehumanisation

g  Desensitisation

h  Disenchantment, disenchanted
i Disillusionment, disillusioned by …

j Disintegration of values

k Dislocated, dislocated by …

l Embittered towards …

m Egalitarianism

n Indifference, indifferent to …

o The ‘lost generation’

p Melancholy

q Nationalism
Ostracism, ostracised by …

Patriotism

Regimentation

Renunciation of personality

Repression of emotions

Sentimentality, sentimental about …

Shattered beliefs

The threshold of life
Characters

6 As you read (or re-read the novel) note down the names of the characters who have the following characteristics. Make sure you get the spelling of their names right. There is space for you to add your own notes to these mini character studies.

a – the protagonist; critical, sensitive, professional.

b – analytical; dies after a leg amputation.

c – a ‘ladies’ man’; dies in a trench after his hip is torn open.

d – tense, crude, tactless, inherits Kemmerich’s boots, but gives them to Paul after he is shot.

e – skinny, simple-minded, a bedwetter.

f – heavy-handed, peat-digger, shot in the back.

g – peasant farmer, homesick; sight of cherry blossom triggers off his desertion, for which he is court martialed.

h – 40 years old, the leader, fatherly, cunning; Paul carries him to the nursing station, but he is dead on arrival.

i – the first to fall, hit in the eye; a dissenter, shamed into joining up.

j – sergeant, cook.

k – idealistic schoolmaster, who intimidated his students into volunteering; later called up as a Territorial.

l – terrified; his leg is amputated because of a thigh wound; Paul knows his mother and must tell her about her son.

m – Number 9 Platoon Commander, ex-postman; sadistic, self-important.

n – Company Commander, a ‘decent fellow’; dies protecting his men.

o – Paul’s sister.
p
– Company Commander temporarily in the Territorials and so in charge of Kantorek.

q
– was the school porter, now in the Territorials.

r
– a compositor; the enemy whom Paul kills.

s
– the one who takes the blame for Paul’s disruption of the nuns’ prayers in the Catholic hospital.

t
– his arm wound haemorrhages because the Night Sister doesn’t come; taken to the Dying Room.

u
– patient in the Catholic hospital with a lung wound; fights against being taken to the Dying Room and comes back triumphant.

v
– Pole who has been in the Catholic hospital for ten months with an abdominal wound; hasn’t seen his wife, Marja, for two years; Paul and the others help him to get his conjugal rights when Marja visits.

w
– wounded in the pelvis while trying to rescue a wounded messenger dog.

**Theme study: The effects of war**

7 Complete the following tables of the positive and negative effects of war by filling in evidence in the form of quotes, examples and page references. Add more points of your own as you come across them in the book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive effects of war</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comradeship/brotherhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of the simple things in life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of the present moment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity of experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turns boys into men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride and patriotism (Do you think these are positive effects?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assessment tasks

#### Topics for analytical responses

1. This novel is a protest against the senselessness of war. Do you agree? Discuss.

2. ‘We are none of us more than twenty years old. But young? Youth? That is long ago. We are old folks.’ Discuss in detail the effects that war had on the lives, attitudes and values of the soldiers in this novel, particularly the young soldiers.

3. For Paul Baumer, the conflict of war is an unending experience; it exists on the battlefield and also on the home front. Discuss, with emphasis on Paul’s experiences while home on leave.

4. Friendship and brotherhood play an important role in the novel. Examine the relationship between Paul Baumer and Katczinsky, and explain how the two men complement one another.

5. In this novel, the brutality of war is balanced by the humour, comradeship, sense of fun and courage of the characters. Do you agree? Discuss.

6. War overturns all moral values. Is this what *All Quiet on the Western Front* is saying?

7. This novel helps us to understand and appreciate the universality of humankind. Do you agree? Discuss.

8. Compare and contrast the novel with the film version (1931, directed by Lewis Milestone, winner of Academy Award for Best Film and Best Direction).

#### Topics for creative responses

1. Paul writes to Katczinsky’s wife after his death. What would he say about his friend in the letter?

2. Recast as a play or dialogue one scene from the section of the novel when Paul returns home to visit his family.

3. Write an article for a special edition of the magazine published by Paul’s school after the war. The article is about what happened to Paul’s class.

4. Write up an interview with the author, Erich Maria Remarque, asking him questions about the book.

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**Negative effects of war**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lost youth/accelerated maturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death, suffering, mutilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shattering of ideals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of faith in authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dehumanisation/deadening of sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimlessness/no sense of future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation from civilian life/family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Topics for oral presentations

1. Why do countries go to war?
2. Is war ever justified?
3. What are the effects of war?
4. What is conscription? What is conscientious objection?
5. What are the rules of war?
6. World War II: What were the causes? The consequences?
7. The Vietnam War: What were the causes? The consequences?
8. The Gulf War: What were the causes? The consequences?
9. Modern warfare – has it desensitised us to the horrors of war?
10. Compare the novel with the Australian film Gallipoli.
11. Wartime propaganda.
12. War poetry: Choose one poem or a collection of poems and analyse it/them for the class. (See Poetry study below for examples.)
13. Take two main characters and trace how they change during the course of the novel.
14. Explain the character of Himmelstoss and try to account for his behaviour at key points in the novel.
15. War has a profound effect on the lives of young men. Discuss.
16. Discuss the relationship between the soldiers in the novel and their enemies.
17. Patriotism, nationalism – discuss how these concepts are dealt with in the novel.
18. Alienation: How is this a theme of the novel?
19. Discuss the family relationships in the novel.
20. Discuss the theme of friendship as shown in the novel.
21. Tell the class about your personal experiences of war.
22. Argue the case that women should be allowed to fight on the front line.
23. Argue the case that women should not be allowed to fight on the front line.
25. Argue the case against compulsory army service for 18-year-old youths.
CHARACTERS EXERCISE
a Baumer,  b Kropp,  c Leer,  d Muller,  e Tjaden,  f Westhus,  g Detering,  h Katczinsky, 
i Behm,  j Heinrich,  k Kantorek,  l Kemmerich,  m Himmelstoss,  n Lieutenant Bertink, 
o Erna,  p Mittelstaedt,  q Boettcher,  r Gerard Duval,  s Josef Hanacher,  t Wachter,  u Peter, 
v Hohann Lewandowski,  w Berger
Film study:  
*Dead Poets Society*

Warner Brothers  
Director: Peter Weir  
Running time: 129 minutes  
USA, 1989

**Cast**

Robin Williams (John Keating)  
Robert Sean Leonard (Neil Perry)  
Ethan Hawke (Todd Anderson)  
Josh Charles (Knox Overstreet)  
Gale Hansen (Charlie Dalton)  
Dylan Kussman (Richard Cameron)  
Kurtwood Smith (Mr Perry)

**Pre-watching activities**

Before you watch the film, discuss the following questions with your classmates and note down your answers:

1. Describe some of the teaching methods used by your teachers (for example, lecture, using PowerPoint, blackboard or overhead notes, reading from handouts, research activities, groupwork, etc.). Which do you prefer? Why?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
2 What sort of school do you attend? Is it a traditional, conservative school or is it progressive in some way? Describe it. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the way your school is set up? Is it the kind of school you like? Give detail.

3 How well do you get along with your parents? To what extent do your parents influence you? Is this a good thing or not? Explain.

4 Some people see suicide as the only way out of their problems. What alternatives to suicide are available?

5 What is your opinion of poetry? Do you have any favourite poems?
6 What do you think is meant by the saying *carpe diem* (seize the day)? Do you think it is a good philosophy to live by? Explain.

7 What do you know about society in the 1950s?

8 What makes a film different from a novel? What does it have that a written text does not have?

9 What makes a film a good one in your opinion? What are you looking for in a film?
Questions and notes on the film

As you watch the film (it would probably be best to do this activity during your second viewing), think about the following questions and make notes. These notes will help you with your assessment tasks later, so the more detailed they are, the better. You could work with a partner or in a group, each team taking one or two questions and reporting their findings to the class.

1 What does the opening sequence in the chapel say about the school, Welton Academy? What images help to build up this impression?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

In what ways is Mr Keating different from the other teachers at Welton? What things does he do and say to make an impression on the students?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

3 How is Mr McAllister different from Mr Keating? How does the film show this difference? What is McAllister's philosophy? What does he say to Mr Keating?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

4 What is Todd Anderson's problem? How is he influenced by Mr Keating? What action at the end of the film indicates the change in Todd?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
5 What is Neil Perry like and in what ways is he influenced by Mr Keating?

6 What is Neil’s father like? What about his mother?

7 How is Knox Overstreet influenced by the idea of *carpe diem*?

8 How is Charlie Dalton influenced by Mr Keating? What mistake does he make, according to Keating?

9 Who is the pragmatist of the group? What does he do and say at the end of the film to reveal this quality?
10 To what extent are the following characters responsible for Neil’s death?
   a  Mr Keating:

   b  Mr Perry:

   c  Neil himself:

11 How are the following images from the film symbolic?
   a  The flight of the birds in Autumn:

   b  The slow-motion shot of the boys running through the mist to the cave for the first meeting of the Dead Poets Society:

   c  The slow-motion shot of the ‘flying desk set’:
d  The lone piper by the lake:

                                               
                                               
                                               
                                               

e  Mr Perry placing his slippers by his bed:

                                               
                                               
                                               
                                               

12 Explain how the music and slow-motion effects added to the scenes connected with Neil’s death.
Assessment tasks

Topics for analytical responses
1. Mr Keating did more harm than good. Do you agree? Discuss.
2. What is the purpose of this film, in your opinion? Does it ultimately say that if you don’t conform, but decide to swim against the tide, you don’t survive?
3. Why did Neil Perry commit suicide?
4. Compare and contrast the two reviews of this film and compare them with your own interpretation.

Topics for creative responses
1. Write your own review of this film for your school magazine.
2. Choose one character and a particular point in the film. Write a monologue, revealing that character’s thoughts and feelings.
3. It is two years later. Write a letter from Mr Keating to Todd and write Todd’s reply.

Topics for oral presentations
1. Any of the above questions for notes on the film could be developed into oral presentations.
2. Pretend to be one of the boys who is either standing on his desk as Mr Keating leaves the classroom for the last time, or who is refusing to stand. Give an oral presentation in which you articulate what that boy is thinking at the time.
3. Pretend that you are the Principal of Welton. Interview Mr Keating the day after Neil’s death.
4. Conduct a conversation between Mr Keating and Todd Anderson. They have met up one year later.
Film study:  
*Looking For Alibrandi*

Miall and Kershaw Production  
Director: Kate Woods  
Running time: 103 minutes  
Australia, 2000

**Characters**  
Pia Miranda (Josie Alibrandi)  
Greta Scacchi (Christina Alibrandi)  
Anthony LaPaglia (Michael Andretti)  
Matthew Newton (John Barton)  
Elena Cotta (Nonna Katia)  
Kick Gurry (Jacob Coote)

**Oral presentations for pairs and groups**

**Character Focus**  
In pairs, role-play the following relationships, focusing on 1) the start of the film and 2) the end of the film, showing how the relationship has changed and developed. The main focus of your presentation is character-based, but you should also try to make some points about important issues such as class and culture, search for identity, friendship and family, teenage suicide, etc.

1. Josie and Christina  
2. Josie and Nonna Katia  
3. Josie and Michael Andretti  
4. Josie and Jacob Coote  
5. Josie and John Barton  
6. Josie and Carly Bishop

You should aim for a presentation of 10 – 15 minutes, and you should try to bring your play to life with a couple of well-chosen props and items of costume.
A Guide to Planning

Pair Number: _________

Josie and________________________________________

Actors: __________________________________________

_______________________________________________

1 Points to make about the relationship and snippets of dialogue to use in the presentation:

a At start of film:

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

b At end of film:

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

2 Possible settings for presentation:

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________

   ___________________________________________
3 Ideas for props and costumes:

Now plan your dialogue:

Theme Focus

Working in small groups of three or four, design an oral presentation for the class based on one of the following themes of the film: Use the questions as a guide. Your presentation should include:

1. A dramatic performance (e.g. a panel discussion, a mock interview with the author, a mock interview with some characters, or dramatisation of some key scenes connected with your theme).

2. A tutorial or lecture, or multi-media presentation, with prepared notes/hand-outs for the other students.

3. Examples of the points you make, using references to specific scenes in the film.

Themes

- Multicultural Australia
  What is “culture”? What factors determine identity? What picture of multicultural Australia does this film present? Which culture is the focus of the film? How is it presented?

- The influence of family on the individual
  How do the older and younger generations differ? Discuss the father/daughter and mother/daughter relationships. Do these relationships change/develop? How?

- Youth suicide
  What reasons does the text present for John’s suicide? What are the effects of youth suicide? What are the alternative solutions to problems? How does the film treat this issue?
Friendship
Discuss the relationship between Josie and her friends. Does it change or develop through the course of the film?

If you have read the novel by Melina Marchetta
Which do you prefer – the novel or the film? Why? What events have been omitted from the film version? Are the characters how you imagined them to be? What are the similarities and differences between the book and the film?

Rites of passage
What does this mean? Discuss Josie Alibrandi’s world and her place in it. In what ways does she grow through the course of the film? How does she deal with her problems? What is she like? In what ways is she an outsider?

Class tensions
What are ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ classes? Are there tensions between the two groups? How does the film present this issue?
Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* in 1606. The play is based on a story, taken from Holinshed’s *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, about an eleventh century Scottish nobleman, who was related to King Duncan of Scotland, and who was tempted into murdering the king to gain the crown for himself. Macbeth is aided by his wife, Lady Macbeth, and the play is a study of the physical, psychological and emotional consequences of their crime.

**Pre-reading activities**

Before you begin to read the play, here are a few points about Shakespeare’s language. First, a glossary of Elizabethan terms. Read through it and have it beside you as you read the play, until you are familiar with the terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anon</td>
<td>at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ay (say ‘eye’)</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cousin/coz</td>
<td>any close relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doth</td>
<td>does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e’er (say ‘air’)</td>
<td>ever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ere</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forsooth/sooth</td>
<td>in truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’gainst</td>
<td>against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’gins</td>
<td>begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hast/hath</td>
<td>has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hence</td>
<td>from this place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hither</td>
<td>to this place</td>
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<tr>
<td>holp</td>
<td>helped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methinks</td>
<td>it seems to me</td>
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<tr>
<td>mine</td>
<td>my</td>
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<tr>
<td>morrow</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>nay</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne’er</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o’er</td>
<td>over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o’the</td>
<td>of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owe</td>
<td>own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presently</td>
<td>at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prithee</td>
<td>please; I pray you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quoth</td>
<td>said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>still</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thee</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notice how the pronouns ‘thee’ and ‘thou’ in the play are used for noblemen and kings, but when Macbeth talks to lower class people – the hired assassins, for example, in Act III, Scene I – he uses the pronoun ‘you’.

Notice how many past tense verbs have the ‘ed’ ending replaced by ‘apostrophe–d’. For example: show’d, mark’d, brandish’d, dress’d, unseam’d, dash’d. This means that the words should be pronounced with one syllable only. If the verb is written with ‘ed’, Shakespeare wants the word to be pronounced with two syllables. For example, ‘drenched’, from Lady Macbeth’s speech in Act I, Scene VII, Line 75, would be pronounced ‘drench–ed’. In this way, Shakespeare makes sure that the rhythmic pattern of the lines follows the rhythms of normal speech.

We can symbolise the rhythmic pattern of normal speech by using marks to identify the unstressed (˘) and stressed (/) syllables or words. Or we can say that an unstressed syllable or word has a ‘da’ sound and a stressed syllable has a ‘dum’ sound. For example: ‘I know’ has a ‘da–dum’ sound, the emphasis falling on the second word; ‘perhaps’ has the emphasis fall on the second syllable. A typical, well-balanced spoken sentence would have five times the ‘da–dum’ pattern. (5 times ˘/) For example:

*I wonder what we’ll have for tea tonight?*  

If you look again at Lady Macbeth’s speech, Act I, Scene VII, Line 75, you can see how she needs to pronounce the two syllables – ‘drench–ed’ – in order to have the sentence flow:

*‘Their drenched natures lie as in a death.’*  

This pattern of five stressed and unstressed syllables in a sentence is called **iambic pentameter**.

When you read the play out aloud (perhaps you will perform it), try to capture those rhythms that Shakespeare has so masterfully written for his actors. Make sure that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>thence</th>
<th>from that place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thereafter</td>
<td>after that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thine</td>
<td>yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thither</td>
<td>to that place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thou</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thou’rt</td>
<td>you are (thou art)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thou didst</td>
<td>you did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thou dost</td>
<td>you do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thus</td>
<td>like this; so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thy</td>
<td>your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’tis</td>
<td>it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’twas</td>
<td>it was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’twere</td>
<td>it were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’twixt</td>
<td>between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whence</td>
<td>from which place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wherefore</td>
<td>for which reason; why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whiles</td>
<td>whilst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whither</td>
<td>to which place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the sentences flow, even if they are broken up into lines (this is because much of Shakespeare is poetry), and take notice of the punctuation marks, which are there to help you with your reading.

Notes on the play

Before you begin, think about the themes of the play by discussing and writing your answers to the following questions:

1. What are your ambitions?

2. Most people have ambitions, or goals, and some goals might be similar (to make money, for example), but there is a difference in the extent to which we will go in order to achieve our goals. Tick the following things if you would do them in order to fulfil your ambition/s:

- Borrow money from the bank
- Study for more than four years at a tertiary institution
- Sell your CD collection
- Pay ten thousand dollars for an item
- Kill someone
- Spread rumours about someone
- Steal something
- Inform on a friend
- Have sex with the boss
- Live in another country
- Move interstate
- Fight in a war
- Die for your country
- Die for your family
- Give up television
3 What is guilt? What is your conscience? What causes a guilty conscience? What are the effects of a guilty conscience? Have you ever felt guilt before? Explain.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4 Do you believe that people have control over their own lives and their own actions, or are we subject to forces beyond our control. To what extent are we at the mercy of fate?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5 What things about life are fair (good) and what are foul (bad)? List them in the table below. Do this individually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Foul</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6 Now compare your answers with the rest of the class. Are there any similarities? Is there anything that one student thinks is fair and another thinks is foul? How do you know what’s good and what’s not? What is ‘good’?
The structure of the play

The play *Macbeth* is tightly structured and all that happens has a direct bearing on the central theme of driving ambition and thirst for power. The play’s structure is symmetrical, in that it can be divided naturally into two parts: the first part is connected with the rise of Macbeth and the second is about his fall. The turning point of the action is the murder of Macbeth’s friend Banquo, which occurs exactly in the middle of the play, in Act III, Scene III.

Like all of Shakespeare’s plays, there are five acts and Macbeth’s path to destruction can be traced through each act:

- **Act I** – Macbeth’s victories and his temptation.
- **Act II** – His hesitation is overcome and Duncan is murdered.
- **Act III** – His apparent success and Banquo’s murder.
- **Act IV** – Macbeth’s decline into savagery and paranoia (evidenced by the senseless murder of Lady Macduff and her family) and his self-division. (Macbeth’s oneness with his country, his wife and his ‘self’ become progressively divided. He becomes a tyrant in the eyes of his countrymen; he becomes estranged from his wife, and he is alienated from his ‘self’ as the gap widens between his conscience and his deeds.)
- **Act V** – Macbeth’s punishment and death (compare his miserable death, like an animal, in the field, with the noble deaths of Cawdor and Macduff’s son, Siward). The natural order is restored.

Studying the play

A suggested approach to studying this text would be to watch a film version of the play first and then, working in groups and pairs, do the following activities.

**Activity 1**

In groups of four or five, perform one act, or perhaps only the key scenes of the act. As well as describing what has happened in that section of the play, each group should outline for the class how it adds to our understanding of the themes and characters of the play. It might be good to provide the class with some notes and significant quotes.
Activity 2
In pairs or groups of three, present a tutorial to the class about one of the following themes, characters or symbols from the play:

Themes
- The conflict between good and evil – Elizabethan society believed that these forces existed both outside us and within us, and there was a constant battle between the two.
- The confusion of fair and foul – how can you tell what is good and what is not? Appearances can be deceiving.
- Ambition and thirst for power – does the end result justify the means of getting there?
- Pride – sometimes your pride can be your downfall.
- The extent to which we control our own actions – how are the characters in the play persuaded by others?
- Witchcraft – when Shakespeare wrote Macbeth the King of England was James I, who was terrified of witches and got parliament to pass a law to execute any person convicted of witchcraft. At this time, during a period of forty years, about 8000 people were tortured and executed in Europe because they were accused of witchcraft. Witches had the following powers:
  — to influence the moon
  — to produce fogs
  — to see the future
  — to prevent sleep
  — to induce nightmares
  — to raise ghosts from the dead
  — to create storms
  — to cause insanity.

Characters
- Macbeth
- Lady Macbeth (compare and contrast her with Lady Macduff)
- Banquo
- Macduff
- Duncan

Symbols
- Darkness and light/night and day
- Sleep/dreams/nightmares
- Blood
- The weather/nature

Activity 3
Compare the play with a film version. The Roman Polanski film of the 1960s was highly controversial in its interpretation of the play. Not only was Macbeth seen as the victim of evil supernatural forces, but the whole cycle of direct intervention in the affairs of men by the forces of darkness is begun again, when the film ends with Donalbain seeking a favourable prophecy from the witches.
Assessment tasks

Topics for analytical responses
1. ‘Fair is foul and foul is fair.’ Discuss what this means and how it relates to the play.
2. How far is Macbeth responsible for his own actions and to what extent has he been influenced by others?
3. Trace the decline of Macbeth from ‘brave and noble’ to ‘butcher’.
4. Compare and contrast the two female leads in the play: Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff.
5. Explore one of the themes from the above list in a topic of your own design.
6. Compare and contrast the play with Polanski’s film version.

Topics for creative responses
1. Write a journal entry as Lady Macbeth at the end of Act III.
2. Write a journal entry as Macbeth at the end of Act III.
3. Write a short play, set in modern times, with three characters: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and a marriage guidance counsellor. They are in a counselling session and it is towards the end of Act IV. Don’t forget about stage directions. Set out your play like this:

   ACT I

   Scene I.
   The scene begins with Mrs and Mr Macbeth sitting in the marriage counsellor’s waiting room. They are sitting at opposite ends of the room. Mrs Macbeth is impatiently and mindlessly flicking through a magazine while Mr Macbeth isolates himself by crossing his arms and staring blankly at the floor. The two do not speak. The only sound comes from the click clacking of the keys on the secretary’s keyboard.
   Mr Macbeth: [Shouting across the room to the secretary] Excuse me, my appointment was supposed to begin at half past one and it’s nearly two o’clock.
   Secretary: [to Mr Macbeth] I’m very sorry Mr Macbeth but the counsellor has gone out for lunch. We expect her back any minute now. Would you like a cup of coffee or tea while you wait?
   Mr Macbeth: No thank you, but I would just like to remind you that I am a very busy man. I have places to go and people to see.

4. Write a dialogue, set in modern times, between Lady Macbeth and a psychiatrist. It is towards the end of Act IV.
5. Macbeth writes to his wife after his first meeting with the witches. Write the letter that Banquo would have written to his wife.

Topics for oral presentations
The suggestions in the three activities in ‘Studying the play’ provide opportunities for oral assessment tasks.
Poetry study

‘Poetry is one way of unlocking the doors of the many mansions inside the head and expressing something of the deep complexity that makes us precisely the way we are.’

Ted Hughes

Reading a poem is very different from reading a short story, novel or play. Poems can seem very complex on first reading, as often it is not so much the actual words used, but their associations or the moods they create, that give the poem meaning.

Because of its brevity, poetry must fit a lot of meaning into a small space, so word choice becomes very important. Sometimes the words chosen by the poet can have many layers of meaning, and often it is not what is said, but what is not said that helps to create meaning.

Also, the music of poetry – how it sounds – helps to create its meaning (remember that the earliest poems were ballads or songs), so you need to read a poem out aloud in order to fully appreciate it.

Pre-reading activities

When you are trying to unlock the meaning of poetry, begin by asking the following questions:

1. What do the words mean? This is the most basic question, but it may not always be easy to answer.
2. What might the words be symbolic of? For example, if the colour red is a predominant feature of the poem, might this be symbolic of blood, passion, or anger?
3. What mood is created by the words in the poem? Remember that certain words have connotations or associations. They make us feel a certain emotion. Ask yourself which emotion you feel when you read a particular poem.
4. When you read the poem out aloud, how does it sound? What is the rhythm like? Does it bounce along, like a nursery rhyme? Is it slow and solemn, like a dirge? Is it a marching rhythm? How does the poem’s particular rhythm reflect its mood?
5. Are there any sound patterns in the poem? For example, are there lots of soft-sounding letters, like ‘s’ and ‘f’, or harsh sounds like ‘b’ and ‘t’? These sounds add to the mood of the poem.
6. What words, phrases or lines stand out?
7. What is the central idea or concern of the poem? What is the poet’s purpose, do you think?

The following poems relate to three of the set texts in this web update: Macbeth, Dead Poets Society and All Quiet on the Western Front.
Poetry study notes

Individually, in pairs or in groups, explore the poems, using the above questions and the questions that follow each poem as a guide to your reading. Remember that any interpretation of a poem is a valid one, if you can provide evidence from the poem to support your theory.

A poem from Macbeth

From Macbeth

(From Act V, Scene V)

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

1. Life is compared to four things in this poem. List the four metaphors:

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. What is the effect of the repetition of the word ‘tomorrow’ in the first line? Comment on the rhythm of this line.

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. What is Macbeth saying about history in line 4?

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

4. What is the ‘brief candle’ of line 5?

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
5 What do you think of the metaphor of ‘a poor player’ to describe life? What is a ‘player’?

6 What is the tone of the poem? How is Macbeth feeling?

7 Read the poem aloud and hear the sound created by the repetition of certain consonants. What consonants are repeated and how do they add to the mood of the poem?

Poems mentioned in *Dead Poets Society*

In the film, Mr Keating asks the students to call him ‘Captain’. Obviously he was thinking of this poem by ‘Uncle Walt’ Whitman.

**O Captain! My Captain!**

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red!  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up – for you the flag is flung – for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths – for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here, Captain! dear father!  
This arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck  
You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;  
The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;  
Exult, O shores! and sing, O bells!  
But I, with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

*O Captain! My Captain!*  
Walt Whitman (US, 1819–1892)
8  Whitman wrote this poem about the US President, Abraham Lincoln, who was assassinated in 1865. What symbol for the President does the poet use throughout the poem?

9  The poet compares the President to something else in the second and third verses. What is the metaphor?

10 What is the ship a symbol of?

11 What is the effect of the words that end each verse? What is the rhythm like in these lines? What is the mood? How are these end-lines different in tone and rhythm from, say, the first lines of the first and second verses?

Here is the poem that Mr Keating gets a student to read a verse from in his first English class, when they are gathered around the photos of past students.

To the virgins, to make much of time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a flying:
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he’s a-getting;
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he’s to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time’
And while ye may, go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

Robert Herrick (UK, 1591–1674)
12 What is the message of this poem and how does it relate to the message of the film Dead Poets Society?

Here is another poem on the theme of *carpe diem*. Mr Keating quotes some lines of it during one of the English lessons in the film.

**O me! O life!**

*O me! O life! of the questions of these recurring,*  
*Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill’d with the foolish,*  
*Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)*  
*Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever renew’d,*  
*Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me,*  
*Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,*  
*The question, O me! so sad, recurring – What good amid these,*  
*O me, O life?*

**Answer.**

*That you are here – that life exists and identity,*  
*That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.*

Walt Whitman

13 What verse would you like to contribute to the ‘powerful play’ of life?
This is the poem that Charlie (‘Nwanda’) uses to impress the girls whom he has invited to a meeting of the Dead Poets Society.

**She walks in beauty**

She walks in beauty, like the night  
*Of cloudless climes† and starry skies;*  
And all that’s best of dark and bright  
*Meet in her aspect and her eyes:*  
Thus mellow’d to that tender light  
*Which heaven to gaudy†† day denies.*

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
*Had half impair’d the nameless grace*  
Which waves in every raven tress,†††  
*Or softly lightens o’er her face;*  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
*How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.*

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,  
*So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,*  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
*But tell of days in goodness spent,*  
A mind at peace with all below,  
*A heart whose love is innocent!*

---

George Gordon, Lord Byron (UK, 1788–1824)

† climes: climates  
†† gaudy: brightly coloured  
††† raven tress: black lock of hair

14 Does the poet only admire the lady’s beauty? What else is admirable?
Poems about war

Many soldiers who fought in World War I felt privileged to be able to fight for their country, as the first poem shows. Compare ‘The Soldier’ with the following poems, also about World War I (both written by Wilfred Owen). Finally, compare the mood of the second poem with the third example provided.

The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust conceal’d;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s, breathing English air,
Wash’d by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke (UK, 1887–1915)

15 What word, in various forms, is repeated six times in this poem?

16 What is the mood or tone of the poem?

17 In the poem, what might have happened in ‘some corner of a foreign field’?

18 Why would the ‘dust’ that is the corpse of the soldier be ‘rich’?

19 Is there any sense at all of the horrors of war in this poem?

20 Would it surprise you to find out that Brooke died before having seen any action in the war?
**Futility**

Move him into the sun –
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds –
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides,
Full-nerved – still warm – too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
– O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth’s sleep at all?

Wilfred Owen (UK, 1893–1918)

21 What sound patterns are in the words of the first verse and how do they add to the mood of this verse?

22 What is the meaning of ‘fatuous’? Why are the sunbeams fatuous?

23 What is the effect of all the questions in the second stanza?

24 What overall question is the poem asking? What is the poet’s purpose?

25 How would you describe the overall mood of this poem?
Dulce et decorum est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering like a man in fire or lime…
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gurgling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, –
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.†

† Sweet and fitting it is to die for one’s country

---

26 List some images from this poem that stand out in your mind.

__________

__________

27 What is the tone of the poem?

__________

28 What do you think is meant by ‘An ecstasy of fumbling’ at the start of the second verse? How does this activity contrast with what is described in the first verse?

__________

__________
29 What has happened to the soldier in verse 2? Why does the poet describe him as 'drowning'? Why does the poet see him 'through the misty panes and thick green light'? 
(Hint: Remember that chemical warfare – gas – was used in World War I.)

30 Why are the poet's dreams 'smothering'? 

31 What is the point of mentioning 'innocent tongues' and 'children' in the third verse? 

32 What is the effect of the long sentence, which forms the final verse? What mood does this create? 

33 What is the poet's purpose? 

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Novel study:  
*The Wife of Martin Guerre*  
by Janet Lewis

This short novel is Janet Lewis’s version of events that actually occurred in the sixteenth century.

**Pre-reading activities**

Before you begin to read the novel, make sure that you know the meanings of the following words:

Discuss these questions with your classmates and record your answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abated</th>
<th>abhor</th>
<th>affable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>alliance</td>
<td>ample</td>
<td>arbitrary</td>
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<td>array</td>
<td>assailed</td>
<td>booty</td>
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<td>coffers</td>
<td>contagious</td>
<td>countenance</td>
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<td>delusion</td>
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incertitude
incredulous
jurisdiction
malicious
manifest
multiplicity
ostensibly
paternal
peremptory
perforce
perpetuation
persistent
premonition
presaged
prolonged
prosperity
sabot
severe
sonorous
swarthy
swineherd
termination
unwieldy
vagaries
vigilant
vigour

1. What is the right age to get married? Why? Will your parents have any influence over the person you choose to marry? Explain.
2  At what age did people get married in the sixteenth century? Why?

3  What does ‘the head of the household’ mean? Who is the head of your household? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this role?

4  Lies, deceit, dishonesty. Why do these things occur? Are there any times when lying is justified? Explain. Have you ever been a victim of dishonesty? Explain.

5  Individuality. What does this mean? What sorts of things stifle individuality?
At what age do/should children become independent from their parents? What does this independence mean in terms of parent/child relationships? Are you allowed any independence? Explain.

Reading journal

Note your answers to the following questions as you read the book.

1. What are the reasons for the marriage between Bertrande de Rols and Martin Guerre?

2. Why is the ‘cap d’hostal’ so important to this household? How must everyone treat him? Is there any place for individuality in such a society?

3. Describe the position of Artigues and how it came to enjoy such peace and prosperity.
4 Describe the things that Martin Guerre does to assert his independence from his father.

5 Describe Bertrande’s feelings during the first year of her husband’s absence.

6 What effect does Martin’s absence have on the household?

7 Compare and contrast the Martin who returns with the Martin who left eight years before.

8 How does Martin’s return affect the household?
9. What is Bertrande’s ‘curious and terrible fear’?

10. How does the cure explain Martin’s kindness when Bertande confesses her suspicions?

11. What does the soldier from Rochefort accuse Martin of? What evidence does he have to support his accusation?

12. Why does Uncle Pierre support Bertrande in her accusations?

13. Why is the reaction of Martin to the judges’ sentence at Rieux an interesting one?

14. What action is taken on behalf of Martin after this trial? Who takes this action?

15. Three people counsel Bertrande. Who are they and what do they say? What is Bertrande’s reaction?
16 What conclusion is reached by the judges at Toulouse, and what subsequent event overturns their judgment?

17 Describe the reaction of Martin Guerre to his wife. Quote him.

18 Describe the reaction of Arnaud du Tihl to Bertrande. Quote him.

19 What is Bertrande’s fate?

20 Do you think Bertrande did the right thing? Explain. What would you have done in her position?
Assessment tasks

Topics for analytical responses

1. The circumstances in which a person lives can be either liberating or restricting. Discuss in relation to *The Wife of Martin Guerre*.

2. To follow your conscience is a noble thing, but sometimes it can be seen as foolishness. Do you agree? Discuss with reference to *The Wife of Martin Guerre*.

3. Discuss the justice of the novel’s final outcome.

4. ‘You, and you only, Madame, are answerable for the dishonour which has befallen me.’ Where do you think the responsibility lies?

5. Both Martin and Bertrande are victims of an unfair society. Neither is to blame for what occurs. Do you agree?

6. Even though *The Wife of Martin Guerre* is set in the sixteenth century, the issues it raises are still relevant today. Do you agree?

7. Bertrande’s decision to expose Arnaud is both courageous and foolhardy. Do you agree?

Topics for creative responses

1. Write a final chapter for the novel, in which you indicate what happens to Bertrande.

2. Write a letter from Bertrande to her husband three years later.

3. It is outside the house of Guerre, and Arnaud du Tihl is about to be executed. Arnaud decides to say something to those who are gathered there to witness his death. The assembly includes Martin Guerre, Bertrande, Uncle Pierre, the curé and other members of the Guerre household, as well as members of Arnaud du Tihl’s family. What does he say to them? Write his speech.

4. Write a series of diary entries, pretending to be Bertrande at various significant points in the novel. Use the points below to start you off.

   - p. 29 – Bertrande thinks that perhaps Martin is not going to return. How does she feel?
   - p. 44 – Bertrande suspects that this man is not her husband. What are her fears? Whom can she turn to?
   - p. 62 – With Uncle Pierre’s support, Bertrande accuses the man of being an imposter and she has him arrested. How does she feel now? What about the other members of the household? How does she feel about them?
   - p. 69 – Bertrande is vindicated: the imposter is found guilty, but she is upset at the sentence he has received. Why?
   - p. 93 – At the end of the novel, Bertrande is exhausted and alone. What does she think? How does she feel?
### Topics for oral presentations

**Individual oral**
1. Perform a monologue as one of the characters at any point in the story.

**Pairs orals**
2. Interview the author, Janet Lewis, and ask her questions about her book.
3. Interview Martin Guerre to find out what he did when he was away and why he was away for so long.
4. Interview Bertrande de Rols about the reasons for her actions.

**Group orals**
5. Conduct your own trial of Arnaud du Tilh.
6. Perform a key scene from the novel for the class and explain its significance.
7. Conduct a panel discussion about the action taken by Bertrande de Rols. The members of the panel are: Uncle Pierre, one of the sisters of Martin Guerre, the housekeeper and one of the judges.

### Comparison of book and film

1. View the French film *The Return of Martin Guerre*. It is quite different from the book. Which version do you prefer? Why?

Before you attempt the assessment task outlined below, discuss the following questions with your classmates and take notes.

2. Narrative structure refers to how the story is told. How is the narrative structure of the film different from the book?
3 How is the title a significant indication of the difference between the book and the film? Who is the focal character in each version?


4 How do the storylines differ?


5 How does the characterisation differ? (Bertrande, Martin, Arnaud, Uncle Pierre, the priest)


6 Who supports Bertrande in the book and who supports her in the film?


7 Which portrayal of Bertrande’s character do you prefer? Why?
8 Which version of Arnaud’s character do you prefer? Why?

9 How is the feudal relationship between master and peasants portrayed in the film? Is it different from the book?

10 Which themes stand out more in each text?

11 What other differences did you notice?

Useful words and phrases

Here is a list of words and phrases for a comparative text essay, which you may find useful. Read through it, paying special attention to the points about grammar and punctuation, and the use of the word ‘however’ – a word that is often used incorrectly.

Note: To compare is to show similarities and to contrast is to show differences.

- The similarity between … can be seen in …
- There are obvious similarities between …
- There are many points of comparison between … and …
There is/There are obvious/minor/subtle/significant/major differences/similarities between the book and the film.

**Say different from:**
- The film is very different from the book, in that …
- The film is different from the book, in the sense that …
- The film is different from the book, in the way that …

**Use a comma to separate the opening comparative phrase from the rest of the sentence:**
- In contrast to the book, the film …
- Like the book, the film …
- Unlike the book, the film …
- Just as the book …, so too does the film …

**Use a semi-colon (or full stop) and two commas for ‘on the other hand’ and ‘however’:**
- The novel …; the film, on the other hand, …
- The book …; the film, however, …
- The film, on the other hand, does not follow a linear narrative structure until Martin’s second trial.
- The novel, however, presents us with a woman for whom principles are far more important than personal happiness.

**For conjunctions like and, while, whereas, and but, you only need a comma:**
- The book …, while the film …
- The book …, whereas the film …
- While the novel …, the film …
- The novel …, but the film …
- The book …, and the film …

---

**Assessment task**

Compare and contrast the film *The Return of Martin Guerre* and the novel *The Wife of Martin Guerre*, by Janet Lewis. Focus on the narrative structure, the characterisation and the focus of each text.

**Charaterisation**

**Bertrande in the novel**
1. Bertrande is very much concerned for her immortal soul and much more ruled by the conventions women were expected to adhere to in that society.
2. Once she decides that the man who returns is not Martin, she is determined to expose him despite her lack of support from most of the people she loves and cares for. She is angry and bitter that Arnaud has put her in an intolerable position by the standards of her society.
3. She did fall in love with him and had two children to him, but this only adds fuel to the fire once she decides he is not Martin.
4. Bertrande has a need for the security and certainty that this medieval society and hierarchy assures her. This does not make her passive, however, because she is prepared to risk everything and everyone to prove she is right. She is also prepared to pay the price as we see at the end of the novel.
5. In the novel, Bertrande is religious, principled and a seeker of truth. Janet Lewis has written the novel from a feminist point of view and portraits the Anglo-American point of view of morals being important.

**Bertrande in the film**
1. Bertrande is much more motivated by her own needs as a wife and as a woman. She loves Martin (Arnaud) and we see a very different view of the psychology of women represented through her in this film. She will risk everything for the love she feels she has a right to.
2. We see in the film that she probably knew Arnaud was not Martin very early in the piece (see her confession at the end of the film). It is not she who accuses Martin; rather, she supports and defends his credibility throughout both trials.
3. While she is shown to be religious, she apparently believes that her love justifies her actions and God and ‘Mary’ will understand. This is a much more modern view of religious faith and what makes a marriage authentic.
4. She is also motivated by her need to protect the children/child she had with Arnaud, more than Bertrande is in the novel.
5. She is prepared to risk the censure of the court in the hope that they will succeed and only relents when Arnaud gives her the sign that all hope is lost.
6. She is very impressed with Arnaud’s love and nobility and considers him her authentic husband because of the way he treated her and despises Martin for abandoning her and Sanxi.
7. The film portrays Bertrande as a woman who is motivated by love and happiness and has a desire for security.
Arnaud in the novel

1 Arnaud is a difficult character to get a handle on because of the way the narrator presents him in the novel. This is a direct result of the way the narrator leaves out his motivations and makes the reader decide what he is up to. We do get indirect clues through his responses to Bertrande’s accusations and his conversation with the Priest.

2 He is presented as noble and loving and very much in control of himself but Bertrande interprets this as cruelty, given her own predicament. He is sophisticated and clever with words, but he is prepared to be ruthless to a certain degree when Bertrande accuses him of being an impostor.

3 We do get hints that he very much wants Bertrande to love him (he is impressed when she cries out in shock after he has been sentenced to die in the first court case).

4 The narrator does not tell us what is going on in his mind and he is not given a lot to say in either court case. We do get the descriptions of his calm and noble demeanour in both cases however, and we see a man who is prepared to die to atone for what he has done to Bertrande.

5 He is obviously a risk-taker but the confession at the end is quite enigmatic because he does mention that he stayed because he fell in love with Bertrande. The narrator only mentions he confessed to ‘stay long enough to pick up a little silver or gold’ (92). He does, however, tell Bertrande that he was a ‘rogue’ who was transformed into an honest man and an ‘indulgent husband’ because of her ‘beauty and grace’ (91).

6 The main way we get to know him in this novel is through the contrasts Bertrande sees between his soul and the real Martin. Our view of Arnaud is therefore very much mediated by her interpretation and emotional response to him. He doesn’t play much part in the second court case. Barely a page is spent putting his point of view across and it is not presented in his own words.

Arnaud in the film

1 Arnaud is presented as a very cunning man and while everyone remarks that he is very clever with words (see the court scenes at Toulouse) he is presented as very much more crude in his demeanour.

2 He is a more desperate and greedy man in the film and we see him being prepared to aggressively manipulate everyone (except perhaps Bertrande and Sanxi) to win the case.

3 He is shown to have an incredible memory but one lapse during the final court scene is his undoing.

4 He is not calm like Arnaud in the novel. His nobility is shown at the very end of the final court case when he lets Bertrande save herself, but until then he had allowed and required her to defend him until the bitter end.

5 He goes to his death confessing his sorrow to King, God and others but he is not sorry for what he does to the real Martin. He tells Martin that he does not deserve Bertrande. He does not go easily to his death because he appears very frightened. It is arguable that this is a much more gritty, realistic portrayal of how a man would react to this predicament.

6 We get a very clear idea of his motivations throughout the film and he is not just presented indirectly by the narrator, nor are we entirely reliant on how Bertrande sees him. He tells the court he decided to stay because he loved Bertrande and after that it was too late. He is shown defending himself aggressively in the film.
Uncle Pierre in the novel

1 Uncle Pierre is presented as an honest man who decides to side with Bertrande (after initially accepting Arnaud’s credibility) because he is impressed by her sincerity and what he has known about her from living with her. He is the only one to side with her and the narrator continually tells us that he is an honest man.

2 He risks a lot by deciding to join Bertrande and we are assured his motivation has had very little to do with the demand Arnaud made for the money. He is motivated by the need for justice for Bertrande and the honour of his family name.

Uncle Pierre in the film

1 Uncle Pierre is the main instigator of the accusation and arrest of Arnaud. He is presented as greedy, manipulative, violent and dishonest.

2 He originally accepted Arnaud as Martin but when he was asked for the money he tries to trick and kill Arnaud and manipulated others to side with him. He is even prepared to forge an accusation against Arnaud after losing the first trial against him.

3 He mistreats and abuses Bertrande when she won’t side with him. He forges her signature (x), which shows he is completely ruthless. He is everything Arnaud accuses him of in the two court trials.

4 He is not motivated by the need for justice, despite the fact that we find out that he is right about Arnaud being an impostor. Pierre is also an impostor because he pretends he is motivated by higher values. The main judge in the film reinforces this when accusing him of recklessly bringing disorder to his family and village for base motives such as greed and revenge. The judge says this at the end of the film after Arnaud is found guilty and is about to be executed. We already know Uncle Pierre was motivated by base motives from the way he behaves and manipulates others throughout the film (at least after Arnaud demands the money).

The priest in the novel

1 The priest is very much on Arnaud’s side. He counts on him as a friend, his best friend in fact and protects him in both court cases. The priest even tries to persuade Bertrande to give up her doubts when she confesses them to him.

2 He is motivated by his love of Arnaud and thinks that he is better for the village. He even tries to persuade Bertrande to reverse her accusations after the first court case.

The priest in the film

1 The Priest turns against Martin and sides with Pierre by the second court case and accuses Arnaud of being satanic. He had initially accepted him like all others.

2 The priest is far less noble in the film and does not hear Bertrande’s confession accusing Arnaud of being an impostor because she is on his side in the film.

The Judge Matre Jean De Coras in the novel

1 In the novel he is just one of the judges and they are not presented as individuals. It is difficult to know whether he was one of the judges in the first court case that found Arnaud guilty. We only know his name due to the Afterward in the novel. We find out some things about him and how he was responsible for writing about the case. We know nothing more about him in the novel and he doesn’t play an important personal part as a character. He doesn’t do any of the things attributed to him in the film.
The Judge Matre Jean De Coras in the film

1 The judge is a major character in the film being involved in both court cases. He is the only judge in the court case and finds Arnaud not guilty due to lack of evidence.

2 He is also the lead judge in the second case at Toulouse. We see a man who is rational and motivated by a need for impersonal, rational proof. However, we see a more personal side of him when he goes to see Bertrande and asks her to tell him why she had defended Arnaud. He suspects she knew all along yet he convinced the judges to find her innocent.

3 He is impressed particularly by her courage and love for Arnaud. He is prepared to step outside the legal and moral norms when he is not in court and tells her that she can tell him the truth without fear it will go any further. He is also crucial to the film because it is he who picks up Arnaud’s mistake that leads Arnaud to confess.

Other differences

The two Martins

1 The two Martins are much more physically similar in the novel. Everyone astonished by the resemblance between them when they are seen side by side.

2 In the film the differences are quite obvious despite some similarities. In the novel the physical scars are identical, in the film there are debatable differences.

The peasants and the villagers

1 The peasants and the villagers are much more deferential to their masters in the novel and the narrator creates the impression that they cannot go on successfully without the head of the house. The masters are more capable and the hierarchy is presented as natural and just, even if harsh. The system is idealised.

2 The peasants and villagers in the film are not deferential and are shown to be ruled by fear rather than respect. They are also shown enjoying the carnival-like feast days when the normal rules of feudal hierarchy are overtured (see their treatment of Martin as a young man). The film is a French production and much more likely to subvert the natural view of the feudal hierarchy. The Guerre family is far less distinguished and civilized and don’t appear to be as they are in the novel.

Narrative structure

Novel's narrative structure

The novel’s narrative structure is linear. This means that each event unfolds in a causal way. It does not flash forward or flashback.

The most significant consequence of this kind of narrative structure is that we do not know that Arnaud’s real identity is under dispute until at least a third of the way through the novel’s narrative. We are always having to predict what will happen next. This also means we can put the evidence together in a causal logical way.

While the narrative is sequenced in a linear way the narrator can still influence and extend the time spent on some events and condense or even skip over significant periods of time and limit what we hear from or about some characters. An example of the former is the number of pages detailing Bertrande’s agony over being abandoned by Martin to
increase our sympathy and understanding of her. An example of the latter is the way the narrator limits the focus on what happens to Arnaud.

The narrator wants Bertrande to be the main protagonist and as the narrator is telling us the story from Bertrande’s perspective, the narrative structure cannot reveal that the identity of Arnaud is problematic until Bertrande begins to doubt him after she becomes pregnant. This is because her morality would be questionable if she got pregnant after she knew it wasn’t Martin and it would make a nonsense of her motivation to see him prosecuted later in the novel.

Film’s narrative structure

The first half of the film’s narrative structure is not linear. After the initial wedding scene the narrative unfolds by flashing forwards to the first court case, which becomes the main focus of the story.

The narrative structure is then dominated by a series of flashbacks to significant moments, as the Judge asks Bertrande a question about her relationship with Arnaud.

Bertrande begins as the narrator of that scene so that the narrative point of view is restricted to what she knows, however, the narrative then becomes less restricted and we see scenes unfold that she was not necessarily present to witness. This is a convention of film narratives that have flashbacks and the consequence of this is that we see events and interpret characters’ actions that Bertrande cannot. This is known to film critics as an unrestricted narrative.

When the content of the initial question has been explored the narrative will again flash forward to the first court case and the judge will ask another question. The narrative will then flashback to that particular event. This is a pattern that will be repeated until the narrative reaches the point where Arnaud goes on trial for the first court case. This is the turning point of the film’s narrative structure.

After this trial is over and Arnaud is found not guilty the narrative structure is linear all the way until the end. The sequencing of the non-linear narrative structure has a number of consequences:

The viewer knows very early in the film that Arnaud’s real identity is a point of contention.

We are also very aware through visual clues that Bertrande is anxious and wary of revealing anything that may incriminate her or Arnaud. We may not be getting the whole truth.
Play study:  
*Medea* by Euripides

**Background**

Ancient Greece, in particular Athens, is the birthplace of theatre. They had open-air drama festivals every year in amphitheatres and the most popular playwrights of the day, like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes would perform their plays for prizes. Euripides only ever won third prize for *Medea*, yet we still study it today, two and a half millenia later. After you have read the play, you might discuss the reasons for this.

Test your knowledge of Ancient Greek theatre by highlighting either ‘true’ or ‘false’ for each of the following statements:

1. All the actors wore masks – tragic, comic or god-like.  
   - True  
   - False

2. All the actors were women.  
   - True  
   - False

3. There was a group of actors called a ‘chorus’ in the plays, and the chorus would comment on the action of the play.  
   - True  
   - False

4. Violence was never shown on the Greek stage; eyewitness accounts were used instead.  
   - True  
   - False

5. The acoustics in amphitheatres were terrible.  
   - True  
   - False

*Medea* is an ancient Greek tragedy featuring a hero of Greek mythology called Jason and his wife, Medea, whom he brought with him back to Greece from a foreign land.

See what you can find out about Jason and Medea, by looking up books in the library or surfing the Internet. Pool the results of your research here to form a clear and concise summary of the legendary background of the play:
Pre-reading activities

The following questions are designed to make you think about some of the issues raised by the play. Discuss the questions with your classmates before recording your answers here.

1 What difficulties face a newly arrived migrant?

2 Do you believe that marriage is forever? Should it be?

3 Why do people get divorced?

5 When something upsets them, do you think that men and women have different ways of reacting to such situations? Explain.

---

**Structure of the play**

Classical Greek tragedies like *Medea* had a structural framework unlike our modern plays, which are divided into acts and scenes. These structural elements are:

- **prologue** – the opening scene, in which some background information is introduced by one or two characters
- **parodos** – the entrance of the chorus, usually chanting a song in unison
- **episode** – this is like a scene in a modern play
- **stasimon** – a song sung by the chorus, usually commenting on the action in the previous episode
- **exodos** – the final action after the last stasimon, ending with the exit of all the actors.

*Medea* has a prologue, a parados, five episodes, five stasima, and an exodos. Mark these in your book before you begin your reading journal.
Reading journal

Use the following questions and instructions as a guide to reading the play. Discuss the issues that are raised with your classmates, before recording your answers. The end result should be a useful collection of notes to help you with the assessment tasks.

Stop reading after you have read the Nurse's speech in the prologue.

1 Write down five things about Medea that we find out from the Nurse:

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Continue reading and stop after the Tutor says to the Nurse: ‘It’s taken you a … everybody loves himself more than his neighbour’.

2 What is the Tutor suggesting about Jason's motives?

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3 What does this statement reveal about the character of the Tutor? How would you describe his general attitude towards life?

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4 Do you agree with his comments? Explain.

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Read on and stop when the Nurse says: ‘The middle way, neither great nor mean, Is best by far, in name and practice.’

5 What does this mean and how can you relate the idea to your own life?

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________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
The chorus of Athenian Women enters the stage. The chorus in Ancient Greek drama was a group of anonymous characters, who spoke in unison, chanted, or sang. Their movements were also significant. In Medea, the chorus is a group of women of Corinth (but remember the actors were all men). The chorus had several functions:

- to give the response of ordinary people to the events of the play, which is about great and powerful people
- to interpret for the audience what is happening or to forewarn them of future events
- to inform the audience of events happening off stage
- to help the audience to understand each leading character’s viewpoint
- to shape the audience’s emotional response
- to offer philosophical comments and to remind the audience of Greek beliefs.

Continue until the end of Medea’s speech in the first episode.

6  Compare and contrast what Medea says about women in Ancient Greek times with women today. Complete the following table:

Read on, and stop after Creon’s visit.

7  Creon is the father of Jason’s new wife, Glauce. Describe him. How does Medea manipulate him? What persuasive techniques does she use? Do they work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women in Ancient Greece</th>
<th>Women today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women buy a husband with a dowry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not possible to tell if the man you marry is going to be good or bad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For women, divorce is not respectable; to repel the man, not possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If a man gets tired of his wife, he can play around, but women are meant to be faithful to one man.</td>
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</table>

Continue reading and stop at the end of Jason’s speech in the second episode.
Look closely at the speeches by Medea and Jason in this episode. Notice how they are roughly the same length, as if the two characters are participating in a debate. Both characters use several persuasive techniques in their arguments. Complete the table below by finding examples from the speeches for each persuasive technique. The first couple have been done for you. See if you can describe the tone of each speech too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persuasive technique</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Use of irony:</td>
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**Medea**

**Jason**

- Flattery of Medea: ‘I admit you have intelligence’
- Rational arguments:
  - Insists that he was helped by the goddess Aphrodite, not Medea
  - In the long run Medea actually benefited by helping him, because he brought her from a barbaric land to a civilised one
- Appeals to her vanity:
- Appeals to her desire to be financially stable:
- Appeals to her maternal feelings and responsibilities:
- Sophisticated language to make him seem superior:
- Tone:

Read on and stop after the second stasimon.

What does the chorus say about love in this stasimon?

Read on and stop after the exit of King Aegeus, before the third stasimon.
10 What is the king so unhappy about? How will Medea help him? What does he offer her in return?

11 Medea plans to kill her two children. What are the two main reasons that she gives? What do you think of her plan?

Read the third stasimon a couple of times. It is a lyrical ode praising Athens and it is one of Euripides's most famous pieces of poetry. Note how the poem comments on the harmonious union of Love and Wisdom in the Athenian people, qualities that are missing in Jason and Medea.

Continue reading and stop after Jason's second visit in the fourth episode.

12 How does Medea manipulate Jason here and persuade him to let her stay? It would be good to act this out in pairs in front of the class to see her body language too.

13 At this point in the play, where do your sympathies lie – with Jason or Medea? Give reasons.

Continue reading and stop at the end of the chorus’s fifth stasimon.
In this stasimon the chorus makes several comments about parenthood. What do the women say? What is your personal response to their comments?

Read on and stop after the Messenger has delivered his news in the exodos.

Do you think that Glauce and Creon deserve their fate? Why/Why not?

Finish reading the play.

What do you think of Medea’s actions?

What do you think of Jason’s reactions? Do you notice anything different about him?

Notice how Medea escapes on a dragon-drawn chariot. This theatrical device (called *deus ex machina* – the god from the machine) was criticised by Euripides’s contemporaries as awkward and incredible. What do you think of it? Why do you think Euripides chose to end the play in this way?
Assessment tasks

Topics for analytical responses
1. Medea: victim or villain? What is your opinion?
2. Despite the fact that the play was written over 2000 years ago, Medea is still relevant to us today because it deals with universal truths about human nature. Discuss.
3. Has justice been done by the end of the play? Discuss.
4. This play shows us the consequences of loving too much. Do you agree?
5. In Medea Euripides is showing us the consequences of a loss of balance in one’s life. Do you agree? Discuss.

Topics for creative responses
1. Choose one of Jason’s or Medea’s long speeches, or one of their conversations, and rewrite it in modern language.
2. Rewrite the exodos.
3. Pretend to be Jason and write a letter to the Athenian King Aegeus, asking that he not give sanctuary to Medea, and write Aegeus’s response.
4. Write a sixth stasimon for the chorus, to be sung after the exodos.
5. Recast a section of the play as a short story or news report.

Topics for oral presentations
1. Medea has been put on trial for murder. Pretend to be the barrister for the defence and make your final speech to the jury.
2. Medea has been put on trial for murder. Pretend to be the barrister for the prosecution and make your final speech to the jury.
3. Jason has returned to the palace of King Creon and Princess Glauce after his first visit to Medea. What does he say to Glauce? What is Glauce’s reply?
4. Perform one of Medea’s speeches, or part of a longer speech. Translate it into modern language for the class and discuss its relevance to the characters and themes of the play.
5. Perform one of Jason’s speeches, or an extract from one of his speeches. Translate it into modern language for the class and discuss its relevance to the characters and themes of the play.
6. With a partner, enact one of the dialogues between Jason and Medea. Translate it and relate it to the characters and themes of the play.
7. Medea is given the opportunity to address the jury at her murder trial. What does she say?
8. Jason is given the opportunity to address the jury at Medea’s trial. What does he say?
Notes for teachers

Medea

1 Features of ancient Greek drama: actors all men; performed in daylight; wore masks with big openings for mouths (to aid amplification); wore stylised costumes; simple set, no backdrops.

2 Play would have been performed in Athens.

3 Neither Jason nor Medea were Athenian, so play would not have offended Athenian people.

4 Deus ex machina – sudden appearance of a god to resolve a problem too complex for human solutions.

5 Chariot at end – symbolic of Medea’s power and victory over Jason.

6 Medea a witch and an alien, making her actions possibly less horrifying.

7 Medea came from Colchis (Georgia), on the Black Sea, which was famous for its deposits of alluvial gold. Hence the legend of the golden fleece. Fleeces were used to “pan” for gold – they were dragged through the river and then scraped for flecks of gold.

8 Euripides was noted for his eccentricity and unfriendliness. He took no part in Athenian public affairs, but was passionately interested in philosophical and political ideas. He took heroic figures from Greek myths and legends and transformed them into ordinary people with contemporary attitudes. He liked to challenge traditional views and values – for example, he was interested in the idea of humans having control over their own destiny, rather than everything being controlled by the gods; and he questioned racist attitudes. He was interested in the idea of justice, blood atonement and the punishment of the gods.

9 There is an ampitheatre in the park at Fairfield and I have taken groups of students there to perform extracts from the play. That works well.
Sample Answer

### Persuasive Technique exercise

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Attempts to elicit Jason’s sympathy</td>
<td>Medea says she is alone and has nowhere to go.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appeals to his paternal feelings and responsibilities</td>
<td>‘Forlorn waifs’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of irony/sarcasm</td>
<td>‘A marvellous husband I have, and faithful too.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tone:</td>
<td>heartfelt, passionate, angry, emotional.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jason</strong></td>
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<tr>
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| Rational arguments:  | • Insists that he was helped by the goddess Aphrodite, not Medea  
|                      | • In the long run Medea actually benefited by helping him, because he brought her from a barbaric land to a civilised one |
| Appeals to her vanity and her desire to be financially stable: | He claims that she has achieved fame because of him. |
| Appeals to her maternal feelings and responsibilities: | ‘My action was wise... and directed towards your interests and my children’s.’ |
| Sophisticated language to make him seem superior: | recrimination, invidious, barbarous, smitten, shunned, etc. |
| Tone:                | calm, logical, condescending, paternalistic. |
Film study:  
*The Castle*

Village Roadshow and Working Dog  
Director: Rob Sitch  
Running time: 82 minutes  
Australia, 1997

**Characters**

Michael Caton (Darryl Kerrigan)  
Anne Tenney (Sal Kerrigan)  
Stephen Curry (Dale)  
Anthony Simcoe (Steve)  
Wayne Hope (Wayne)  
Sophie Lee (Tracy)  
Eric Bana (Con)  
Costas Kilias (Farouk)  
Charles (Bud) Tingwell (Lawrence Hammill)  
Tiriel Mora (Dennis Denuto)

**Pre-watching activities**

Before you watch the film, discuss the following questions with the class and write down your responses.

1. **What are the good things about families, and what aspects of family life are not so good?**

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</table>
2 What sorts of things (for example, character qualities, possessions, activities, beliefs, etc.) are valued by your family?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

3 What do you understand by the phrase ‘multicultural Australia’? What are the advantages and disadvantages of multiculturalism?

By multiculturalism I understand: ________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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4 Do you think there is such a thing as an ‘Australian’ sense of humour? What is it like?

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Notes on the film

As you watch the film, perhaps for the second time, make notes about the following, in preparation for written and oral responses. Be sure to record specific examples and quotes to support the points you make.

1. The Kerrigan family and their feelings for each other: How do they relate to each other?

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2. Family values: What values does the film endorse?

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3. The humour in the film: How is humour created?

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4. The working class: What generalisations are made about working class people in the film?

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____________________________________________________________________________________
5 Multicultural Australia: How is it portrayed in the film?

6 Look at Sal and Tracy: How are women portrayed in the film? Is it necessarily a negative view?

7 ‘It’s not a house; it’s a home.’ What does this mean? What is the significance of the title of the film?

8 The individual against the ‘system’: Who wins? Why?

9 Altruism: What is this? How is it shown in the film?
10 What do the characters value? Is everything to be measured in terms of dollars? What else is valuable, as shown in this film?

Assessment tasks

Topics for analytical responses
1 ‘Dad is the backbone of the Kerrigan family. If Dad’s the backbone, Mum’s all the other bones.’ (Dale) How do Darryl and Sal Kerrigan hold the family together?
2 *The Castle* is a superficial film, with nothing meaningful to say and it should be condemned for reinforcing stereotypes about migrants and working class people. Do you agree? Discuss.
3 *The Castle* may be very Australian in its language and its humour, but it can be enjoyed by viewers in any place and at any time, because it deals with universal values. Do you agree? Discuss.
4 Darryl Kerrigan is the true hero of this film. Do you agree? Discuss.

Topics for creative responses
1 Darryl calls Sal before he returns from Canberra. Write their telephone conversation. (See how to set out a dialogue below.)
2 Write a review of the film for your school magazine.
3 Dale visits Wayne in jail the day after the celebratory party (at the end of the film). Write their conversation in the form of a dialogue. Set out a dialogue like this:

Wayne: Hi Dale.
Dale: G’day Wayne.
Wayne: How are you?
Dale: Good.
Wayne: How’s Mum?
Dale: Good.
Wayne: How’s Trace?
Dale: Good.
... and so on.
Topics for oral presentations

There should be enough topics here for each student. If you are working with a partner or in a small group, some topics could be combined. The task is to relate the statement or question to the characters and events of the film in an oral presentation of 3 to 5 minutes.

1. The law should uphold justice.
2. It is important to be proud of your children.
3. Does the film, through its portrayal of Sal, present a positive image of the traditional wife/mother role?
4. Dale is clearly not very bright. How might he have been treated in a less loving, more ambitious family? Compare this possibility to how he is treated in the Kerrigan family.
5. Why does Laurie seek a friendship with Darryl? Are they a ‘likely pair’?
6. Do you think that The Castle presents Australia as ‘the lucky country’?
7. What ‘firsts’ does Tracy achieve? What is significant about her choices?
8. Social class is not terribly important in Australia.
9. The Castle gently mocks the Kerrigans’ ‘taste’, but ultimately does the film suggest that ‘taste’ is important?
10. How does Darryl react when he is defeated in court? Explain and discuss his reaction.
11. Darryl has neither money nor formal education, but feels confident dealing with anyone. What qualities allow him to mix easily with such a range of people?
12. Note some of the humorous moments in the film. Why do they make us laugh?
13. Do you think that non-Australian audiences would enjoy the film as much as Australians?
14. Discuss the resolution of the film. What message is instilled in the way the story ends?
15. Australia is a multicultural, accepting society.
16. A sense of community is an important part of any neighbourhood.
17. In what ways does the film draw on and reflect the ‘stereotypical Aussie’?
18. It is important to live by your principles.
19. It is important to stand up for yourself.
20. Wayne is in jail for a serious offence. Why do you think the film-makers included such a character in the Kerrigan family?
21. ‘Typical Aussie blokes’ feel deeply but sometimes have difficulty expressing this/communicating with others.
22. Places can be sacred.
23. Money isn’t everything.
24. To be satisfied with what you have is the key to happiness.
25. It is possible for the ‘little’ people to beat the big corporations.
Fiction for young adults 
reading list (annotated)

KEY
★ Good 
★★ Very Good
★★★ Excellent

**Killing Darcy**, Melissa Lucashenko ★★ real life, with a touch of Aboriginal 
dreamtime mythology
Stunning first novel from a young writer: the story of an aboriginal boy and a white brother 
and sister, who get involved in a suspenseful adventure involving a “magic” camera that 
they found in an old abandoned house near their country property.

**Vigil**, Nadia Wheatley ★★ real life
Moving story of how a youth, Nathan, deals with the deaths of his two best mates. About 
dealing with grief, friendship, loyalty and guilt.

**Chain of Hearts**, Maureen McCarthy ★★★ real life
Sophie is in Year 12 and going through a terrible time – deteriorating relationship with her 
mother, lack of success at school, death of a close friend – so she is sent away from it all to 
stay with her Aunt Fran in Sydney. There she finds that she is not the only one with 
problems.

**Princes**, Sonya Hartnett ★ real life
Suspenseful and a little weird, the story of male twins and their struggle for domination.

**Love Takes You Home**, Julie Capaldo ★★ real life
Lovely story of life as a member of an Italian family and Grace’s special relationship with 
her Zio, an excellent cook.

**The Climb**, Libby Hathorn ★ real life/fantasy
Peter is climbing up the outside of a building to rescue his girlfriend and as he climbs, he 
thinks about his life.

**the devil latch**, Sonya Hartnett★ real life
In this book, the writer explores the mind of a schizophrenic - 18 year-old Kitten Latch - 
who thinks he is the devil.

**Queen Kat, Carmel and St Jude Get a Life**, Maureen Mc Carthy ★ real life
About three friends - country girls - who are starting their university studies in the big city

**Sleeping Dogs**, Sonya Hartnett ★★ real life
Rivetting account of an off-beat, anti-social family who run a caravan park, and what 
happens when a stranger arrives to stay and discovers too many of their secrets.
**Holding On**, Donna Sharp ★★ real life
The story focuses on Marty, a confused and angry 17 year-old whose mother left eleven years ago and whose father is about to remarry. About adolescence, divorce, sexual relationships, parenting, friendship, and much more.

**Wilful Blue**, Sonya Hartnett ★★ real life
Interesting and captivating study of the troubled mind of a young artist and the effect he has on those around him.

**Wyrd**, Sue Gough ★★★ real life/fantasy
About Queen Berengaria, a 13th Century prioress, Trace, a 20th Century street kid, a couple of female archeologists and the evil Doctor Horniman, and how their paths cross.

**B is for Burglar**, Sue Grafton ★ crime fiction
Engrossing murder mystery, solved by likeable Private Investigator, Kinsey Millhone.

**Cross My Heart**, Maureen Mc Carthy ★ real life
Michelle is running away from home and she teams up with Mick, who is an ex-crim.

**Night Music**, Nigel Gray ★★ Real Life
A great story. About Louisa, her father who is an artist, and her lover, Paddy, who is caught up in IRA terrorist activities.

**This Boy’s Life**, Tobias Wolff ★★ Real Life
Engaging account of a boy growing up in the fifties.

**Tell Me I’m Here**, Anne Deveson ★★ Real Life
Deveson’s account of her life with her son who had schizophrenia.

**A Long Way to Tipperary**, Sue Gough ★★ Humour
Humorous tale of a band of runaways who travel around Queensland performing concerts.

**The House Tibet**, Georgia Savage ★★ Real Life
About incest, street kids, sex, growing up, relationships and working out values. Explicit, hard-hitting and contemporary.

**Prices**, David Mc Robbie ★ Adventure/Romance
Ben and Sara get involved in a criminal activity, which sets them on an exciting adventure, and their romance develops along the way.

**Lee Spain**, David Metzenthen ★ Real Life
Lee is a teenage runaway and Prue gives him a lift. He goes to her place to stay and things develop from there.

**Street of Dreams**, Daryl Mc Cann ★★ Real Life
Easy to read and authentic-sounding, this is about a 17 year-old boy’s thoughts and feelings about school, death, friendship and his first love, Angie.
The House Guest, Eleanor Nissan ★★ Fantasy/Real Life
Interesting story of psychic teenager, Gunno, who burgles houses, and his meeting with a ghost.

Peter, Kate Walker ★★ Real Life
Peter tries to work out his sexuality. Sensitive treatment of a delicate issue.

Maestro, Peter Goldsworthy ★★ Real Life
About the relationship between a piano teacher and one of his students.

I For Isobel, Amy Witting ★★ Real Life
Treated badly by her parents, Isobel turns to writing to banish some psychological demons.

The Journey, John Marsden ★★ Real Life/Fantasy
A boy is sent on a journey of discovery by the society in which he lives, to prepare him for life.

Blue Days, Donna Sharp ★ Romance
About growing up and coming to terms with the death of a parent.

Just Us, Gabrielle Carey ★ Real Life
About the relationship between a prisoner and a woman on the outside (the author).

After January, Nick Earls ★★ Real Life
Alex has just finished Year 12 and he’s holidaying by the seaside, where he meets and falls in love with Fortuna. This is the story of their romance.

Falling Forward, David Metzenthen ★★ Real Life
A beautiful story about the friendship between two boys: lively “pop star”, Troy, and Bruce, a dim-witted oaf with a heart of gold. Reminiscent of Steinbeck’s Of Mice and Men, only without the tragedy.

Guitar Highway Rose, Brigid Lowry ★★ Real Life
Modern Australian tale of two 15 year-olds and how they run away together. Told in an interesting way, with headings and short paragraphs of the characters’ thoughts, their letters and memos.

touching earth lightly, Margo Lanagan ★★★ Real Life
No holds barred in this story of love, friendship, suicide, liberal parents and sexual abuse. Lanagan really gets into the hearts and minds of her two main characters, Janey and Chloe, and even though the reader might be shocked and disturbed by what they say and do, we can’t help but care about what happens to them.

Finn and the Big Guy, David Metzenthen ★★ Real Life
A “growing up” story about Finn, a barely literate 15 year-old, whose love of horses gets him a job, some friends and a boost in self-confidence. The book is easy to read; the characters are authentic and likeable, and there is some suspense.