

A Level English Literature – Year 11 Transition Work

English Literature at A Level is an explorative course that will challenge you to read widely, construct informed arguments and use texts as a lens through which we can question the world around us. It is a rigorous and demanding course – as such, the project below has been designed to give you a realistic flavour of A Level study.

The project has been structured over 4 weeks. You will need to manage your time carefully and stay motivated to get the most out of your learning. Make a plan at the start of each week to organise your work. This is a deliberately challenging project – we want to give you the opportunity to showcase your skills and show us your ideas and opinions. Be brave!

Educating Rita – Willy Russell

Week 1: Research

Research the topics listed below – aim to create an A4 mindmap/knowledge organiser for each topic:

- **The Open University** – When was it founded? What is its purpose? What are its values and mission?

Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3li9qGkJkw> - 1 hour documentary on the history of the Open University

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_University

<http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/strategy-and-policies/mission>

- **Willy Russell** – his life and work (including his connection to the Everyman Theatre)

Resources:

<http://www.willyrussell.com>

<https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/willy-russell>

- **The Women's Movement in Britain post 1960**

Resources:

<https://www.bl.uk/sisterhood/timeline>

<https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-life/international-womens-day-a-comprehensive-guide-to-the-feminist-waves-a3780436.html>

Week 2: Read

Read *Educating Rita* by Willy Russell.

You can access the full text for free here: openlibrary.org – sign up for access and search for the text. Alternatively, physical and Kindle editions of the text are available on Amazon.

Readinglength.com states this will take around 3 hours with an average reading speed.

You might also want to watch the film adaptation with Michael Cain and Julie Walters, available on Amazon. However, this project must be rooted in the **original text**.

Week 3: Plan

Complete an essay plan answering the question, 'Education is the route to freedom' – to what extent do you agree this is the case in *Educating Rita*?

Hints and Tips:

Before you begin planning you need to decide what you think! Spend time considering the below:

- Think carefully about the idea of 'freedom'. What is it? What does it look like? What is freedom not?
- Think carefully about the idea of 'education'? What is it? What does it look like? Are there different types of 'education'?
- Consider the characters of the play. Are they 'free'? Are their freedoms different? How? Why? Is 'education' to thank for this freedom?

Revisit your research notes and consider how these ideas might be relevant to your response.

You may find the attached essay template (final page of this document) useful in structuring your planning.

Week 4: Write

Write up your essay – use formal language and include quotations and references from the text where appropriate.

Aim for at least 1000 words. Please use size 12 Times New Roman font.
Proof read and edit your essay carefully to ensure it reflects your ability.

Email your completed essay to HFielding@walton-ac.org.uk

We are passionate about our subject and will loudly enthuse about its benefits until the cows come home! However, to keep you motivated, here are some words of encouragement from recent A Level Students:

'I shouldn't have beaten myself up for finding it hard at the beginning, it is a big jump and you won't instantly be writing amazing essays but you will get there. I've most enjoyed the discussions, sharing your opinions and hearing other interpretations of a text.' Year 13

'The most enjoyable part of A Level English is the in depth discussion that we get the opportunity to engage in. It forces you to look at things from more than one perspective and forces you to justify your opinion. The style of essay is a bit different to GCSE, but there is so much help and advice in altering the way you write once you start the course.' Year 12

'If reading is a bit of a task for you, I feel as though that would be the most challenging part. For me, I love reading, so the most challenging aspect has been writing the essays at a more advanced level and stopping myself from resorting to GCSE 'tick box' analysis and zooming in on individual words. Instead, I try to identify how ideas can be widened into a 'bigger picture' interpretation.' Year 12

'It's hard work, but the books are more interesting! You get more one on one time with your teachers which means that if you do struggle, they are there to help you out. The classes are actually more fun than you think due to being treated more like an adult and having more independence in your learning.' Year 12

Preparation for Autumn Term

Political and Social Protest Writing

Key texts studied in Year 12 are:

The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood

The Kite Runner – Khalid Hosseini

*Songs of Innocence and Experience** – William Blake

You should buy and read the novels over the summer holiday.

*Songs of Innocence and Experience will be provided for you in anthology form – you do not need to buy this text.

This unit is a genre study – familiarity with other texts within this literary tradition will be a considerable advantage for all students and are imperative for success at the highest level. As such, we would encourage you to read and explore a range of texts from the list below. This is a concise selection of our favourites that will support your learning in Year 12.

A Level texts are texts written for adults. Please be aware that some of these texts may contain themes, language and events that reflect this

Ray Bradbury	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>
George Orwell	<i>Animal Farm</i> <i>1984</i>
Charles Dickens	<i>Bleak House</i> <i>Great Expectations</i> <i>Oliver Twist</i> <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>
Toni Morrison	<i>Beloved</i>
Charlotte Bronte	<i>Jane Eyre</i>
Kazuo Ishiguro	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>
Zadie Smith	<i>White Teeth</i>
Virginia Woolf	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
Michael Cunningham	<i>The Hours</i>
Moshin Hamid	<i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>
Alice Walker	<i>The Color Purple</i>
Louisa May Alcott	<i>Little Women</i>
Margaret Atwood	<i>Life Before Man</i>
Harper Lee	<i>To Kill A Mockingbird</i>
Andrea Levy	<i>Small Island</i>
Marilyn French	<i>The Women's Room</i>
Kathryn Stockett	<i>The Help</i>
Sarah Waters	<i>Fingersmith</i>

Education is the route to freedom. To what extent do you agree this is the case in Willy Russell's *Educating Rita*?

Introduction:

1. How have you interpreted 'education' and 'freedom'?
2. Suggest what you believe to be the purpose of the text in relation to the question.
3. Try to summarise your overall argument in a few sentences – to what extent do you agree?

Main Body 1

1. What is the point you are trying to make? This must relate to your overall argument.
2. Evidence from the text – quotations or references.
3. Exploration of evidence – explain how your evidence demonstrates your point and explore the evidence in the context of the play.
4. Refer back to the question and your position.

Main Body 2

1. What is the point you are trying to make? This must relate to your overall argument.
2. Evidence from the text – quotations or references.
3. Exploration of evidence – explain how your evidence demonstrates your point and explore the evidence in the context of the play.
4. Refer back to the question and your position.

Main Body 3

1. What is the point you are trying to make? This must relate to your overall argument.
2. Evidence from the text – quotations or references.
3. Exploration of evidence – explain how your evidence demonstrates your point and explore the evidence in the context of the play.
4. Refer back to the question and your position.

(You may, of course, have more than 3 main body paragraphs – aim for 3 as a minimum)

Conclusion

Here, you may demonstrate your personal engagement with the text. You might wish to comment on:

- How the text still holds relevance today
- Why the text successfully explores the ideas of freedom and education

Top tips:

- Ensure you focus on the question consistently throughout
- Make sure your argument is clear – at the end of your essay your reader should know exactly what you think
- Keep your phrasing simple and clear. High quality essays present complex ideas that are precisely communicated. Don't use an online thesaurus or pepper your essay with irrelevant literary terminology – it will not benefit your writing!
- Be brave – we want to hear your ideas and interpretations