

TRANSITION TO A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

Welcome to A Level English Literature!

The aims of the English Literature course are to encourage you to develop your interest in and enjoyment of literature and literary studies as you:

- read widely and independently both set texts and others that you have selected
- engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and ways of responding to them
- develop and effectively apply your knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation in writing
- explore the contexts of the texts you are reading and others' interpretations of them.

Task One

Throughout the course you will be honing and enhancing your essay technique. You will need to develop a consistently fluent and accurate writing in appropriate register, which is well-structured and coherent.

You can get started by reading this essay by George Orwell.

http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit

Task Two

Your study of English Literature will involve your using a variety of approaches by which to analyse literary texts.

- One possible approach is a **feminist** analysis.

Check out the following websites for a glimpse of how this works:

women'shistory.about.com/od/feminism/a/feminist_criticism.htm

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/11>

- A second approach is **Freudian** analysis.

Check out the following website for a glimpse of how Freudian or psychoanalytic analysis works:

public.wsu.edu/delahoyd/psycho.crit.html

- A third approach is **Marxist** analysis.

Check out the following websites for a glimpse of how this works:

Public.wsu.edu/delahoyd/Marxist.crit.html

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/05/>

Now read the following poem:

Kubla Khan

BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Or, a vision in a dream. A FRAGMENT

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground

With walls and towers were girdled round;

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,

Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,

A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:

Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst

Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,

Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:

And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever

It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion

Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,

Then reached the caverns measureless to man,

And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far

Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure

Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountains and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And with holy dread close your eyes
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

See how **Feminist** analysis can be applied to this poem.

Read:

www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1999/v/n13/005842ar.html

See also how Freudian analysis may be applied.

Read:

www.academia.edu/800777/Khubla_Khan_A_Poem_of_Sexual_Ambiguity

Write a brief summary of what these approaches tell you about the poem. Now read below to see what the main components of a Marxist approach to this poem would be:

...A Marxist interpretation of 'Kubla Khan' should focus on the enormous wealth of Kubla Khan and the hidden story behind its accumulation, his aristocratic yearning for an earthly paradise, material comforts and sensual pleasures. He can be seen as an epitome of exploitation devices as a result of which the general people are not only without a voice but also without any presence in the poem. The Abyssinian maid appears only in a vision. (From *Perspectives on Criticism: Multiple Interpretations: A Practical Guideline* – Mohit K. Jay).

Apply this approach to the poem, writing between half a side and a side of A4.

