

How to revise English Literature

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The top five basics:

- Know your texts:
 - An Inspector Calls
 - A Christmas Carol
 - Much Ado About Nothing
 - Power and Conflict poetry (15 poems)
- You need to know and be clear about plot, characters and themes
- Make sure you know relevant context about each text (why the author wrote it and the 'big' ideas that it deals with)
- Learn key quotations for each of your texts (make quotes work hard for you)
- Know your themes and links between your Power and Conflict anthology poems

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- **Know your texts:**

- Can you summarise the plot of each text in 6/8 bullet points?
- Who are the main characters of each text? What does each character represent?
- What are the key themes in the text? How do these themes link to the characters and the overall message in the text?
- What was the author's purpose in writing the text? Link this to the messages contained in the text.
- Quotes!

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- **Know your texts:**

- Choose a text. Can you summarise the plot in 6/8 bullet points?

For example, Much Ado About Nothing:

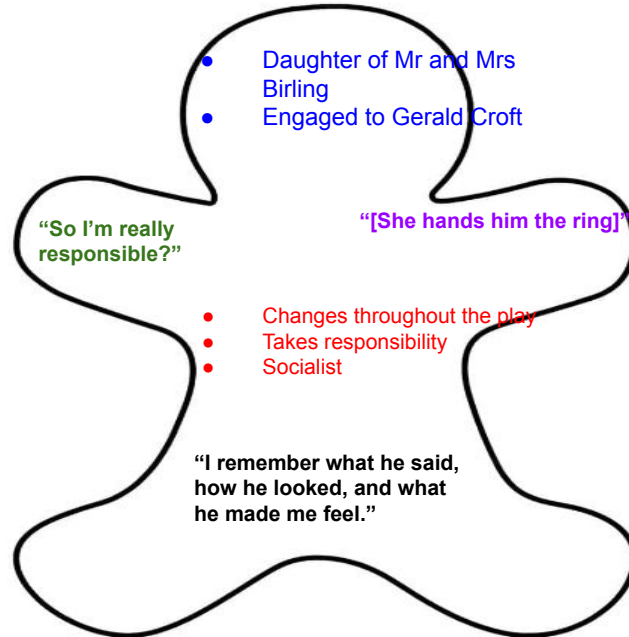
1. The men return to Messina after a war. Don Pedro is victorious and has brought his half brother back (Don John). They will stay at Leonato's house.
2. Benedick and Beatrice quarrel and Hero and Claudio fall in love at first sight.
3. Don John plots before the masked ball to ruin the marriage of Claudio and Hero.
4. The friends of Benedick and Beatrice both agree to trick them into falling in love with each other.
5. Don John 'shows' Claudio that Hero has been unfaithful and Claudio disgraces Hero at their wedding.
6. Hero pretends to be dead whilst her friends and family vow to clear her name.
7. Benedick and Beatrice realise they truly do love each other, whilst Don John's evil plot has been discovered.
8. Hero's name is cleared and she marries Claudio, and Beatrice and Benedick also marry in a happy ending for all.

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- **Know your texts:**

- Choose a character from one of your texts and create a gingerbread revision map for them

Sheila Birling

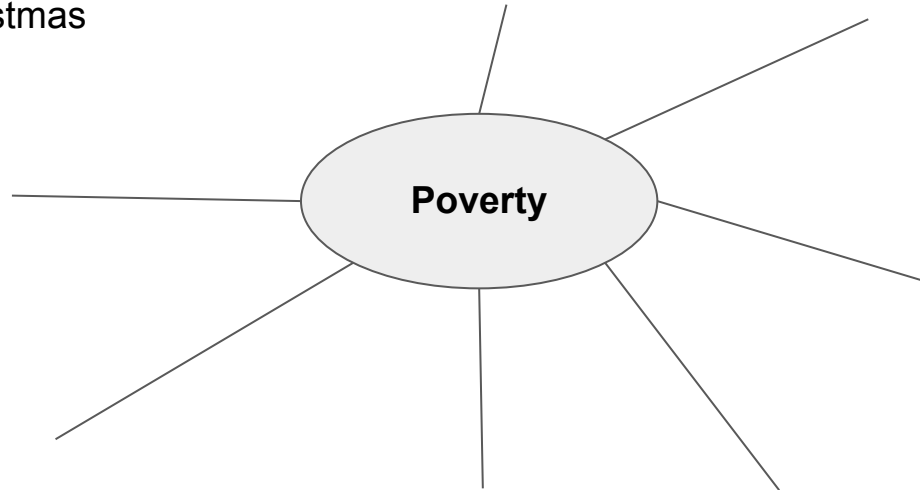


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- **Know your texts:**

- Choose a theme from one of your texts. How does it link to different parts of the text?

An example from A Christmas Carol:



The Cratchits at Christmas dinner make do with what they have “nobody said it was a small pudding for a large family” Clearly Dickens is suggesting that it was too “small” but the family made do with what they had. Here Dickens shows the cheerfulness of the poor in the face of extreme poverty, which is a criticism of wider society and Scrooge as they had the power to improve the plight of the poor for the greater good in society, but were instead motivated by greed.

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- **Know your texts:**
 - Context: why did the author write the text? Go back to your work on themes and look for the messages that are presented.

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- **Know your texts:**
 - Quotes!
 - The key is making your quotes work hard for you!
 - Choose quotations that link to both characters, themes and the overall message of the text - this means they can be used in lots of different ways for different exam questions.

For example:

“Girls of that class”

This quote could be used in a question on Mrs Birling, social class, responsibility, attitudes towards women etc