

GCSE English Literature

Set Text Mini-Quotes To Memorize

With Core Terminology Too



Random Kitten

Lord Williams's School English Department

1. An Inspector Calls

The Inspector

- *chain of events*
→ the links between the Birlings and Eva – a chain of moral responsibility
- *I don't play golf*
→ Does not care about class, and so can't be intimidated by Birling
- *members of one body*
→ how he describes the links between people in society – everyone is important
- *fire and blood and anguish*
→ what happens if people won't change – WW1 / WW2 / Judgement Day

Mr Birling

- *unsinkable*
→ Looks foolish because he's talking about the Titanic – dramatic irony
- *look after himself*
→ His 'every man for himself' attitude – no such thing as society
- *lower costs and higher prices*
→ Wants to lower wages – only cares about profit
- *public scandal*
→ afraid of losing his reputation (even though he thinks he's done nothing wrong)

Mrs Birling

- *girls of that class*
→ Prejudiced against working class people
- *how disgusting*
→ Attitude to Gerald's affair – because it's not 'the done thing' and involves sex
- *accept no blame*
→ refuses to accept moral responsibility – total lack of sympathy for Eva
- *confess in public*
→ What she says the baby's father should do – ironic, because he turns out to be Eric

Sheila

- *so happy tonight*
→ Eva's suicide ruins her evening – spoilt and shallow
- *aren't cheap labour – they're people*
→ sympathy for working class – rejection of father's attitude to workers
- *absolutely furious*
→ At her mother and Eva when the dress looked bad on her – feels humiliated
- *same old way*
→ accuses parents of learning nothing from the Inspector's visit

Gerald

- ***couldn't have done anything else***
→ agrees that Birling had to fire Eva – does not see workers as people
- ***keep it from him***
→ tries to hide what he did
- ***it wasn't disgusting***
→ refuses to talk about Eva as if she was just a prostitute
- ***but is it a fact?***
→ First to question whether the Inspector and his story are real

Eric

- ***squiffy***
→ Slang for drunk. He drinks alcohol to cope with being unloved by his parents
- ***could have kept her on***
→ challenges his father over his firing Eva – stands up for himself
- ***didn't even remember***
→ Unclear whether or not he raped Eva
- ***killed them both***
→ Holds his mother responsible for the deaths of Eva and his child

Eva Smith

- ***right type for it***
→ Was pretty and dignified despite being poor
- ***just to make it last longer***
→ Reason for going to the seaside – memories are all she has left
- ***refused to take any more***
→ Won't take more stolen money – more honest than the Birlings
- ***millions and millions and millions***
→ Inspector's words – Eva stands for all poor people in this political play

2. Jekyll and Hyde

Henry Jekyll

- ***duplicity of life***
→ two sides to him – tension - why he wants to escape his bad side
- ***morbid sense of shame***
→ feels ashamed of his (sexual?) behaviour – wants to escape his bad side
- ***mystic and transcendental***
→ the forbidden scientific knowledge he wants – like Adam and Eve and the fruit in Eden
- ***ordinary secret sinner***
→ Like many Victorians, he is a hypocrite who pretends to be better than he really is
- ***delighted me like wine***
→ reaction to becoming Hyde for the first time – intoxicating, enjoyable, addictive

Edward Hyde

- *trampled calmly*
→ He is remorseless, calculating and violent, like a criminal
- *ape-like fury*
→ He is violent and less evolved – the evolution / Darwin connection
- *Satan's signature*
→ He belongs to the Devil and deserves to go to hell
- *sea of liberty*
→ He wants total freedom without any social rules or laws; a metaphor

Links Between Jekyll and Hyde

- *animal within me*
→ Hyde is Jekyll's dark / evil / violent / irrational /sexual side
- *ghost of some old sin*
→ Hyde is Jekyll's hidden past come back to haunt him
- *not truly one, but truly two*
→ all humans have split personalities – good / bad or conscious / unconscious
- *tall / dwarfish*
→ Jekyll and Hyde are opposites; Hyde has not grown morally

Mr Utterson

- *austere*
→ rejects pleasure; feels guilty of his desires; up-tight
- *fairly blameless*
→ a respectable Victorian gentleman with a reputation to lose
- *last reputable acquaintance*
→ the last friend of people in trouble – makes us like him
- *lover of the sane*
→ rejects the irrational / supernatural

Dr Lanyon

- *greed of curiosity*
→ wants to see Hyde transform – greed for forbidden knowledge undoes him
- *locked into his safe*
→ a letter from Jekyll – wants to avoid the truth
- *O God!*
→ exclamation, reaction to seeing Jekyll's transformation – shock kills him
- *unscientific balderdash*
→ his reaction to Jekyll's kind of science – wants everything to be logical and provable

Mr Enfield

- *chief jewel of each week*
 - ➔ his walk with Utterson – perhaps unable to admit they are gay (both unmarried)
- *desire to kill him*
 - ➔ on seeing Hyde – also a hint he wants to destroy his own dark side?
- *from some place*
 - ➔ out on the street at 3 a.m. – secretly using a brothel?
- *make his name stink*
 - ➔ his threat to destroy Hyde's reputation

Gothic London

- *labyrinth*
 - ➔ gothic motif – a symbol of the unconscious mind?
- *dismal quarter of Soho*
 - ➔ disreputable working class area – Hyde's rooms are here
- *fogged city moon*
 - ➔ gothic motif – fog a symbol of mental obscurity and mystery
- *nothing but a door*
 - ➔ The laboratory door is the mysterious, hidden, back-entrance to Jekyll's house

Some Key Words for Jekyll and Hyde

- **Duality** = Having two opposite sides to your personality
- **Gothic** = The literary genre to which the novel belongs; other examples are *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*
- **Hubris** = Overstepping the boundaries set for human beings – leads to disaster ('nemesis')
- **Hypocrisy** = Saying people ought not to do something, whilst still doing it yourself
- **Motif** = A recurring image, object, or situation in a text
- **Obscurity** = A mental fog that prevents understanding, often when we lack words to describe something
- **Repression** = Forcing an idea or desire into the unconscious mind so you don't have to admit it's yours
- **Taboo** = A social rule that absolutely forbids something (e.g., murder, homosexuality)
- **The Other** = Any person rejected because they are different (in Victorian times: working class people, non-Europeans, women, gay men, transvestites, foreigners etc.)
- **The Unconscious** = The 'basement' of the mind where we hide thoughts and feelings we are ashamed of
- **Uncanny** = Something that is strange and different, but also oddly familiar

3. Romeo and Juliet

- **Star-crossed lovers**
 - ➔ Star signs mean Romeo and Juliet are fated to die (prologue)
- **I bite my thumb, sir**
 - ➔ Immature adolescent boys deliberately starting fights in first scene
- **Artificial night**
 - ➔ Romeo in his room, thinking he is in love with Rosaline
- **Ripe to be a bride**
 - ➔ Capulet talks about Juliet to Paris – treats her like an object
- **Susan is with God**
 - ➔ Juliet is Nurse's replacement daughter and Nurse is her replacement mother
- **Teach the torches to burn bright**
 - ➔ Romeo comparing Juliet's beauty with the other young women
- **Villain Romeo**
 - ➔ Tybalt feels insulted and dishonoured because Romeo gatecrashed the party
- **My only love ... from my only hate**
 - ➔ Juliet realizes who Romeo is, and how dangerous loving him is
- **Madman... Lover!**
 - ➔ Mercutio mocks Romeo because he is no longer 'one of the lads'
- **Juliet is the sun**
 - ➔ Romeo sees Juliet on her balcony – she is the centre of his world
- **Plague on both your houses**
 - ➔ Mercutio blames both families for his fatal wounds
- **Made me effeminate**
 - ➔ Romeo blames Juliet for Mercutio's death because she has made him 'unmanly'
- **Come night, come Romeo**
 - ➔ Juliet longs for Romeo to join her on their wedding night
- **No world without Verona walls**
 - ➔ Romeo feels there is nothing left for him outside Verona when he is banished
- **Nightingale ... not the lark**
 - ➔ Romeo and Juliet pretend it is not yet daytime, when they will have to part
- **I'll give you to my friend**
 - ➔ Capulet thinks he has the right to force Juliet to marry Paris
- **This knife**
 - ➔ Juliet threatens to kill herself if Friar can not come up with a plan – rather masculine
- **I defy you stars**
 - ➔ Romeo reacts to news of Juliet's 'death', saying he will refuse to obey Fate
- **With a kiss I die**
 - ➔ Romeo and Juliet are united in death, as if the tomb were a marriage bed
- **All are punished**
 - ➔ Prince sums up the effect of the feud on the community of Verona at the end

4. Anthology Poems

Ozymandias

This sonnet presents the remains of a great statue of the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramesses II as an ironic comment on the contrast between the arrogance of emperors and their inevitable loss of power. The poem is a warning to the British Empire.

- **Trunkless legs of stone**
→ The statue and the pharaoh's public image are both destroyed
- **Cold command**
→ How the pharaoh treated his people
- **King of kings**
→ The pharaoh thinks he is an almighty emperor and god
- **Lone and level sands**
→ The pharaoh's empire did not last forever – a warning to the British empire

London

Blake's poem is in part a response to the French revolution of 1789. It criticizes the British government and upper class, and is focused on the suffering of the common people of London. State, military, and Church are all attacked.

- **Marks of weakness, marks of woe**
→ The poor of London
- **Black'ning church**
→ The church is corrupt, supporting those in power against the poor
- **Blood down palace walls**
→ The Royal Family and government are guilty of sending soldiers to their death
- **Marriage hearse**
→ Teenage prostitutes are dying from sexually transmitted diseases

The Prelude

This text is an extract from a long autobiographical poem that tells the story of the poet's growing up. The poem belongs to the Romantic movement, and explores themes of guilt and the contrast between nature and mere humans.

- **Mountain echoes**
→ Echoes are voice of parents / morality telling him he's doing something wrong
- **huge peak, black and huge**
→ Boy intimidated by mountain that makes him feel small and inadequate
- **strode after me**
→ Boy feels the mountain is coming to get him
- **Trouble to my dreams**
→ Boy can't forget what he experienced – has ended his childhood innocence

My Last Duchess

The poem is a dramatic monologue in which the Duke reveals his controlling and murderous personality by commenting on the sexual behaviour of his dead wife. The Duke is talking to an ambassador representing the father of a new bride, whom he intends to marry for political reasons.

- **Curtain I have drawn**
→ Duke has total control over painting of dead duchess – she is trapped
- **Spot of joy**
→ Duchess blushed, making Duke jealous because she 'belonged' to him
- **A nine-hundred-years-old name**
→ The Duke's self-centered pride in his status
- **All smiles stopped together**
→ Euphemism for ordering servants to murder her

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Notable for its use of rhythm and repetition, the poem presents the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava (1854). The poem emphasises both the poor military planning that led to the loss of life, and the bravery of the troops involved. Often read as a patriotic poem, it can also be interpreted as a political criticism of the generals.

- **Half a league, half a league**
→ Rhythm of galloping horses – the soldiers keep riding into danger (and back afterwards)
- **The mouth of hell**
→ Metaphor for the valley where they are surrounded by cannons
- **Cannon to the right...to the left... in front**
→ The soldiers are trapped by foolish orders from generals
- **Honour...honour**
→ The soldiers did their duty, even if the orders were foolish – to avoid shame

Exposure

Written by a famous WWI poet, the text presents the experience of men dying in the no-man's land between the British and German front lines as a result of brutally cold weather conditions. Both structure and imagery create an almost dream-like train of thought.

- **Iced east winds that knife us**
→ The weather is as much of an enemy as the Germans
- **Ranks on shivering ranks of grey**
→ Clouds as a metaphor for the enemy soldiers in grey uniforms – and vice-versa
- **Flowing flakes that flock**
→ The paradox of snow being both beautiful and deadly
- **All their eyes are ice**
→ Literally true of dead soldiers, but also a metaphor for the witnesses who become used to the horror that they are emotionally 'dead'
- **But nothing happens**
→ Refrain (repeated line) which reinforces the boredom and sense of futility (pointlessness) of the soldiers' experience

Storm on the Island

The poem is an extended metaphor that uses the speaker's thoughts about his community's relationship to the barren Irish landscape to present his attitude towards the political conflict between Republicans and Nationalists in Northern Ireland. The title alludes to the imposition of direct rule by the British government in 1972, based at Stormont in Belfast.

- **Build our houses squat**
→ The well-built houses that can resist the coming storm – traditional buildings
- **Exploding comfortably**
→ The sea at the foot of the cliff – but are you safe?
- **Like a tame cat turned savage**
→ The weather can change quickly and unpredictably – it is wild
- **Bombarded by the empty air**
→ The wind is not solid / political threats are just talk

Bayonet Charge

The poem presents the experience of a soldier who has just become aware of his situation as he attacks an enemy position. A freeze-frame effect is created, allowing the poet to present both the physical reality of violent injury and more reflective ideas about fate and doing your duty.

- **Suddenly he awoke**
→ The soldier suddenly realizes he's in the middle of a battle
- **stumbling**
→ Emphasises the difficulty of moving – makes him an easy target
- **Cold clockwork of the stars**
→ The soldier is helplessly trapped by political events, war, and fate
- **King, honour, human dignity**
→ Things the soldier forgets in his desperation to just stay alive

Remains

The poem presents the experience of a soldier suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder using a first person narrative that employs colloquial language, as well as standard poetic techniques. The soldier could be talking to a counsellor or perhaps war-crimes investigators.

- **Probably armed, possibly not**
→ Was killing the man a war crime? The soldier is doubtful / uncertain about his actions.
- **Sort of inside out**
→ It was seeing the bloody corpse that traumatized the soldier
- **End of story. Except not really**
→ PTSD causes flashbacks that are frequent, sudden, and unpredictable
- **Bloody life ... bloody hands**
→ Literally and a metaphor for guilt – possibly swearing reflecting anger too

Poppies

The poem combines dress-making, the military, and childhood to present a mother's feelings for her soldier son. A response to the Second Iraq War, the poem starts with her preparing her son for a Remembrance Day parade in full dress uniform, before expressing her grief over his (implied) death in battle.

- **spasms of paper red**
→ Remembrance day poppies compared to battle wounds
- **sellotape bandaged**
→ To remove hairs from uniform, but hints at bandaging wounds
- **bird from its cage**
→ The son's death has freed him from suffering?
- **playground voice**
→ The mother recalls his vulnerability and innocence as a child. Poignant if he died.

War Photographer

The poem presents the experiences of a war photographer as he develops photographs taken on 35mm film in a dark-room. The reality of war is contrasted with the response of newspaper readers, which is presented as shallow and sentimental.

- **spools of suffering**
→ 35mm film with each frame a photo of suffering – as if the reel is never-ending
- **Running children in a nightmare**
→ The nightmare is both theirs (during the war) and the photographer's (after the war)
- **A half formed ghost**
→ A half-developed photo. A metaphor for the memories that haunt him
- **They do not care**
→ Reaction of the public to his photographs – is it really worth it? Yet he carries on.

Tissue

This non-narrative poem draws on the poet's Muslim background to present the varied uses of paper as an extended metaphor for human life. Themes of identity, personal and community tradition, politics, and the shortness of human life are explored. There are lots of different – but equally good – ways to see this poem.

- **Let the light shine through**
→ Light is a metaphor for truth and hope
- **Well used books**
→ Sign of tradition, especially if a family Koran with a family tree in
- **If buildings were paper**
→ Suggestion that our way of life is more fragile than we think – so we can change it
- **Living tissue**
→ Suggests human flesh, which is sensitive, vulnerable, and alive

The Emigr  

This first-person poem presents the experience of an exile who cannot return to the city of their birth due to the political conditions in their homeland. The poem combines references to light, childhood, and a non-democratic state in a sequence of metaphorical images.

- **was once a country**
 - ➔ Early memories are precious and magical like fairy tales
- **Bright, filled paperweight**
 - ➔ The shatterproof glass protects the memories but keeps them fresh
- **No way back**
 - ➔ Can not return. Also a metaphor for not being able to rewind time.
- **They surround me**
 - ➔ An image of her vulnerability to her enemies – yet she will not give in
- **sunlight**
 - ➔ Repeated through the poem to reinforce her hope and positive memories of home

Checking Out Me History

Using non-standard English to suggest his Caribbean accent, Agard explores his experience of being taught a history curriculum that imposes a white British identity whilst excluding the history of his own black community. His use of contrasting rhythms and contrasting choices of historical figures challenges the version of history he was taught.

- **dem tell me, dem tell me**
 - ➔ Accent shows pride in identity; English schools brainwashed students
- **bandage up me eye**
 - ➔ Stopped him knowing about or understanding black history
- **De cow who jump over de moon**
 - ➔ A traditional history curriculum that excludes immigrants
- **Carving out me identity**
 - ➔ Black people have the power to lead the way to a better future – guiding star

Kamikazi

The poem presents a daughter's narrative account of her father being ignored by his Japanese community for failing to complete a suicide mission during WWII. The beauty of nature is contrasted to the war (which is not actually described in detail).

- **Samurai sword**
 - ➔ Symbol of honour – he is a traitor and coward if he returns from mission
- **Like bunting**
 - ➔ Ironical – nature is beautiful, but no celebration for him
- **Never spoke again**
 - ➔ Family refuse to acknowledge him as he has disgraced himself
- **Better way to die**
 - ➔ Would suicide be better than total rejection by family, friends, and community?

Core Terminology List

- ALLITERATION Words Start With Same Sound
- CONNOTATIONS Extra Meanings a Word Suggests
- DRAMATIC IRONY Audience Knows Things Characters Don't
- EMOTIVE LANGUAGE Makes Us Feel Emotions
- FLASHBACK Tells What Happened Before Main Action
- FORESHADOW Hint at What Happens Later
- HYPERBOLE Exaggeration for Effect
- JUXTAPOSITION Two things Near Enough To Notice the Contrast
- LIST of THREE 3 Short Phrases In a Row
- METAPHOR One Thing * Is * Another Thing
- NARRATIVE GAP Information Left Out To Create Mystery
- OXYMORON Two-Word Contradiction
- PATHETIC FALLACY Weather Echoes Mood / Feelings
- PERSONIFY Describe a Thing As If It's A Person
- RHETORICAL QUESTION For Effect – Not to Find Things Out
- SIMILE One Thing * Like / As * Another Thing

5. Advanced Connectives

- ADDITIONALLY To Add a Similar Idea
- ALTERNATIVELY 'On the Other Hand...' / 'Instead of...'
- DESPITE 'Without Being Affected By...'
- EVEN IF To Introduce a Condition that Won't Change Things
- FURTHERMORE To Add a New But Linked Idea
- HOWEVER To Introduce a Contrast or Opposite
- NONETHELESS 'Even Though That's True...'
- RATHER THAN 'Instead of...'
- UNLESS To Introduce a Condition that Needs to Be True
- WHENEVER 'Every Time That...'
- WHEREAS To Introduce a Comparison for Contrast
- WHEREVER 'In any place where...'