Year 9 – MODERNISM (Term 2)

1901-1957

The Modernists were some extremely edgy lads & ladies, who made a point of offending as many sensibilities as they could in order to explore new territory in their work. It isn't surprising that one important journal that published these writers' works was called Blast. Three, two, one, Blast off: these guys meant to clear out the old as quickly & violently as possible to make way for new ways of seeing & being.

What is Modernism?

- Concerned with the inner-self & consciousness, defined as a rebellious period
- Rejected prominent ideas associated with the Romantic period e.g. a dismissal of idealised views concerning nature & the beauty of being. Also rejected the Victorian strict moral code. BOUNCE BACK – ROMANTICISM AND VICTORIANS.
- Associated with nihilism (the rejection of all religious & moral principles, in the belief that life is meaningless) & questioning of humanity
- Concerned with decline of civilization due to the bleakness of the industrial revolution, globalisation & the First World War.
- A highly liberating (freeing) & creative period that moved away from previous conventions e.g. modernism experimented with stream of consciousness, satire & irony.

Profile of a modernist writer- James Joyce.

- Regarded as the modernist novel inventor – one of the most important writers of the 20th century
- Modernism focuses on something seemingly ordinary & then portrays it as if it were unfamiliar & bizarre.
- The novel Ulysses (Joyce's most famous novel) focuses on one day following the protagonist Leopold Bloom (it is 783 pages long!)
- It is narrated as a stream-of-consciousness that allows the reader to trace Bloom's actions & thoughts. Consequently, the style breaks the illusion of reality.

War Poetry

- Between 1914 and 1918, over nine million people died. Entire cities were razed to the ground. Nations crumbled, only to be re-formed amidst political turmoil and enough bad blood to launch another war (World War II, to be precise) a few short decades later.
- Poets such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney have a strong association with World War One. As a group, their poems are often violent and realistic, challenging earlier poetry which communicated a pro-war message. The first-hand experience of war is arguably one reason why there is such a shift in the attitude of poets towards war.

What is Postmodernism

- The start of the postmodern era is hard to define but the end of the second world war usually marks the start.
- Postmodernism embraced disorder & refused to perpetuate (continue) the idea that 'high brow' texts were superior. It therefore dented classic ideas about literature, culture & art.
- One of the major ideas behind postmodernism is that *everything has already been done*—every story has been told, and it's impossible to be 100% original anymore.
- This attitude might seem gloomy at first, but it takes this lack of originality as a starting point and says, what the hey?—let's just have fun experimenting and drawing inspiration from those texts that already exist.

The role of women

- In the early 19th century women has no place in politics. The suffragette began in 1832 & ended in 1918 when parliament passed a bill allowing all women over 30 the vote.
- Women suffered victories but many hardships during this time, even at the hands of the police who force feed them during their hunger protests. The following people are considered influential to the cause: Emily Pankhurst & Millicent Fawcett.
- Women were presented as dangerous & villainous. The cartoons were particularly vicious.
- The industrial revolution & WW1 provided women with opportunities to prosper & be united for their country. Women, in most cases , were better represented in Literature due to their efforts in wartime.
- Anne Frank's Diary is moving text due to its autobiographical style. This authentic first hand account of hope at a time of great darkness is truly moving.

Modernist form

- **Stream of consciousness** - a person's thoughts & conscious reactions to events, seen as a continuous flow. The term was introduced by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890).
- **Satire** - the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose & criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics & other topical issues.
- **Irony -** the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic (emphasis) effect.
- **The unconscious -** Freud's idea about the stormy seas of desire and animal need that are crashing about in the back of your mind *right now.*

Possible writing purposes

Explain	Q - Explain what you think about..... ❑ Be factual ❑ Give a balanced view (but not contradictory) ❑ Use evidence to support your view ❑ Use connectives of comparison ❑ Write in 3rd or 1st person
Instruct Advice	Q - Advise the reader of the best way.... ❑ Be factual ❑ Write in present tense ❑ Use connectives ❑ Use technical terms ❑ Write in 2nd person
Argue	Q - Argue the case for/against.... ❑ Rhetorical questions ❑ Emotive language ❑ Counter arguments ❑ IAMAFORESTER
Persuade	Q - Persuade the writer of the statement that... ❑ IAMAFORESTER ❑ One-sided argument

Reading tasks

A comparative fiction analysis & comparative a non-fiction analysis

Writing tasks

A formal letter to advise & a narrative biography.

Writing a biography

- They are personal pieces of writing recording thoughts & feelings about life experiences
- The reader gains an understanding of the writer's personality
- The reader gains an insight into the writer's life
- People & places are described in detail
- Language is descriptive & imaginative
- They are written in the 3rd person

Writing a letter

- the use of addresses & date (top right)
- a formal mode of address e.g. Dear Sir/Madam or a named recipient
- effectively/fluently sequenced paragraphs
- an appropriate mode of signing off: Yours sincerely (if you know the person's name) OR Yours faithfully (if you don't know the person's name.

What is comparison & why is it important?

Comparison is when you place two things side by side to examine the similarities & differences. Comparison is vital because we can identify changes in attitudes amongst writers & learn to value different ideas, also, it will add another layer of interpretation to your writing. You can compare thoughts, language style, poetic terms, intended effects, structure & form.

Comparative conjunctions

AND – also, additionally, similarly, as, both, too, comparably, as well as, likewise	**BUT –** however, meanwhile, yet, whilst, although, in contrast, differently, although, though, differ

How does using these conventions of purpose increase the likelihood of getting the desired response?

The purpose of a text, is the 'job' the writer wants the text to do: persuade/advise/argue/entertain/inform/instruct. Writers use a specific selection of language, structure and form techniques to do that job . By following the conventions (rules) of a certain purpose, which are familiar to the reader, and normally elicit (get) certain responses, the writer is ensuring that the text does its job on the reader. So just as a hammer would not normally be effective for a relaxing massage, humour would not normally be effective for an instruction-based recipe book.

Grammar

Passive voice –
A clause or sentence in which the subject undergoes the action of the verb (e.g. *they were killed* instead of *he killed them)*.

Active voice –
A clause or sentence in which the subject does the action of the verb (e.g. *he killed them* instead of *they were killed.)*

Relative pronoun –
A pronoun which relates back to a subject already mentioned, and starts a relative clause. e.g. The man, **who** was really hungry, ate quickly.

Conditional clause –
A type of subordinate clause which begins with the conjunction 'if' or 'unless'.

Stretch yourself

Look up 'new paradigms', 'avant-garde', 'imaginism', 'vorticism', Also take a look at Virginia Woolf's writing.

Looking forward to next term….

And what has contemporary literature done for us? Well, it's broken down boundaries. Where some other eras and literary movements have tried to draw a line between high and low culture, it mixes things up. It's the opposite of snobby, and doesn't worship a particular set of "classic" authors or texts.