

Year 9 Term 2: New Voices

Many of the authors you will study this term are people that, historically, may have been excluded from the literary world. This is because of their gender, race or class.

As the world recovered from two catastrophic wars (WW1 & WW2), new voices in literature began to emerge. These new writers wanted to use their own experiences of marginalisation or prejudice to produce texts which questioned the status quo and called out certain inequalities in society. Many readers of these pioneering writers were exposed to experiences and perspectives outside of the mainstream.

Why is it important that we have diverse voices in literature? First, so that we can learn about others' experiences of life that may be different to our own, and second – so that everyone can see their own experiences reflected in literature.

Other New Voices in Literature

Fences – August Wilson
Set in the 1950s, Fences explores the evolving African-American experience and examines race relations. The main character of Fences is Troy, a working-class patriarch. Key themes: social inequality, class, racial prejudice, masculinity, family and relationships

Blood Brothers – Willy Russell
Set in the 1980s in Liverpool, the play explores the idea of nature vs. nurture and class inequalities in England. Two twins are separated at birth – one growing up rich and the other poor. Key themes: social inequality, class, family and relationships

Noughts and Crosses – Malorie Blackman
Set in a parallel society where white people are discriminated against and oppressed. The two main characters, Sephy and Callum try to maintain their friendship in a divided world. Key themes: racial prejudice, social inequality, love

A Taste of Honey - Shelagh Delaney
Set in the 50s in Salford – the play explores the life of Jo a 17 year old working class girl. The play comments on, and puts into question, class, race, gender and sexual orientation. Key themes: gender, social inequality, class, racial prejudice

Prose/Play Key Terms

Protagonist – the main character or hero of the story.
Narrative Point of View – the perspective the story is written in (1st, 3rd person, limited, omniscient).
Setting – the place/time when the text is set.
Characterisation – how a writer builds up an idea of a character through speech, dress, actions etc.
Bildungsroman – a story in which a character grows up, goes on a journey and learns new things.
Act – a 'chapter' in a play.
Scene – small section of an act.
Stage directions – instructions for director and actors.
Dialogue – talk between two or more characters.
Monologue – when one character in a play speaks at length.
Dramatic Irony – when the audience knows something that the character on stage doesn't.

To Kill A Mockingbird – Plot and Characters

- To Kill a Mockingbird is a novel by Harper Lee. Although it was **written in 1960 it is set in the mid-1930s in the small town of Maycomb, Alabama**. It is narrated by Scout Finch, a six-year-old tomboy who lives with her lawyer father Atticus and her ten-year-old brother Jem.
- Scout and her brother, Jem, learn the principles of racial justice and open-mindedness from their father, whose just and compassionate acts include an unpopular defense of a Black man falsely accused of a crime.**
- Scout Finch** - The protagonist of the story. Intelligent and, by the standards of her time and place, a tomboy.
- Atticus Finch** - Scout and Jem's father, a lawyer in Maycomb descended from an old local family. Atticus has instilled in his children his strong sense of morality and justice. He is one of the few residents of Maycomb committed to racial equality. Atticus functions as the novel's moral backbone.
- Jem Finch** - something of a typical American boy, refusing to back down from dares and fantasising about playing football.
- Charles Baker "Dill" Harris** - Jem and Scout's summer neighbour and friend. Dill is a diminutive, confident boy with an active imagination.
- Calpurnia** - Calpurnia is a stern disciplinarian and the children's bridge between the white world and her own black community.

To Kill A Mockingbird – Context

- Legacy of slavery** - Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, people were kidnapped from the continent of Africa, forced into slavery in the American colonies and exploited to work in the production of crops such as tobacco and cotton. By the mid-19th century there was a great debate over slavery that would tear the nation apart in the bloody Civil War. Though the Northern victory freed the nation's four million enslaved people, the legacy of slavery in the South continued to influence American history.
- Great Depression** - October 29, 1929, the stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression, the worst economic collapse in the history of the modern industrial world. With banks failing and businesses closing, more than 15 million Americans became unemployed which resulted in widespread poverty.
- Jim Crow Laws** - laws that enforced racial segregation in the South.
- Scottsboro Boys' Trial** - The Scottsboro Boys were nine black teenagers falsely accused of raping two white women aboard a train near Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931.
- The Civil Rights Movement** – this movement was a struggle for social justice that took place mainly during the 1950s and 1960s. Its aims were for Black Americans to gain equal rights under the law in the United States.

To Kill A Mockingbird – Themes

- Morality
- Social inequality
- Racism
- Justice
- Innocence
- Fear
- Women and femininity
- Family
- Compassion and forgiveness

Grammar – Y7 and Y8 Review

Noun types:

Concrete – A noun we can see, hear, touch, smell or taste

Abstract – A noun which we cannot experience with any of the 5 senses e.g. happiness, tension

Proper – A noun which is the name or title of something and is capitalised

Collective – A singular word used to group together a plural e.g. a group, a herd, a class

Pronouns: replaces a noun e.g. she, her, mine, that

Subject: Does the action in a sentence or clause

Verb types:

Dynamic – A verb that we can see/hear being completed – a deliberate action

Stative – A verb that we cannot see being completed e.g. I think, I believe

Imperative – A commanding verb e.g. Do this work, sit down, let's go

Modal – A verb expressing possibility or probability e.g. will, should, could, can, must

Past tense: used to describe things that have already happened **Present tense:** used to describe things that are happening now

Future tense: describes things that have yet to happen

Main clause – A clause which makes sense on its own as a sentence

Subordinate clause – A clause which does not make sense on its own as a sentence – it needs another to make it make sense – it starts with a subordinating conjunction

Coordinating conjunction – A conjunction which joins 2 main clauses FANBOYS – for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so

Subordinating conjunction – A conjunction which joins a subordinate clause to a main one – e.g. while, as, because, since, if

Simple sentence – A sentence with only one verb and one main clause

Compound sentence – A sentence with more than one main clause, joined by a coordinating conjunction

Complex sentence – A sentence with at least one main clause and at least one subordinate clause which can't stand alone as a sentence, joined by a subordinating conjunction

Grammar Y7 and Y8 Review

Adjective types:

Descriptive – An adjective which describes factual characteristics e.g. big, green

Evaluative – An adjective expressing an opinion, can be disagreed with e.g. great, boring, amazing

Emotive – An adjective which makes the reader feel a strong emotion e.g. shocking, starving, dangerous

Comparative – An adjective ending in –er or with 'more' in front of it. e.g. bigger, faster, more exciting

Superlative – An adjective ending in –est or with 'most' in front of it. e.g. biggest, fastest, most exciting

Adverb types:

Manner: tell us how something happens e.g. angrily, quickly

Time: tell us when something happens e.g. tomorrow, yesterday

Place: where something happens e.g. everywhere, nowhere

Degree: describe the intensity of an action or quality e.g. extremely, very, too

Frequency: used to describe how often something happens e.g. constantly, frequently

Grammar Y9

Prepositions

A preposition is a word that tells you where or when something is in relation to something else. Examples of prepositions include words like after, before, on, under, inside and outside.

Passive and Active Voice

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*.)

Scholars – Extra Texts

The Bell Jar – Sylvia Plath

The Bell Jar is the only novel written by the American writer and poet Sylvia Plath. The novel is semi-autobiographical. The protagonist's descent into mental illness parallels Plath's own experiences. Set in 1953 - Esther Greenwood is awarded a summer internship at a magazine in New York City. Esther feels alienated and disorientated and struggles to come to terms with the expectations for women in her society.

Anita and Me - Meera Syal

Meera Syal's novel Anita and Me is set in the fictional English village of Tollington in the 1970s. It follows the life of nine-year-old Meena Kumar, the daughter of Indian immigrants, as she attempts to define her personal identity, marked by her Indian background and the small-town, English society in which she grows up. The novel was first published in 1996. It is a semi-autobiographical novel, based on Syal's childhood in the mining village of Essington, Staffordshire.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings – Maya Angelou

A 1969 autobiography describing the young and early years of American writer and poet Maya Angelou. It is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma. The book covers topics common to autobiographies written by black American women in the years following the Civil Rights Movement: a celebration of black motherhood; a critique of racism; the importance of family; and the quest for independence, personal dignity, and self-definition.

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Invisible Man addresses many of the social and intellectual issues faced by African Americans in the early twentieth century, including Black Nationalism and issues of individuality and personal identity.