**De Aston**

**English Department**

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**Year 9: Big Imitation**

**Challenge Tasks**

**Name:**

**Week Three:**

This week, you will have read an extract from The Great Gatsby. Gatsby is famous for his extravagant parties. Your task is to come up with a character of your own who is famous for something they own or something they do that reflects their character. For example, they might be a recluse with an extensive library, or a show-off who owns a collection of fast cars or expensive paintings, or someone with a sense of adventure who is famed for his travels. Write two paragraphs giving their back story.

**Week Two:**

This week you have been looking at the importance of setting. Choose two places that have contrasting meanings to you: one may be somewhere where you feel safe; the other somewhere you feel unsafe. Write a description of each place, trying to show your feelings about each place in the way you describe it. Try to make me feel how you feel about it!

**Week One:**

This week, you have started to consider the importance of narrative voice. “The Tell-tale Heart” is told from the point of view of a man who has killed someone. He tried to convince us he is not mad, but in the process gives us lots of evidence to the contrary!

Choose your own unconventional narrator. It could be someone who society considers an outcast, like a criminal, or it could be an animal, or even an inanimate object. Try to show their viewpoint not just in the content of what you write but also in your writing style.

**Week Four:**

You have studied extracts from texts by a range of different authors over the last few weeks. Write a review either of one of the texts we have studied or of a novel you want to recommend to the rest of the class. If you are not sure what a book review should look like, look for examples online.

**Week Five:**

This week you have looked at the poem “Hour” which contains references to both the story of Rumpelstiltskin and the myth of King Midas. Choose one of these stories to research further, write it up in your own words, and then explain the links between this story and the poem.

**Week Six:**

Choose one of the poems you have studied so far and write a diary entry from the point of view of one of the characters. For example, you could imagine you are the lady who becomes the victim in Porphyria’s Lover, or the lonely farmer in Farmer’s Bride.

**Week Seven:**

Many of the poems you have studied are modern poems and specifically explore modern issues in the world of relationships. Consider the impact that social media could have one a relationship (be this a romantic relationship or a friendship) and write your own story inspired by this. You could write it in the form of a poem if you wish.

**Bonus week:**

Read the review below from the Independent and complete the ‘all’ question and one more of the questions below:

**All:** list four things you learn about the book called The Not Dead.

**Hard:** what is the writer’s view of the poet Simon Armitage?

**Harder:** how does the writer use language to interest the reader in the topic?

**Hardest:** to what extent does the text provide an informative review of this collection of poetry?

Originally broadcast a year ago in a Channel 4 documentary of the same name, The Not Dead is a short collection of war poems written, not in battle, but as a response to the testimonies of ex-soldiers featured in the programme. As Simon Armitage points out in his eloquent, self-effacing introduction, time is no "great healer" for people scarred by war. One of the former soldiers in the documentary is still unable to talk without crying about a jungle ambush he took part in nearly 50 years previously in Malaya.

Each poem focuses on a flashback scene one of the ex-soldiers has struggled to forget. "Remains", for example, written for someone who served in Basra, tries to capture the moment when he shot a man looting a bank. The body was disposed of but the man's "blood shadow" remained on the street: "I blink / and he bursts again through the doors of the bank. / Sleep, and he's probably armed, possibly not."

Who are the Not Dead? The ex-servicemen and the ghosts trapped in their memories; the people who live and die and live again every time one of the veterans experiences a bad memory. This collection offers a strange, painful kind of memorial.

**Additional challenge tasks:**

Make sure you understand what each of these words means and show your understanding by trying to use them in your classwork. Then learn how to spell them – be ready for a spelling test in the last week of term.

**Hard:**

1. Prose 2. Representation 3. Eponymous 4. Characterisation 5. Setting

**Harder:**

1. Omniscient 2. Intensifier 3. Oxymoron 4. Parody 5. Satire

**Hardest:**

1. Impertinent 2. Novice 3. Obtuse 4. Parallel 5. Superfluous

**Final challenge:**

Finally, challenge yourself to read one of the following: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon, Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier, The Ocean at the End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman, The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Driver’s Seat by Muriel Spark, The Help by Kahtryn Stockett, To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee, The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak.

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For more resources, including literacy support, visit www.deastonenglish.com