

## Saint Francis Xavier Sixth Form College English A level Preparation Tasks

### ***(Re-)Creative Writing***

- Open a favourite novel randomly, at 15 or 20 different pages across the text. On each page that you choose, pick out two or three words or phrases that leap out at you. Drawing on the most interesting and significant of these words and phrases, create a poem that gives a strong sense of the novel. Think about what the process has revealed about the novel e.g. its themes, language and style.
- Take a short extract from a novel you know well (for example, one of your GCSE set texts or your favourite book). Experiment with transforming the extract by rewriting it from a different narrative perspective, altering the time or place in which the book is set, or by changing aspects of the characters, such as their gender or age. This process is known as recreative writing. How does your new piece of writing compare to the original extract?

### ***Linguistics***

- The English language is always generating new words. The Oxford English Dictionary regularly publishes lists of words that have been newly included in English vocabulary. Have a look at some of the examples (Floss, VAR, Mansplaining etc.) in the attached list of new words from the English and Media Centre and complete the tasks on the sheet.
- Watch the clips of Deborah Cameron discussing language and gender [here](#). How far do you agree with her idea that society's fascination with the differences between male and female language is due to women and men becoming much more similar over the past 50 years? Create a mind map setting out your ideas in response.

### ***Reading***

- Why not take a risk and try to read something completely different? Find a new book to read for enjoyment. Look for ideas [here](#) or [here](#). Record yourself reviewing the book and prepare to talk about it once you start sixth form.
- Margaret Atwood wrote one of the novels that you will study at A level – The Handmaid's Tale. You are going to read an extract from one of her poems called 'A Red Shirt', which she wrote for her sister. Before you read the poem think about the connotations of the colour red. Read the extract and create a mind map of how Atwood uses symbolism in the poem.

### **A Red Shirt**

*(For Ruth)*

i

My sister and I are sewing  
a red shirt for my daughter.  
She pins, I hem, we pass the scissors  
back & forth across the table.

Children should not wear red,  
a man once told me.  
Young girls should not wear red.

In some countries it is the color  
of death; in others passion,  
in others war, in others anger,  
in others the sacrifice

of shed blood. A girl should be  
a veil, a white shadow, bloodless  
as a moon on water; not  
dangerous; she should

keep silent and avoid  
red shoes, red stockings, dancing.  
Dancing in red shoes will kill you.

### **Competitions**

Each year, we support students to enter external competitions. But you could start now! Try out this poetry competition (<https://foyleyoungpoets.org/about/>).