

English Literature A Level: what to do before September

<u>Shopping List</u>	<u>Reading and Watching List</u>	<u>Activities List</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Buy 'Othello' by Shakespeare (one with 'translations' and extra information to help you is useful) ISBN: 9781107615595	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read 'Othello' and 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', highlighting or making notes on any lines or scenes which link to the tragic genre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete the tasks in this workbook on Shakespeare and 'Othello'
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Buy 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' by Thomas Hardy ISBN-10: 1853260053	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Watch a version of 'Othello' online (keep an eye on Posts in Microsoft Teams for links). How is the tragedy heightened by the actors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete the tasks in this workbook on Thomas Hardy and 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Buy 'Death of a Salesman' by Arthur Miller ISBN-10: 9780141182742	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Watch the BBC's Tess of the D'Urbervilles (not for exact content but for an idea of characters and landscape)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Email Mrs Brown with any questions you might have as you complete the tasks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any study guide which you feel might help you (our course is AQA Literature B paper 1A and 2A and whilst there is an AQA course textbook, you do not have to get it). We study: 'Othello', 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' and 'Death of a Salesman' in Y12; 'Oliver Twist', 'Atonement' and poetry by Crabbe, Wilde and Browning in Y13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Listen to these podcasts:<ul style="list-style-type: none">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C61wse-eDwMhttps://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/othello	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have a look at this list of 'prohibited texts' for NEA (coursework). You won't do yours until next year but it's worth knowing what you won't be able to do it on (you choose one novel and one poetry collection) https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-literature-b-7716-7717/subject-content-a-level/theory-and-independence

Tasks on Shakespeare and 'Othello'

What Is A Shakespearean Tragedy and How Does 'Othello' Fit This Genre?

Create a poster or spider diagram to answer the above question(s). Research material online or in books (check they are reliable sources). This might be a good place to

start: <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/an-introduction-to-shakespearean-tragedy#>

Read 'Othello' and Make Notes (particularly on the tragic aspects)

As you read through the text, use the tasks, summaries and videos from the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) to guide your notes: <https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/othello/story/scene-by-scene>

This will not be a speedy task! There are five acts, each with a varying amount of scenes and scene lengths: look at the time you've got and plan how much you want to cover in that time. Make sure you take breaks if dedicating longer periods of time to this.

Here is an online copy of the play should your own copy not have arrived: <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/othello/>

Tasks on Thomas Hardy
and
'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'

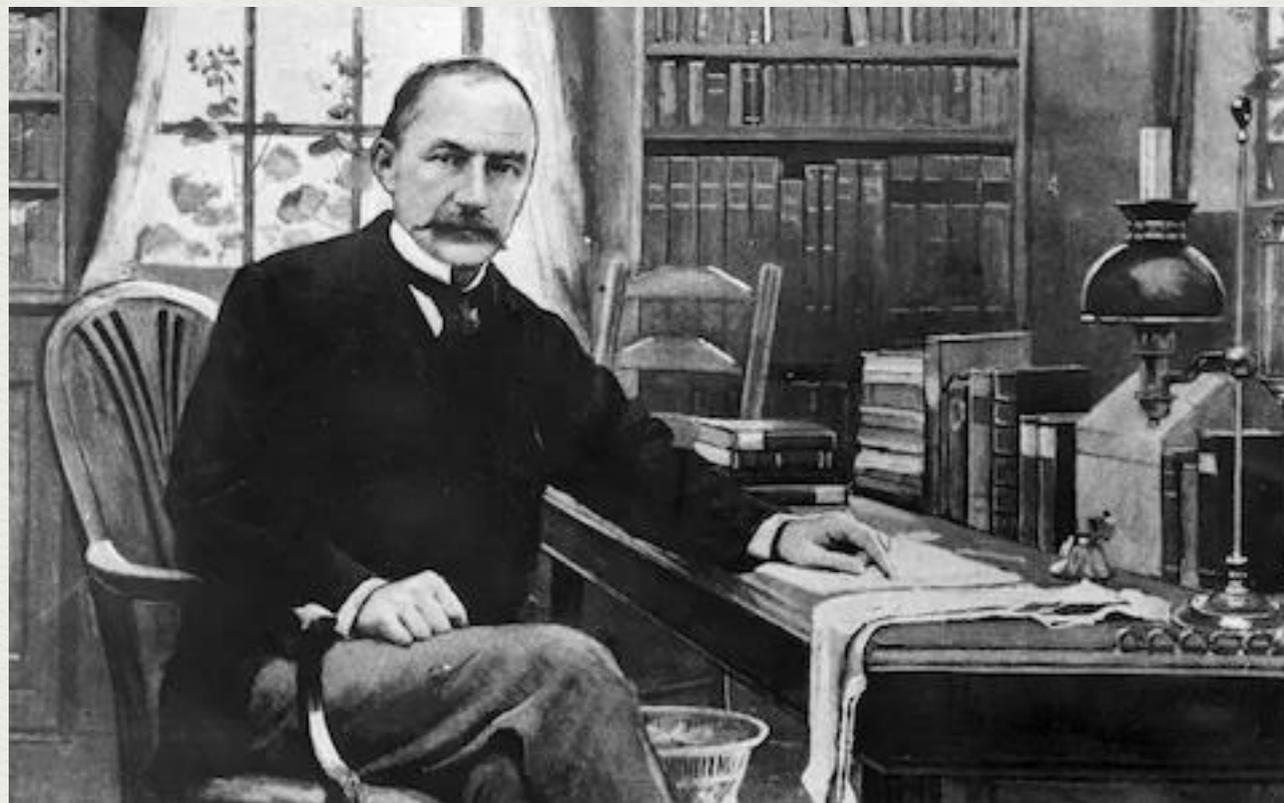


The Ruined Maid

Thomas Hardy

<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/hardy/diniejk03.html>

Read the information about Thomas Hardy on the above webpage and create a leaflet which gives a summary of his beliefs, paying particular attention to those which are relevant to 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'.



Write true or false next to these statements.

1. People in the Victorian era did not talk publicly about sex.
2. Women were supposed to remain virgins until they were married and never have affairs.
3. Women who had sex out of marriage were disowned by society and their family.
4. Hardy disagreed with Victorian attitudes to sex and women.
5. Men were not held to the same standards in society as women.
6. 'The Ruined Maid' was published in 1901 even though it was written in 1866.
7. Virgins or 'chaste' women were known as 'maids'.
8. Men were disowned if they had sex outside of marriage.
9. Women were considered equal to men in society.
10. Hardy agreed with society's attitudes towards women and sex.
11. A woman who had sex outside of marriage was known in society as a fallen woman.
12. Life in the Victorian era was easy for most working-class women because they lived in the picturesque countryside.

Answers:

1. People in the Victorian era did not talk publicly about sex. **T**
2. Women were supposed to remain virgins until they were married and never have affairs. **T**
3. Women who had sex out of marriage were disowned by society and their family. **T**
4. Hardy disagreed with Victorian attitudes to sex and women. **T**
5. Men were not held to the same standards in society as women. **T**
6. 'The Ruined Maid' was published in 1901 even though it was written in 1866. **T**
7. Virgins or 'chaste' women were known as 'maids'. **T**
8. Men were disowned if they had sex outside of marriage. **F**
9. Women were considered equal to men in society. **F**
10. Hardy agreed with society's attitudes towards women and sex. **F**
11. A woman who had sex outside of marriage was known in society as a fallen woman. **T**
12. Life in the Victorian era was easy for most working-class women because they lived in the picturesque countryside. **F**

Prostitution in Victorian England

- Although we may think of Victorian England as very strict and moral there was probably just as much behaviour that would still be considered shocking then as there is now, if not more.
- Drug taking, violent crime, prostitution, adultery and pornography all went on but were hidden under a more genteel surface leading to hypocrisy and double standards. In Hardy's time, there was also much less equality in England than there is today so there were different expectations and treatment for the poor and the rich, and for men and women.
- In the 19th century (as in some cultures and societies today) there was a double standard whereby it was usually accepted or even expected that men had sex outside marriage but women who did this were called "fallen women" and considered "ruined". They were often shunned by polite society, banished from their families, or worse, left without support, money or connections.
- Opportunities, rights and support for women were so limited that many poor women felt they had no option but to turn to prostitution to make enough money to live. However, there wasn't usually much sympathy or understanding for their circumstances. Prostitution was seen as a big problem, not only as a nuisance in society, but as a threat to morality.
- Although prostitution was not spoken about in polite society, prostitutes and adulterous and otherwise "fallen" women were popular subjects for Victorian art and literature. This sort of art and literature often conveyed a message or lesson which aimed to reinforce Victorian values and warn against sexual temptation.

Images of a 'fallen woman'

The three paintings on the following pages entitled *Past and Present* by Augustus Egg (1858) tell a story of a woman who has been unfaithful to her husband, with disastrous consequences for herself and her family.







The Ruined Maid

BY [THOMAS HARDY](#)

"O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?" —
"O didn't you know I'd been ruined?" said she.

— "You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;
And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!" —
"Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined," said she.

— "At home in the barton you said thee' and thou,'
And thik oon,' and theäs oon,' and t'other'; but now
Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compa-ny!" —
"Some polish is gained with one's ruin," said she.

— "Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak
But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,
And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!" —
"We never do work when we're ruined," said she.

— "You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem
To know not of megrims or melancho-ly!" —
"True. One's pretty lively when ruined," said she.

— "I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!" —
"My dear — a raw country girl, such as you be,
Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined," said she.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67g3RRrJZHk>

Questions to answer

- 1. What might be in the letter the husband is reading in the first painting?
- 2. What do you think is the symbolism (the meaning or significance) of:
 - the woman's fall in the first painting
 - the house of cards being built by the children
 - the open door reflected in the mirror?
- 3. What is the effect of the facial expression of the child looking towards us in the first painting?
- 4. What is the difference in mood between the first and the last two paintings?
- 5. What do you think the two girls are thinking about in the second painting?
- 6. Look carefully at the moon in the second two paintings. What does it tell us about when the scenes take place?
- 7. What do you think is the significance of the fragmented words in the last painting? And what is the woman holding?
- 8. What do you think of the way the woman is represented? For example, do you think the linking of the paintings make it seem as if the woman's unfaithfulness led to her fate?

- Considering what you now know about how “fallen women” were usually represented in the literature and art of the time, decide which of the descriptions on the next slide you think will apply to ‘Melia as she is now – a “ruined maid”, and which might apply to a farm girl. Write them into the correct ‘girl’. Look up any unfamiliar words.

"in tatters"

"such prosperi-ty"

"tired"

"hands like paws"

"face blue and bleak"

"lively"

"gay bracelets"

"talking quite fits 'ee for high company"

"fair garments"

"without shoes or socks"

"polish"

"little gloves fit as on any la-dy"

"delicate cheek"

"melancholy"

"said 'thee' and 'thou'"

"sigh"

Which statement do you agree with the most and why?

1. The girls' lives are equally as bad
2. Hardy is suggesting that the girls are both unhappy
3. The country girl is jealous of 'Melia
4. Men use both girls
5. 'Melia's life hasn't really improved
6. The country girl will probably end up just like 'Melia.

After reading 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', write a summary of what Hardy wanted to highlight about Victorian society through his tragedy. Link it to 'The Ruined Maid' where you can.

