



English Literature:GREATEST HITS!

Teaching Materials

A Note on using these materials

These teaching materials are here to supplement the experience of seeing the show 'English Literature:GREATEST HITS' and to give you some ideas for working in class. However, the show is designed to be a light introduction to some of the great writers and it is not necessary to prepare for it. Therefore we recommend that you work with these materials after seeing the show.

Please note too that the work in these materials is set at a higher level than the show itself. So please do not use these materials as a guide to help you judge if the show will be suitable for your students.

Most of the sections are presented in the form of exercises that may be done with students. However the section 'Beowulf' simply contains extra background information on the poem in case you are interested. You should consider ahead which sections you really want to do with you students and what is really suitable for their level.

Section 1 - Beowulf

Beowulf is an old anglo-saxon poem – written down around the year 1000.

The old manuscript where the poem is written is in the British Library in London.

We don't know who actually wrote the poem. The author is referred to as 'The Beowulf Poet.'

Another common theory is that Beowulf was an old traditional oral poem. That means it wasn't written straight to the page, but was remembered by poets and spoken aloud. Each generation of 'reciters' probably changed it a bit. So the version of Beowulf we have today was just the last in a long line of individual versions.

The original anglo-saxon text really is not easy for modern readers. It is basically impossible to understand. However, even a great modern English translation needs some work to follow. It may be difficult, but you can see both here.

*So. The Spear-Danes in days done by
And the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness.*

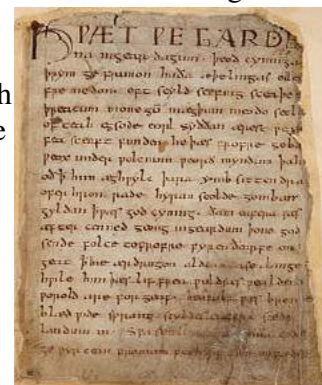
We have heard of those prince's heroic campaigns.

*There was Shield Sheafson, scourge of many tribes,
A wrecker of mead-benches, rampaging among foes.*

This terror of the hall-troops had come far.

A foundling to start with, he would flourish later on

As his powers waxed and his worth was proved.



This text is from the Irish poet Seamus Heaney.



Section 2 - Geoffrey Chaucer

Exercise 1

Here is an extract from The Merchant's Tale by Chaucer. It tells the basic story of Adam and Eve. Can you change it into more modern English?

**The hye God, whan he hadde Adam maked,
And saugh him al allone, bely-naked,
God of his grete goodnesse seyde than,
"Lat us now make an helpe unto this man
Lyk to hymself"; and thanne he made him Eve.**

Exercise 2

Chaucer's most famous work is the Canturbury Tales. A group of travellers are walking together on a long journey, a pilgrimage, to Canturbury cathedral. As they walk they take it in turns to tell each other stories.

In the show we tell 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', but here are two more Canterbury Tales. The exercise here is to read one of the stories yourself. Then find a partner who has read the other story. Take it in turns to tell each other the stories. You have just one minute. Don't read out the text from the page, try to tell the story in your own words.

The Pardoner's Tale

Three young men hear that their friend was taken away by Death. They go to look for Death so that they can také revenge on him. An old man tells them that they will find Death under a certain tree. When the three friends arrive at the tree they just find a large pile of gold. They are so excited by the gold that they forget about their mission to find Death. They agree to sleep under the tree and leave with the gold the next day. One of them goes away to bring food and drink. While he is gone, the other two agree that they will kill him. However, he has his own plan to kill the other two by putting poison in the wine. When the friend returns with the food and wine, the other two do kill him. But then they drink the poisoned wine and die themselves. So all three of them did find death under the tree.

The Manciple's Tale.

Phoebus has a crow, which is all white and can speak. Phoebus also has a wife, who he f loves but he keeps her shut up in his house. Phoebus's wife, still manages to find a lover and she sees the lover in the house when the husband is out. The crow, however, knows their secret, and tells Phoebus what is happening. Phoebus in rage kills his wife. But later he is sorry, he regrets his act and blames the crow. He curses the crow with black feathers and a rough, unmelodious voice. The Manciple ends by saying his moral that it is best to keep quiet and to not to say bad things even if they are true.



Section 3 - Shakespeare

Exercise 1

Match the story with the name of the play.

The Taming of the Shrew

King Lear

Hamlet

1. – A young prince is unhappy because his father, the old king, has died and now his uncle is the new king. To make things worse, his mother has married this uncle. One night the dead king's ghost comes to the prince and tells him that he was actually killed by the uncle who took his crown. The ghost tells the prince that he must take revenge and kill the uncle. The prince thinks about it for a long time, but can't decide what to do.

2. - In Padua there is a law that a young girl can not get married, if she has an older sister who is not married. This is the situation of a young man who loves a girl, whose sister is bad tempered and always arguing. So nobody wants to marry her. But then one man comes to marry her. He is quite mean to her, he lets her be cold and hungry, but in the end she becomes a nice and obedient wife.

3. - An old king gives all of his land to his three daughters on the condition that they tell him how much they love him. The older two daughters say fantastic things and get a lot of land, but the youngest daughter just says that she loves him normally, as a daughter should. The king is furious and sends her away. He gives her share of the land to the other two daughters. However, when he goes to visit the daughters that he gave the land to, they don't look after him. They leave him outside in a storm. In the end it is the younger daughter who comes back and tries to help him.

Exercise 2

Here are some of the most famous speeches in Shakespeare. Match the speech with the explanation. Can you 'translate' the speeches into a more simplified modern English version?

A - Hamlet is trying to work out what is the best way to live – to tolerate your fate, or to take action against your problems.

B - Duke Orsino is trying to distract himself and not think about the woman he loves.

C - Richard III talks about how his family just won the Wars of the Roses.

D - Macbeth is extremely depressed (and hasn't slept for a long time). He talks about how pointless life is.



The Bear Educational Theatre

Theatre helping your students to learn English

Speech 1

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time.
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death.

Speech 2

To be or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to set sail upon a sea of troubles
and by opposing end them.

Speech 3

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.

Speech 4

Now is the Winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this son of York.
And all the clouds which lowered on our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

Section 4 - Writer names quizzes

Quiz 1

Put the writer together with the work and say which country they came from.

Mark Twain	Jane Eyre	English
Robert Louis Stevenson	For Whom the Bell Tolls	
Sir Walter Scott	Huckleberry Finn	American
Ernest Hemingway	Treasure Island	
Charlotte Brontë	Waverley	Scottish

Quiz 2

Who wrote these famous works, **Jane Austen**, **Charles Dickens**, or **Oscar Wilde**?

Oliver Twist	The Picture of Dorian Gray	Pride and Prejudice
Great Expectations	Sense and Sensibility	

Thank you for visiting The Bear Educational Theatre!



EXTRA: 8 classic English poems

A Red, Red Rose

By Robert Burns

*O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune!*

*As fair thou art, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I:
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:*

Endymion

by John Keats

*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.*



Daffodils

by William Wordsworth

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

Oh Captain! My Captain!

by Walt Whitman

*O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is
won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.*



She Walks in Beauty
by Lord Byron

*She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.*

The Cloud
by Percy Shelley

*I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.*



The Eagle

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

*He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.*

*The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.*

The Fly

by William Blake

*Little Fly,
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.*

*Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?*

*For I dance
And drink, and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.*



English Literature: GREATEST HITS!

Teaching Materials – ANSWERS-

Section 2 - Geoffrey Chaucer

The hye God, whan he hadde Adam maked,
The high God, when he had made Adam,
And saugh him al allone, bely-naked,
And saw him all alone, stark naked,
God of his grete goodnesse seyde than,
God of his great goodness said then,
"Lat us now make an helpe unto this man
"Let us now make a helper for this man
Lyk to hymself"; and thanne he made him Eve.
Like to himself"; and then he made him Eve.

Section 3 - Shakespeare

Exercise 1

The Taming of the Shrew - 2

King Lear - 3

Hamlet - 1

Exercise 2

A - Hamlet is trying to work out what is the best way to live – tolerate your fate, or take action against your problems.

Answer – Speech 2

B - Duke Orsino is trying to distract himself and not think about the woman he loves.

Answer – Speech 3

C - Richard III talks about how his family just won the Wars of the Roses.

Answer – Speech 4

D - Macbeth is extremely depressed (and hasn't slept for a long time). He talks about how pointless life is.

Answer – Speech 1



Section 4 - Writer names quizzes

Quiz 1

Mark Twain - Huckleberry Finn - American
Robert Louis Stevenson - Treasure Island - Scottish
Sir Walter Scott - Waverley - Scottish
Ernest Hemingway - For Whom the Bell Tolls - American
Charlotte Brontë - Jane Eyre - English

Quiz 2

Oliver Twist - **Dickens**
The Picture of Dorian Gray - **Wilde**
Pride and Prejudice - **Austen**
Great Expectations - **Dickens**
Sense and Sensibility - **Austen**

Extra exercise - Elevator pitches

Students have to prepare to tell others about a film or a book that they like or that they think the others should also experience. The problem is that they only have one minute to do it in. There are different ways to set this up, but we recommend that students work in groups of five or six. Each student has to prepare an elevator pitch, but they will deliver their pitch only to the other members of their group. All of the groups in the class are therefore giving their pitches and talking at the same time. This reduces the pressure on students who are 'performing' in front of a small group instead of the whole class. The teacher should have a watch and say 'start' and 'stop' at the end of the minute.

The exercise is a good way to practice all aspects of presentation skills. The key to making an effective pitch is to prepare just two or three main points that you want to make and be sure that those points are made very clearly. Don't talk too fast and don't try to say too much.

Extra exercise - Working with Poems

Poetry can be intimidating for students, especially poetry in a foreign language. This exercise is designed to help students connect to poems in a stress-free way.

- Print the eight poems in the document '8 classic poems for The History of English Literature'.
- Stick them up on the wall in different places around the room.
- Tell the students that they shouldn't try to read all of the poems, but that they should walk around the room and choose one poem to be their favourite. (Give them a few minutes. You could play music while they walk around.)
- The students should finally decide which poem they feel is their favourite and stand next to it.
- On a count of three, ask them to all read their poem aloud at the same time. (Point out that because everybody is talking at the same time, nobody is listening to them personally.)
- Then make groups of three or four from people who chose different poems.
- One person from the group will take the others to visit their favourite poem. They should explain what they think it is about and why they chose it.
- Then another member of the group should take the group over to their poem and do the same.