

Research  
Based  
Curricula



**Literary Legacy: from  
Romanticism to Beckett**  
Key Stage 5  
English  
Literature

2020



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# For Students Getting Started

*RBC means Research-Based Curriculum,. Each RBC coursebook is written by a PhD student at a university about their cutting edge research.*

## **Why complete an independent 'RBC' study pack?**

RBC courses are challenge courses to sharpen your skills and resilience: finishing a RBC course is a major accomplishment to add to your academic CV. To get into the university, you must demonstrate that you are intellectually curious, and will make the most of the academic opportunities available to you. Completing a pack will allow you to gain invaluable experience to write about in your university application..

It allows you to:

- ✓ Build your subject experience to mention in your UCAS Personal Statement
- ✓ Sharpen your academic skills
- ✓ Experience what it's like to study beyond school and at university
- ✓ Better understand what you enjoy and don't
- ✓ Improve your overall subject understanding ahead of final exams





# For Students Getting Started

## What's in this booklet?

Your RBC booklet is a pack of resources containing:

- ✓ More about how and why study this subject
- ✓ Six 'resources' each as a lesson with activities
- ✓ A final assignment to gauge learning
- ✓ Extra guidance throughout about the university skills you are building
- ✓ End notes on extra resources and where to find more information



## Who should complete this pack?

Anyone interested in improving their academic skills or understanding what they should do at university. *This pack is especially great for anyone interested in studying **English Literature**, and who want to explore a new topic.*

Even if you are unsure of where your interest in these subjects can take you, by completing this pack you will have a clearer idea of the variety of subjects that link to one another.

If you have any questions while you are using the resources in this pack, you can contact your teacher or email us directly at [schools@access-ed.ngo](mailto:schools@access-ed.ngo).

Good luck with your journey to higher education!





# For Students University Skills



To complete this resource, you will have to demonstrate impressive academic skills. When universities are looking for new students, they will want young people who can study independently and go above and beyond the curriculum. All of these skills that you will see here will demonstrate your abilities as a university student – while you're still at school!

Every time you have to look something up, or write up a reference you are showing that you can work independently.

Every time that you complete a challenging problem or write an answer to a difficult question, you might demonstrate your ability to think logically or build an argument.

Every time that you evaluate the sources or data that you are presented with, you are showing that you can "dive deep" into an unfamiliar topic and learn from it!

## Skills you will build for university:

### independent research

your ability to work on your own and find answers online or in other books

### creativity

your ability to create something original and express your ideas

### problem solving

your ability to apply what you know to new problems

### building an argument

your ability to logically express yourself

### providing evidence

your ability to refer to sources that back up your opinions/ ideas

### academic referencing

your ability to refer to what others have said in your answer, and credit them for their ideas

### deep dive

your ability to go above and beyond the school curriculum to new areas of knowledge

### source analysis

your ability to evaluate sources (e.g. for bias, origin, purpose)

### data interpretation

your ability to discuss the implications of what the numbers show

### active reading

your ability to engage with what you are reading by highlighting and annotating



# Where can this subject take me?

## Pathways

Studying Biology or Psychology can open the doors to many degrees and careers. It intersects with microbiology, chemistry, physiology, and sociology. Whatever interests you is likely to relate to biology in some way. See a snapshot of where studying Biology and Psychology can take you.

### 'Transferrable skills' from English Literature to a career:

- critical analysis skills
- evaluation of sources and information
- strong written and verbal communication skills
- ability to manage your own time and learning
- research skills

## What are some are the 'interdisciplinary' subjects in this course?

Interdisciplinary is a term you will hear used by higher education institutions. It's also how many professionals and academics in the real-world operate: they use multiple subjects, or disciplines, to achieve their work.

By thinking about which subjects you like, alongside maths, it can help you choose a career pathway later.

Read more about subject selection and careers pathways:

<https://targetjobs.co.uk>

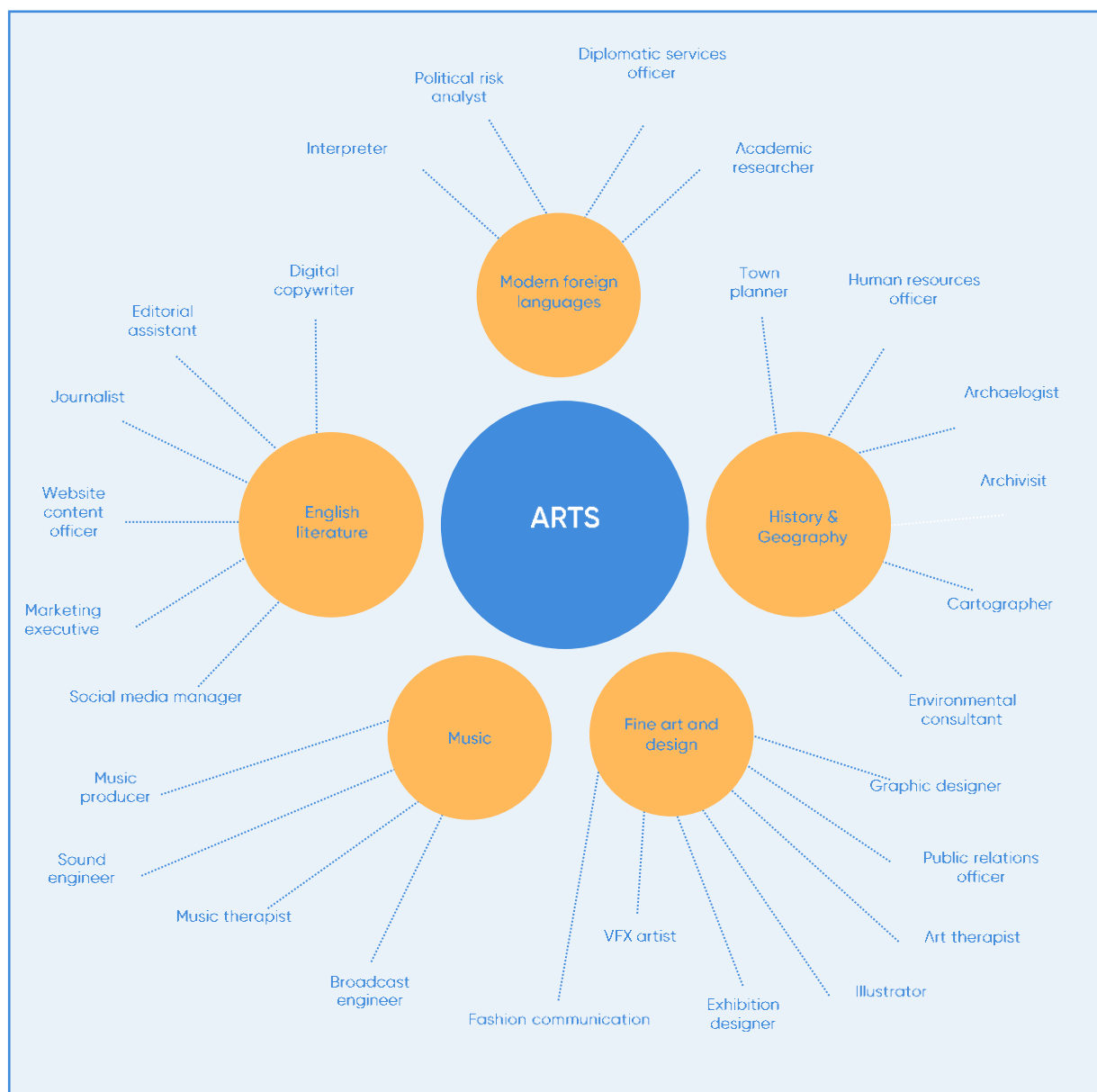
<https://www.prospects.ac.uk>

<https://thinkuni.org/>



# Subject map: Arts and Humanities

Arts as a subject choice is quite popular with students, and it doesn't just mean visual arts like painting or design. These subjects often complement one another and around 24.7% of students with an Arts degree go on to do a Masters' degree in a subject that is within the broad field of Arts and Humanities. Furthermore, a lot of these students get jobs in Marketing, PR and sales.



Find our about Science-related careers here:  
 PROSPECTS: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk>  
 TARGET JOBS: <https://targetjobs.co.uk>



# For Teachers

## RBC Guide

- Learner aims** The Research-Based Curriculum aims to support student attainment and university progression by providing classroom resources about cutting-edge research at local universities. The resources are designed to:
- ✓ promote intellectual curiosity through exposure to academic research
  - ✓ stretch and challenge students to think deeply about content that may be beyond the confines of the curriculum
  - ✓ develop core academic skills, including critical thinking, metacognition, and written and verbal communication
  - ✓ inform students about how subjects are studied at university, and provide information, advice and guidance on pursuing subjects at undergraduate level

**Content** The programme represents a unique collaboration between universities and schools. Trained by AccessEd, PhD Researchers use their subject expertise to create rich resources that help bring new discoveries and debates to students.

The Research-Based Curriculum offers ten modules suitable for either KS4 or KS5 study. The modules span a range of disciplines, including EBacc and A-level subjects, as well as degree subjects like biochemistry. Each module includes six hours of teaching content, supported by student packs, teacher notes and slides. All modules are available online and free of charge for teachers at select schools.

**Using the RBC pack** These resources are designed to be used flexibly by teachers. The resources can be completed by students individually or in groups, in or out of the classroom.





# For Teachers

## Using the RBC packs

Here are five examples of delivery options:

### Extra-Curricular Subject Enrichment Clubs

The resources can be completed in small groups (4–8 pupils) across a series of weekly lunch clubs or after-school clubs. Groups can reflect on their learning by presenting a talk or poster on the subject matter at the end of the course.

### University Access Workshops

The resources can be used by students to explore subjects that they are interested in studying at university. This can inform their decision making with regards to university degree courses, and allow students to write more effective personal statements by including reflections on the Research-Based Curriculum.

### Research Challenge

The resources can be used to ignite curiosity in new topics and encourage independent research. Schools could hold a research challenge across a class or year group to submit a piece of work based on the resources. Pupils could submit individually or in small groups, with a final celebration event.

### Summer Project

Resource packs can function as 'transition' projects over the summer, serving as an introduction to the next level of study between KS3 and KS4, or KS4 and KS5. Students could present their reflections on the experience in a journal.

### Why offer these?

The Research-Based Curricula programme builds on the University Learning in Schools programme (ULiS), which was successfully delivered and evaluated through the London Schools Excellence Fund in 2015. The project was designed in a collaboration between Achievement for All and The Brilliant Club, the latter of which is the sister organisation of AccessEd. ULiS resulted in the design and dissemination of 15 schemes of work based on PhD research for teachers and pupils at Key Stage 3. The project was evaluated by LKMCo. Overall, pupils made higher than expected progress and felt more engaged with the subject content. The full evaluation can be found here: [ULiS Evaluation](#).

### Questions

For more information contact [hello@access-ed.ngo](mailto:hello@access-ed.ngo)



# Introduction to Topic Literary Legacy: from Romanticism to Beckett

The topics within this pack will include:

What is Romanticism?

Who is Samuel Beckett?

Modes of Expression from Romanticism to Beckett

Pre- and post- war Beckett

How does Beckett's writing relate to Romantic thought?

Beckett's Romantic Silence

This coursebook looks at the movement of ideas across time in English Literature; you will learn how literary themes can recur in similar ways in vastly different time periods such as the Romantic era and the twentieth-century. To this end, the coursebook introduces you to the concept of Romanticism and considers the passage of ideas from this era to a key figure in twentieth-century literature, Samuel Beckett.

The working title of my research is, simply, 'Beckett and Romanticism'. As this suggests, it is quite a large topic area which considers two key periods in literary history; the Romantic movement and the twentieth-century literary landscape through the lens of Samuel Beckett.

Throughout this coursebook, you will learn what the Romantic movement and the twentieth-century literary landscape were like. The resources will focus on the contrasts and connections between Romantic thought, theories and ideas and Beckett's writing, considering the passage and transmission of ideas through the ages. My thesis investigates whether Beckett's (particularly early) reading of Romantic literature influenced his creative development. The reason I place specific emphasis on his early reading is because this enables me to gain insight into the Romantic thought which was circulating within his mind during his formative years. As William Wordsworth, a famous English Romantic poet, said: 'the child is the father of the man', meaning the things which impact us in youth ultimately shape who we become or, in an author's case, what we write. Therefore I use a chronological approach, studying Beckett's engagement with Romantic literature throughout his life alongside an analysis of his writing. This allows me to trace how he developed as a writer and to perceive the impact his reading of Romanticism had on his work.



# Introduction to Topic Literary Legacy: from Romanticism to Beckett

Throughout these resources you will first gain an understanding of what the Romantic movement is and who Beckett is, then we will establish the main literary theme with which the coursebook is concerned – modes of expression.



# Introduction to Subject English Literature



The resources encourage you to look at other influences on Beckett's minimalistic expression, allowing you to develop and defend your own critical interpretation. By the end of this coursebook you will have a well-rounded knowledge of the influences which acted upon Beckett, and you will be able to construct a debate on the importance (or not) of investigating a writer's reading to show the movement of ideas and theories across time.

English Literature is a vast and diverse degree to study at university. It does not only open new, interesting and exciting modes of thought, but it also develops and enhances your transferable and interpersonal skill set in a variety of unique ways which are applicable to many jobs. In my opinion, there is no better way to advance your written and verbal communication skills than by studying an English Literature degree.

Core modules in English Literature studies ensure that you have the crucial basis of knowledge needed to understand the social, political, cultural and personal elements of different periods in literary history. For example, you will know dates of key events, which writers were active at what time, and how their work was received at the time of production, over time and with today's readers.

The great thing about English Literature is that, even though these essential modules ensure you acquire the relevant and necessary knowledge base, the course is by no means prescriptive. That means you will study one set module per semester, and you will get to choose the other two from a selection of available modules yourself. And there is always quite a varied and intriguing selection to choose from.

# Introduction to Subject English Literature



The dissertation writing is the best part – in your final year, once you are equipped with all the necessary scholarly apparatus, you get to create your own unique project, and you really can write about anything you wish. It is a freeing, fun and fascinating course to pursue.



# Meet the PhD Researcher Emma Keanie



At school, I studied English Literature, Geography and Spanish for A-level and obtained an AAB. I had applied to the University of Liverpool to study Geography, and when I received my offer 'something' told me it was not right. On the very same day, I applied to study English Literature at Ulster University and accepted my offer. The reason it came through so quickly was because I was able to apply through a process called 'adjustment': this is when your predicted grades (ABB) are lower than the grades you achieved (AAB), which really emphasises the necessity of doing your very best at school!

I will always cherish the three years of my undergraduate degree in English. It is an experience which has shaped my academic and personal development and that has created opportunities which I would not have accessed otherwise. Since 2018, I have been a contributing reviewer for *The Beckett Circle*, the official Samuel Beckett newsletter, and I have four theatre reviews published across two editions to date. After graduating in July 2018, I began my Masters in English Literature that September, also at Ulster, and graduated as a Master of Arts in December 2019. My MA dissertation expanded on my undergraduate research, exploring and exhibiting the connections and contrasts between Beckett's writing and Romantic literature. My current doctoral research is a natural progression from my previous undergraduate and postgraduate study. When asked how I thought of the deeper links between Beckett and Romanticism, the truthful answer is wide reading, persistent application and boundless enthusiasm for the material.



# Meet the PhD Researcher Emma Keanie

I began my PhD at the University of Reading in January 2020. Reading offers flexible modes of study, as I am a ‘by distance’ researcher which means that I am a student at Reading whilst I live, work and study in Northern Ireland.

Reading is the global hub of Beckett Studies, home to the Beckett Archive and the Beckett International Foundation, and my aim is to contribute to their unique research output with my work on the influence of Beckett’s reading of Romanticism on his creative development. I also have some creative writing published in several literary journals: a one-act play in the *Qutub Minar Review*, a poem in Issue III of *The Raven Review*, two poems in *Capsule Stories’s* Summer 2020 Edition and four in their Autumn 2020 Edition. In July 2020, I was interviewed by *Capsule Stories* about my writing and research.

My decision as an eighteen-year-old to change my degree from Geography to English Literature has altered the course of my professional and personal life in the most wonderful way. My advice to you is to invest your time and energy in studying and doing something you love – it is important to be aware of career pathways and opportunities, and most of all to understand the importance of doing things your own unique way. Alongside my doctoral research, I work as a classroom assistant in a primary two class as I am passionate about children’s learning and development and wish to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of primary school teaching. I am increasingly interested in working with both primary and secondary level students in a teaching and supportive capacity, and hope that you enjoy studying this coursebook based on my specialist research area.

<b>A-Level Subjects</b>	English Literature, Geography, Spanish
<b>Undergraduate</b>	English Literature
<b>Postgraduate</b>	Masters in English Literature

# Glossary



Term	Definition
Aesthetic	Related to the appreciation of beauty and the principles underlying an artist's work
Austerity	Strictness or severity of manner or attitude; without luxuries or frills
Autocratic	Domineering; or relating to a ruler with absolute power
Compatriot	A fellow citizen of a country
Constitutional	Relating to an established set of principles governing a state
Diction	The choice and use of words or phrases
Emotionalism	The quality of being excessively emotional
Enlightenment	A European intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries which emphasised reason above tradition
Equanimous	Calm or composed
Extant	Still in existence



# Glossary



Term	Definition
Genesis	The origin of something
Ideology	A system of beliefs, ideas or principles
Impoverishment	The state of being, or being forced into, extreme poverty
Insatiable	Impossible to satisfy
Intellectual	Relating to the intellect
Minimalism	A style or technique characterised by simplicity
Psychotherapy	The treatment of a mental disorder by psychological means
Rationalism	The practice of basing something, such as an opinion, on reason or knowledge rather than on an emotional response
Semantics	The meaning of a word or phrase
Voracious	Devouring great quantities of something

# Resource One Overview



Topic	What is Romanticism?
A-level Modules	Texts in Shared Contexts
Objectives	<p>By the end of this resource, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Discuss a key epoch (time period) in literary history – the Romantic period</li><li>✓ Understand how social, political and cultural elements intersect the literary</li><li>✓ Develop comparative study skills in a shared context</li></ul>
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the data source</li><li>2. Complete the activities</li><li>3. Explore the further reading</li><li>4. Move on to the next resource</li></ol>





# Resource One

## Data Source

### Section A

#### Discovering the roots of Romanticism

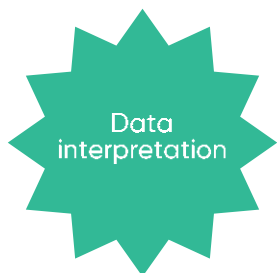
Throughout this resource students should reflect on how the social, political and cultural climate impacts the literary. For the purpose of this resource, students will engage with poems by two English Romantic writers whilst gaining a broader understanding of the Romantic movement and its genesis.

#### Background

Romanticism, also known as the Romantic era, was an intellectual, literary, musical and artistic movement of European origin during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The title of Tim Blanning's book, *The Romantic Revolution*, indicates how Romanticism is characterised by a spirit of rebellion and a longing for freedom.

Consider Isaiah Berlin's description of the Romantic movement as:

*a new and restless spirit, seeking violently to burst through old and cramping forms, a nervous preoccupation with perpetually changing inner states of consciousness, a longing for the unbounded and the indefinable, for perpetual movement and change, an effort to return to the forgotten sources of life, a passionate effort at self-assertion both individual and collective, a search after means of expressing an unappeasable yearning for unattainable goals.*



Berlin depicts Romanticism as an era of restlessness, emotional extremes and the feeling of longing for something unknown. He also ends with a description of the Romantic search for definitive expression, which means the 'right' words to convey (or define) that sense of yearning for some unknown thing that they fail to attain. The concept of definitive expression is integral to this coursebook as we look at how Romantic writers (like Beckett after them) endeavoured to achieve a mode of expression or the *mot juste* (meaning 'right word') to clinch their thoughts and feelings with precision.



# Resource One

## Data Source

To gain a deeper understanding of the Romantic movement, how it came to be and why it is largely associated with extremes of emotion and a restless spirit, it is important to consider the roots of Romanticism, meaning from where these central characteristics of emotionalism and revolution stemmed.

Two identifiable roots of Romanticism are:

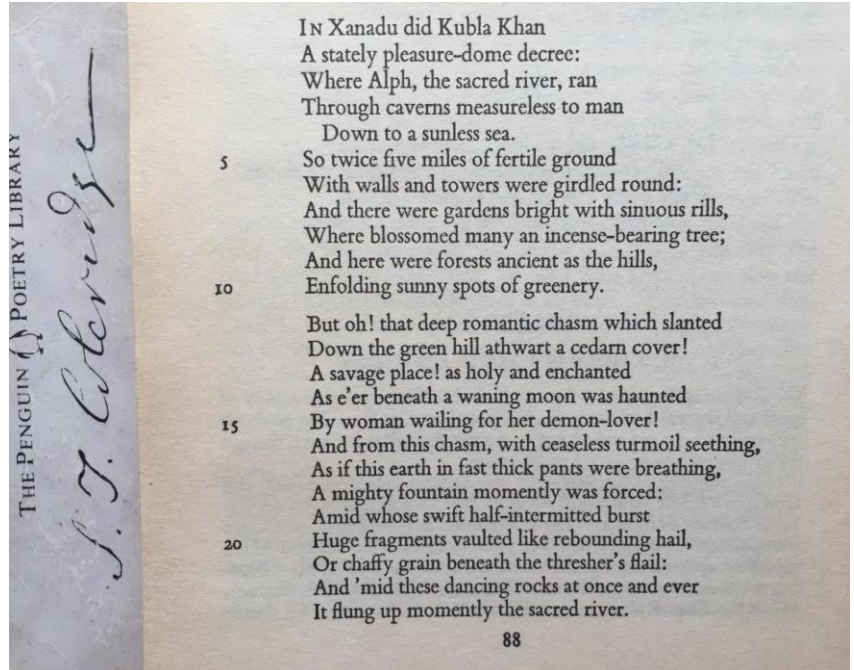
- The German *Sturm und Drang* (meaning storm and stress) movement. This roughly spanned two decades from the late 1760s and occurred mainly in German literature and music. It placed value on the freedom of expression and emotional extremes, reacting against the perceived restraints of enlightenment ideology such as rationalism. *Sturm und Drang's* focus on emotionalism and individuality reflect the same primary preoccupations with feeling and freedom in the Romantic movement.
- The **French Revolution** (May 1789 – November 1799). It began with the abolition of the Ancien Régime and the subsequent creation of a constitutional monarchy, and ended when Napoleon Bonaparte was appointed First Consul (as he declared himself head of a more autocratic French government). A noteworthy event is the Storming of the Bastille on 14th July 1789, which is still celebrated today as Bastille Day. The French Revolution characterises a period of radical social and political change. Its liberal modes of thought extended into the literary, promoting the freedom of the individual imagination which is central to Romanticism.

# Resource One Data Source

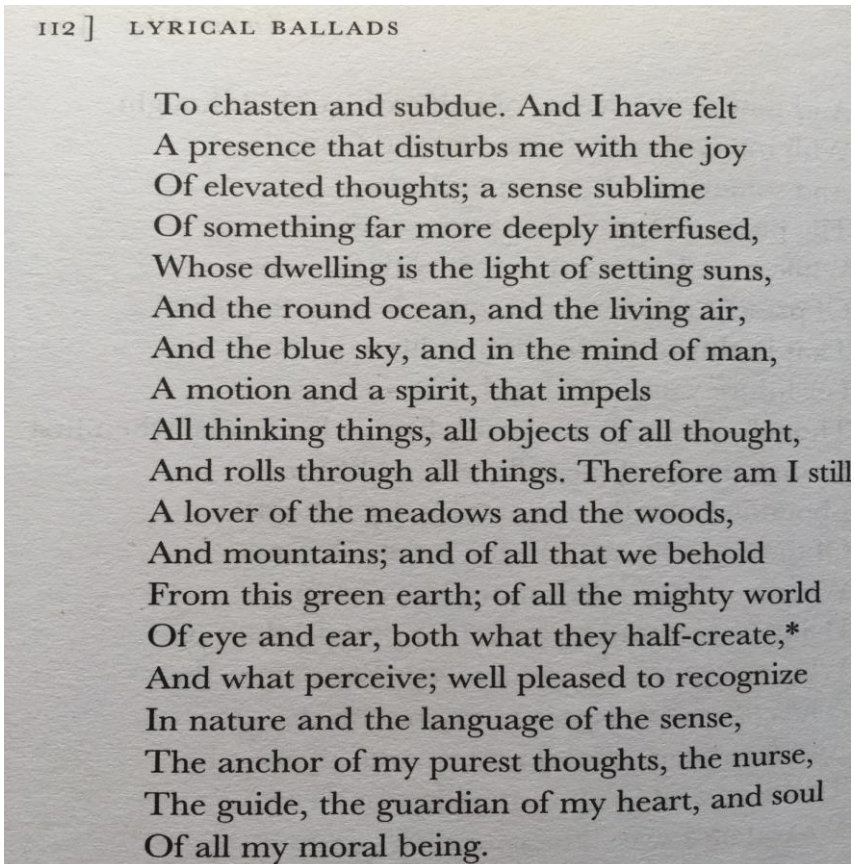


## Section B

Excerpt from 'Kubla Khan' (1797) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)



Excerpt from 'Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey' (1798) by William Wordsworth (1770-1850)



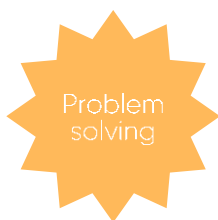
# Resource One

## Activities



### Activities

1. Can you identify the time period during which the Romantic movement occurred?
2. Considering Tim Blanning's illustration of Romanticism as a 'revolution' and Isaiah Berlin's description of the movement, what would you select as five central characteristics of Romanticism?
3. Which two key events would you cite in a discussion of the Romantic movement's origins? Which of these is more closely related to German culture, and why?
4. Using the poetry excerpts by two English Romantic writers and applying your knowledge of the Romantic era what, in your opinion, was the impact of social and political occurrences on the literature of the time?
5. Thinking about the excerpt from Wordsworth's poem, which words or phrases would you identify to support the view that Romantic writers were searching for definitive expression?



# Resource One

## Further Reading



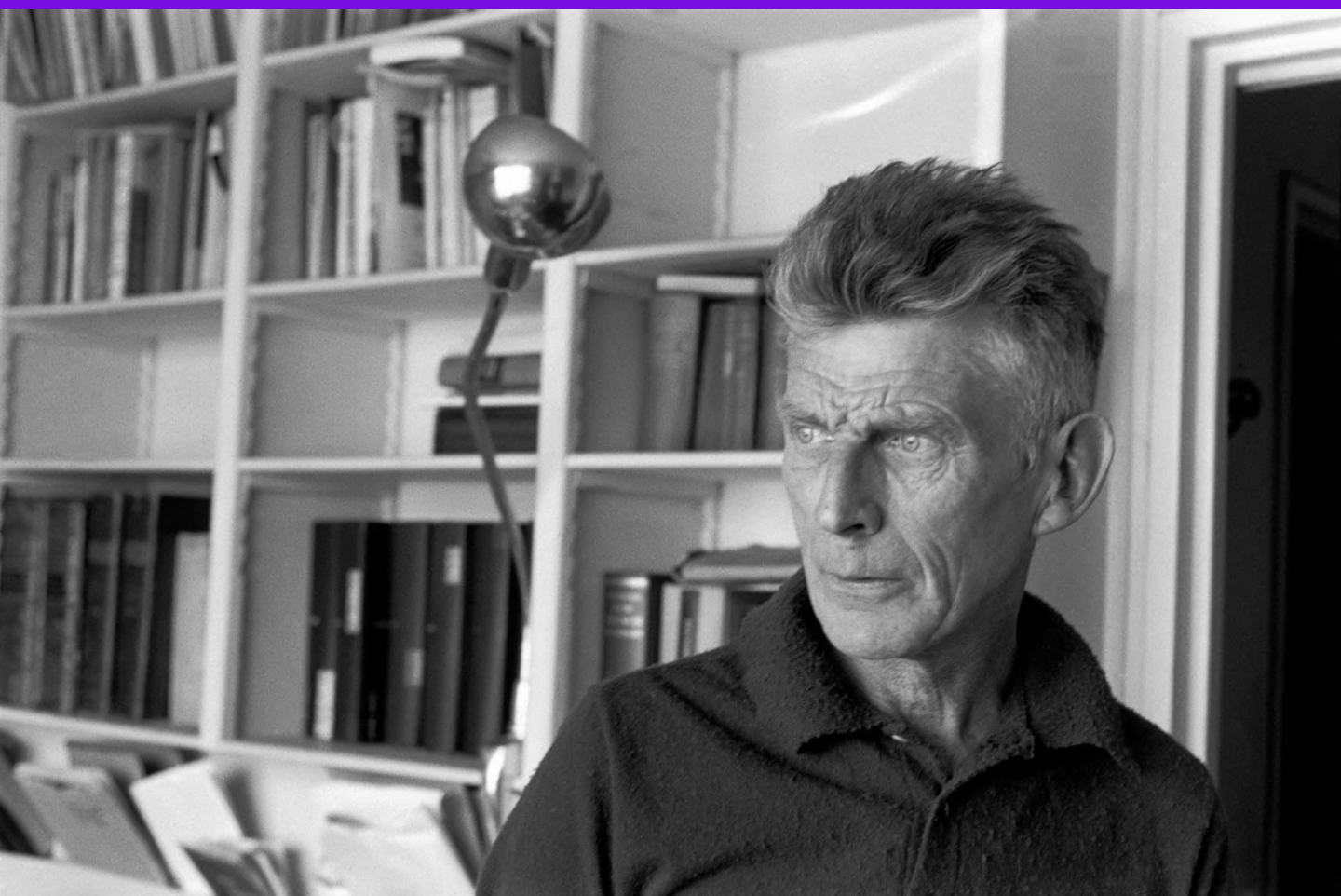
Independent  
Research

- Explore**
- 'The Romantics' by Stephanie Forward - <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-romantics>
  - The nature of Romanticism (written by the editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica) - <https://www.britannica.com/art/English-literature/The-Romantic-period>
  - Stephen Maxfield Parrish on Wordsworth, Coleridge and the *Lyrical Ballads* - <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Wordsworth#ref275660>

# Resource Two Overview



Topic	Who is Samuel Beckett?
A-level Modules	Texts across time
Objectives	<p>By the end of this resource, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Discuss key aspects of a crucial figure in twentieth-century literature</li><li>✓ Consider and validate the influence of a writer's reading on his creative thought</li><li>✓ Select relevant evidence from sources to justify your points</li></ul>
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the data source</li><li>2. Complete the activities</li><li>3. Explore the further reading</li><li>4. Move on to the next resource</li></ol>







# Resource Two

## Data Source

### Section A

#### A Short Introduction to Samuel Beckett (1906–1989)

Samuel Beckett was a poet, playwright, novelist, short story writer, literary critic, translator and theatre director born in Foxrock, Dublin, on Good Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1906. Like his compatriots William Butler Yeats, Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw, he came from a Protestant, Anglo-Irish background. Also like Wilde, his schooldays were spent at Portora Royal School in Enniskillen. He then studied Romance Languages (French and Italian with English as a subsidiary subject) at Trinity College Dublin from 1923–1927, where he earned his bachelor's degree. After a brief teaching spell at Campbell College in Belfast, he was then appointed lecteur (meaning 'reader') in English at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris.

It was here that he met James Joyce, an Irish expatriate whose most notable works include *Ulysses*, *Finnegan's Wake* and *Dubliners*. In 1930 Beckett returned to Ireland to take up a post as French lecturer at Trinity, but resigned in 1931. The following years, until his settlement in Paris in 1937, consisted of restless travel, particularly in Germany, France, London and Italy. He also underwent psychotherapy with Wilfred Bion whilst in London between 1934–36.

During the Second World War, Beckett and his partner Suzanne (later his wife) worked as part of an underground resistance cell called Gloria SMH. They narrowly escaped arrest and deportation by the gestapo when their cell was infiltrated and sold out by a Catholic priest. Beckett's friend Alfred Péron was not so fortunate, dying of malnutrition shortly after the liberation of Mauthausen concentration camp. Beckett was awarded the Croix de Guerre in 1945 for his resistance work.





# Resource Two

## Data Source



Even though he had written poetry, a collection of short stories (*More Pricks Than Kicks*), novels (*Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, *Murphy* and *Watt*), the short story 'Echo's Bones', review articles and an essay on Marcel Proust, it was not until the 1953 production of *Waiting for Godot* at the Théâtre de Babylone in Paris that Beckett began to rise to world fame. Among his major works are the prose narratives *Molloy*, *Malone meurt* (*Malone Dies*), and *L'Innommable* (*The Unnamable*).

Although he was born in Ireland and held an Irish passport throughout his life, Beckett's permanent move to Paris in 1937 has sparked much debate about his literary heritage. He wrote in both English and French, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969.

### Beckett as Reader

Beckett was a voracious reader and the extant material in his library reveals how he did not only read literature in English but also in French, German and Italian. His assiduous study of this vast and diverse reading material is known to have left its imprint on his own literary output. Indeed, Beckett himself remarked to a friend that he was a 'poor reader, incurably inattentive, always on the lookout for elsewhere', and that the reading experiences which captured him most were those 'best at transporting him to that elsewhere'. This grants us insight into Beckett as a reader; by his own admission, certain themes or theories encountered during his reading resonated in his creative imagination, his 'elsewhere'.



# Resource Two

## Data Source

### Beckett as Romantic reader

Beckett was familiar with the writing of the Romantic era. He had a particular fondness for the English Romantic poet John Keats (1795–1821). This admiration for Keats began early, when Beckett was still a teenage boy.

At Portora Royal School, the doors were closed to the boys on especially warm and sunny Sunday afternoons between the hours of two thirty and three thirty. On one such afternoon, he and his friend Geoffrey Thompson sat under the shade of a tree and learned Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' by heart. When Beckett and Thompson met again in London around six decades later, they reminisced about their reading and reciting of Keats's poem. This exemplifies how Keats is a significant Romantic figure in Beckett's life, as his engagement with the poet can be traced from his early, formative years right through to the final decade of his life.

The line 'Take into the air my quiet breath' is a well-known favourite of Beckett's from 'Ode to a Nightingale'. Its long vowel and light plosive sounds register a calm and resigned tone. Try reading the line aloud to yourself and you will find that it is mimetic – when you say 'Take into the air my quiet breath' you slowly exhale the soft sounds, and thus give into the air your quiet breath! As the following excerpts will show, it was precisely this equanimous nature in Keats that Beckett revered.



# Resource Two

## Data Source

### Section B

Excerpt from *Samuel Beckett's Library*, edited by Mark Nixon and Dirk Van Hulle

*Literature in English* 35

ROMANTICS

Despite making an exception for its German incarnation, Beckett was rather dismissive of literary Romanticism, so that the lack of books by the great English Romantic writers in the library hardly surprises. Already in his essay *Proust* (1931), Beckett had inveighed against the 'gangrene of Romanticism' (PTD 80). In the 'German Diaries', he specified that the 'only kind of romantic still tolerable [was] the *bémolisé*' [the minor key] (GD, 14 February 1937; qtd. in Knowlson 1996, 254). This attraction to the quiet melancholy, most notably expressed in the German concept of *Schwermut*, explains his love of Keats's poetry, for example, as Keats 'doesn't beat his fists on the table' (letter to MacGreevy, undated [late April or early May 1930]; LSB 21). There are two books by Keats in the library, *Selected Letters* (1954) and the bilingual *Poèmes choisis / Selected Poems* (1968), neither of which contain marginalia. Further books from the Romantic period include a nineteenth-century edition (1861?) of Byron's *Poetical Works* and a two-volume edition of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1958), which he read in 1962 'without much pleasure' (letter to Mary Hutchinson, 11 June 1962) but may well have influenced, as John Pilling (2006a, 160) has suggested, the use of 'Fancy' in *All Strange Away* (begun in August 1964). Finally, there is a copy (probably dating from 1895) of the *Selected Essays of De Quincey*, which bears the inscription 'S.B. Beckett / Trinity College / Dublin / March 1927'. Beckett must have read the first essay in the book, 'On Murder Considered One of the Fine Arts', as he copied a line from it into the 'Dream' Notebook (718).

Excerpt from *The Letters of Samuel Beckett 1929-1940*, edited by Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck

Undated letter of either April or May 1930 to Thomas McGreevy

now with a very decent irregularity.<sup>7</sup> I have been doing a little tapirising & reading Keats, you'll be sorry to hear. I like that crouching brooding quality in Keats - squatting on the moss, crushing a petal, licking his lips & rubbing his hands, 'counting the last oozings, hours by hours.' I like him the best of them all, because he doesn't beat his fists on the table. I like that awful sweetness and thick soft damp green richness. And weariness. 'Take into the air my quiet breath.' But there's nobody here to talk to, & it[']s so rarely one is enthusiastic, or glad of something.<sup>8</sup>

# Resource Two

## Activities



- Activities**
1. Can you identify and explain the differences between the two prizes awarded to Beckett?
  2. How would you assess Beckett's experience during the second world war?
  3. What evidence would you select to prove Beckett's psychological struggles during the 1930s?
  4. Beckett's comment that he was a 'poor reader' in fact shows us how important his reading was to his creativity. Can you elaborate on how this comment shows us this?
  5. How would you defend the importance of John Keats to Beckett?
  6. Considering the excerpt from *Samuel Beckett's Library*, and based on what you know, how would you evaluate Beckett's relationship with Romanticism?
  7. What evidence can you find in the excerpt from Samuel Beckett's letter that shows his admiration of Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale'?
  8. What would you cite from Beckett's letter to defend the idea that it was the notions of quietness and resignation in Keats's writing that appealed most to Beckett?





# Resource Two

## Further Reading



- Explore**
- 'Samuel Beckett' by Martin Esslin – <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Samuel-Beckett>
  - 'Beckett and Romanticism in the 1930s' by Mark Nixon – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25781787?seq=1>
  - *Beckett's Literary Legacies*, edited by Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman – <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/download/sample/57963>

# Resource Three Overview



Topic Modes of Expression from Romanticism to Beckett

A-level Modules Through the ages

Objectives By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

- ✓ Deploy comparative and connective study skills
- ✓ Determine how and why a single theme presents itself differently between two separate time periods
- ✓ Assess the importance of thinking about a single theme in literature, such as 'expression', over time

- Instructions
1. Read the data source
  2. Complete the activities
  3. Explore the further reading
  4. Move on to the next resource





# Resource Three

## Data Source

**Section A** When thinking about the concept of expression in relation to literary studies, you should consider several elements:

What signifies the concept of expression?

- Diction (word choices and phrasing)
- Tone
- Style
- Semantics (meaning in language – what the words convey)

These four elements together show us (i) what the writer is saying, (ii) why they are saying it and (iii) what mood – such as emotional or sentimental, sarcastic or mocking – infuses their utterance.

Romantic Expression

Three words which best describe Romantic expression are: eloquent, exuberant and impassioned. Considering the cultural, social and political climate allows us to understand why Romantic writers adopted this mode of expression. The prevailing revolutionary atmosphere encouraged liberal thought and radical change. It is useful to think about the impact of the French Revolution and how notions of revolt and free thinking did not only permeate the social sphere but also the literary. Many writers began to exercise imaginative and creative freedom in their work, rebelling against the strictures of established traditions such as classicism. Classicism refers to an artistic style based on the culture of ancient Greece and Rome; it is associated with simplicity, clarity and restrained emotion. The art of classicism is formal and restrained.



# Resource Three

## Data Source



The Romantic movement, steeped in the notions of rebellion and change conjured by the French Revolution, questioned classicism's adherence to traditional and ancient forms, negating its qualities of balance and completeness. Thus it is not surprising that an aura of emotional intensity was evoked by such an insurgent (or rebellious) society, as freedom of thought tends to give rise to emotional extremes. It is also worth contemplating how cultural movements such as the German *Sturm und Drang* period, with its emphasis on unrestrained emotion, contributed to or complemented such an emotionally intense social and political climate. To be sure, the Romantic era saw a similarly passionate outpouring in literature.



# Resource Three

## Data Source

**Beckettian Expression** Beckett's writing is famously described as minimalistic, austere or sterile. He said that his creative method was one of impoverishment and reduction. In contrast with Romanticism's wordiness, Beckett's mode of expression is characterized by lessness, as he attempted to strip the flowery eloquence from language. Ruby Cohn has referred to this as 'creation in decreation' and Brian Richardson calls it Beckett's 'denarration'. The Imagist movement, which occurred at the beginning of the twentieth-century, rejected the perceived superfluity of Romantic expression in favour of precision. Imagism is thought of as the start of modernism, an experimental movement partly triggered by Ezra Pound's call for writer's to 'Make it new'. The two world wars are crucial to our understanding of the twentieth-century literary landscape. The social and political breakdown of such unprecedented horror, destruction and devastation left people with the sense that traditional methods of representation were now invalid. And thus this cultural fragmentation transcended the social and entered the literature of the time.

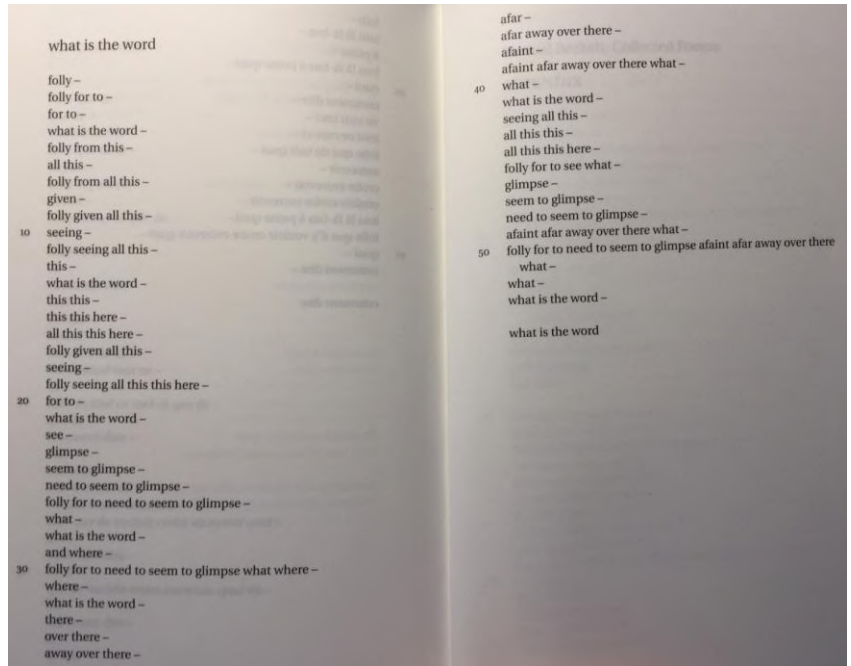
**Expression as a literary theme** Expression is the way in which a writer puts across their point. There is another way of thinking about the concept of expression which denotes its value as a literary theme to be explored over time. This is to consider the writer's need to express, to relate something – usually an urge, longing or feeling – in words. Do you often find yourself struggling to reflect something that you sense within yourself in words, whether it be an emotion, a thought or simply a phrase you cannot recall? It is precisely this struggle which consumed many authors, not least Beckett and the Romantics. Therefore when we think of expression as a theme, we are considering how a writer expresses their battle with expression.

# Resource Three Data Source

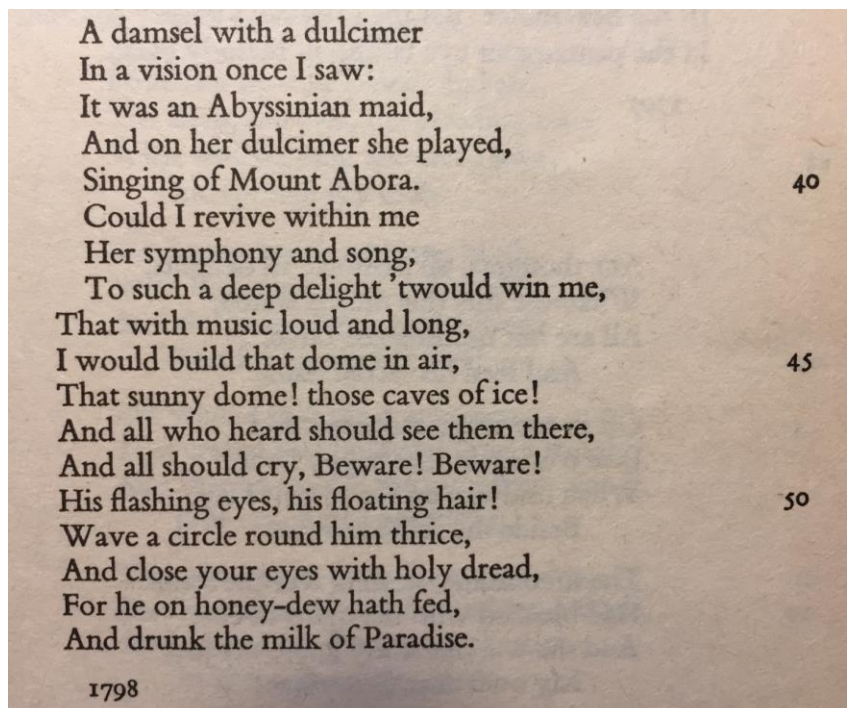


## Section B

'what is the word' by  
Samuel Beckett



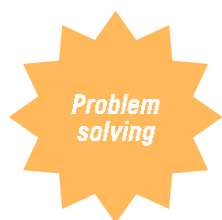
Excerpt from 'Kubla  
Khan' by Samuel Taylor  
Coleridge



# Resource Three Activities



- Activities**
1. Can you list four key components of expression and outline what these features tell us about a piece of writing?
  2. Can you make a distinction between the key features of Romantic and Beckettian expression?
  3. Can you justify the turn toward a more minimalistic mode of expression during the twentieth-century?
  4. How would you explain 'expression' as a literary theme?
  5. Which line in 'Kubla Khan' would you select as evidence that Coleridge is longing to yet unable to recall something within him?
  6. Consider the poetry excerpts in Section B of this resource. How would you compare Beckett's representation of his struggle or inability to express with Coleridge's?



# Resource Three

## Further Reading



### Explore

- "What Is the Word': Beckett's Aphasic Modernism,' by Laura Salisbury –  
<https://www.euppublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/E0309520709000090>
- 'Failure and Tradition: Coleridge / Beckett,' by Paul Lawley –  
[https://www.academia.edu/200365/Failure\\_and\\_Tradition\\_Coleridge\\_Beckett](https://www.academia.edu/200365/Failure_and_Tradition_Coleridge_Beckett)
- 'On Translating Beckett's Minimalism', by Julia A. Walker –  
<https://humanities.wustl.edu/features/julia-walker-translating-beckett-minimalism>

# Resource Four Overview



Topic	Pre- and post- war Beckett
A-level Modules	Texts in Shared Contexts
Objectives	<p>By the end of this resource, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Understand and evaluate the synchronic historicist perspective</li><li>✓ Speculate about how and why a literary theme such as modes of expression can change in a single time period with a single author and not just through the ages</li><li>✓ Construct a debate based on the knowledge you have gained and your own critical interpretation</li></ul>
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the data source</li><li>2. Complete the activities</li><li>3. Explore the further reading</li><li>4. Move on to the next resource</li></ol>





# Resource Four

## Data Source

### Section A

#### Pre-war Beckett

Throughout this resource, students should be aware of the social, political, cultural and personal experiences which informed Beckett's decisions as a writer. To this end, this resource employs the synchronic historicist perspective, which concerns how something existed at one point in time; we will think about Beckett's writing in relation to the time period in which he lived as opposed to considering the connections with other time periods such as Romanticism. The consideration of the themes and ideas found in Beckett's writing in relation to past times, like the Romantic era, relates to the diachronic historicist perspective; looking at how something, such as language or expression, has evolved over time.

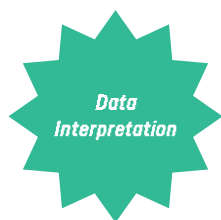
If you open one of Beckett's pre-war works, such as the short story 'Echo's Bones' (written in 1933 but unpublished until 2014) or the novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932), you will see that the pages are populated with an abundance of words and that there is nothing remarkably unusual about the layout. The early 1930s mark the beginning of Beckett's artistic venture. It is thus of interest that in 1931, in a letter to his friend Thomas McGreevy, he described how:

I can't write anything at all, can't imagine even the shape of a sentence, nor take notes (though God knows I have enough 'butin verbal' to strangle anything I'm likely to want to say).



# Resource Four

## Data Source



'Butin verbal' means 'verbal booty', which shows how Beckett believed that his education and the concomitant acquisition of an extensive vocabulary were in fact the very things which prevented his progress as a writer. The word 'booty' to describe his vast vocabulary is interesting, as it denotes Beckett's own awareness of the influence of his reading on his writing; he viewed the words and phrases which he borrowed from other texts as literary plunder. Two notebooks kept during the 1930s – the 'Dream' Notebook and the 'Whoroscope' Notebook – reveal just how much material he lifted from others' writing to transfer to his own creations. As John Pilling observes, the 'for interpolation' section of Beckett's 'Whoroscope' Notebook is a fine example of how much interest he took in English literature, as numerous extracts were taken with the composition of his 1938 novel *Murphy* in mind. One of my research findings, which I will outline below, further exemplifies this point.

Beckett read the German writer Goethe's *Faust* in August 1936 before his trip to Germany and took extensive notes on his reading, shown by two extant notebooks. It has been discovered that he transferred two phrases from his *Faust* notes into his 'Whoroscope' notebook; 'the sougning loom of time' and 'the green benediction of the fields'.

Although his rendition of the latter quotation has not yet been found, in *Murphy*, Beckett's character Neary utters the line: 'sougning with the bawdy innuendo of eternity.' Given that much of the material in the 'Whoroscope' Notebook was taken with the writing of *Murphy* in mind, I believe Neary's line is Beckett's artistic transformation of the Faustian 'sougning loom of time'. Not only does he use the precise terminology – 'sougning' – but the meaning is also the same, demonstrated by the focus on 'eternity' which equates with 'loom of time'. Instances such as these illustrate just how deeply the material that Beckett lifted from his reading is embedded in his own writing.





# Resource Four

## Data Source



Beckett also spoke of his 'phrase-hunting' and 'note-snatching', further indicating the significance of his reading to his creative process. However, the 1931 letter to McGreevy suggests his growing sense that, in order to proceed with his own artistic venture, he needed to adopt a compositional strategy less reliant on his reading.

### Post-war Beckett

Between 1947 and 1950, Beckett composed what is now referred to as the trilogy, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*. These three novels appear to enact Beckett's progression as a writer. *Molloy* introduces a lack of paragraphing; a glance at a few pages shows dense blocks of writing. The second and final paragraph goes on for over eighty pages. *Malone Dies* adopts a similar layout, yet there are many more paragraph breaks throughout; visually, it is as though the words are beginning to break away from each other. At the end of *Malone Dies*, the paragraphs fragment into shorter paragraphs, to several sentences, to single sentences, to a few words, and finally to a single word.

*The Unnamable* functions as a clearing of the narrative bric-a-brac, and ends with what has become widely recognised as Beckett's maxim: 'I can't go on. I'll go on.' Therefore the trilogy as a whole mimics Beckett's struggle to find his own way as a writer, as he battles with the dense mass of words accumulated from his knowledge and reading and attempts to fracture the form and strip down the syntax. This experimentation occurred after the splintering of social, political and cultural spheres as a result of the Second World War. Beckett's aesthetic became more and more minimalistic from the late 1940s onwards, shown by the mere length of texts such as his *Texts for Nothing* or short prose works like *Enough* and *Lessness*. The titles themselves hint at Beckett's gravitation toward reduction, subtraction, and lessness.



# Resource Four

## Data Source

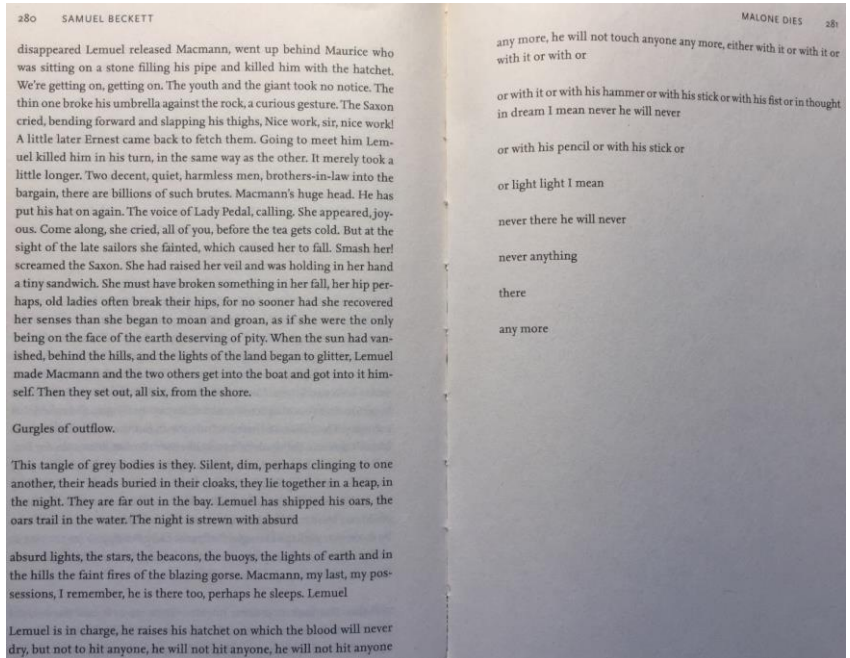
Such austerity is not only present in Beckett's prose works but also in his move to the stage. The setting of *Waiting for Godot*, written in the late 1940s, is a fine example: 'A country road. A tree. Evening.' The sparse scene endures a further reduction, as the very thing which holds the promise of life is rendered lifeless; the tree is bare, leafless, destitute. The four principal characters – Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky – endure the act of 'waiting' together in this barren landscape, although we get the sense that they are fundamentally alone. Moreover, the main presence – Godot – is permanently absent, they wait for him yet he never appears. They do not even know who he is, thus by extension they do not even know what they are waiting for, simply for something to happen in this huge empty space. In a certain light, it is a harrowing rendition of a post-Holocaust world.

# Resource Four Data Source

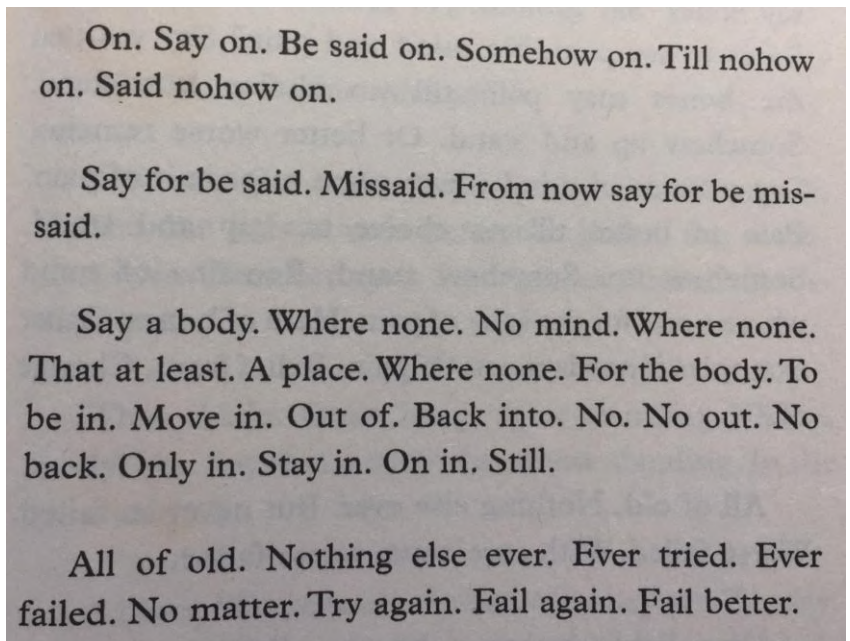


## Section B

### Excerpt from *Malone Dies* (1951) by Samuel Beckett



### Excerpt from *Worstward Ho* (1983) by Samuel Beckett



# Resource Four Activities



## Activities

1. Can you elaborate on how looking at Beckett's pre-war writing compared with his post-war works illustrates his gravitation towards minimalism?
2. What could you cite as evidence that Beckett himself was aware of the impact of his extensive reading on his creative process?
3. How would you explain the function of Beckett's 'Dream' and 'Whoroscope' notebooks?
4. Based on the example of my research on the first page of this resource, can you assess the value and importance of studying how a writer's reading impacts his writing?
5. Can you outline how Beckett's 'trilogy' illustrates his progression as a writer through the act of reduction? Use the excerpt from Malone Dies in Section B to help you visualise this.
6. Based on what you know about Beckett as a reader and his contemporary climate (the time period in which he lived), how would you interpret the famous last words of *The Unnamable*?
7. What judgement would you make about the impact of the Second World War on the setting of *Waiting for Godot*?
8. Consider the excerpt from *Worstward Ho*. The word 'on' appears repeatedly, think about the anagram of this word. How does this make you perceive Beckett's creative struggle?
9. Determine and construct a debate on the two elements which influenced Beckett's reductive approach to writing.





# Resource Four

## Further Reading



- Explore**
- 'Trauma, Company and Witnessing in Samuel Beckett's Post-War Drama,' by Electra Georgiades - [https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/trauma-company-and-witnessing-in-samuel-becketts-postwar-drama-195261\(761f1fce-cdb0-4262-8494-f622914960ba\).html](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/trauma-company-and-witnessing-in-samuel-becketts-postwar-drama-195261(761f1fce-cdb0-4262-8494-f622914960ba).html)
  - The Literature of World War Two (written by the editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica) - <https://www.britannica.com/art/English-literature/The-literature-of-World-War-II-1939-45>
  - 'Samuel Beckett: The Apotheosis of Impotence', by Eric Sellin - <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40124317?seq=1>

# Resource Five Overview



Topic How does Beckett's writing relate to Romantic thought?

A-level Modules Texts in Shared Contexts, Through the ages

Objectives By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

- ✓ Understand and evaluate the diachronic historicist perspective
- ✓ Assess and justify the thread connecting Beckett's writing with Romantic literature
- ✓ Students will gain unique knowledge about – and be able to elaborate on – an under-examined yet crucial link between the Romantic era and the twentieth-century literary landscape

- Instructions
1. Read the data source
  2. Complete the activities
  3. Explore the further reading
  4. Move onto the next resource





# Resource Five

## Data Source

### Section A

The gap between the ages...

Students should reflect on the knowledge gained from the previous modules. It is crucial to do so here in order to shape and develop your own critical interpretation and views about the influences acting on a writer, the validity of these perceived influences, and to think about how you might construct your own debate on the subject. In contrast with the previous resource, which largely focuses on Beckett's writing in relation to the time in which he lived and wrote, this resource employs the diachronic historicist perspective, which concerns how something – in this case, expression – has developed and evolved through the ages.

Beckett seeming quite 'un-Romantic'

There are several key aspects of Beckett's writing, established and explored throughout the previous modules, which we must consider in order to determine the elements that signify a connection with Romantic thought. These are:

- Gravitation towards minimalism and reduction
- 'Decreation' or 'denarration' of words – think about where this element leads us; when words are gone, there is only empty space and silence . . .
- Attraction to Keatsian quietness, a good term for this element is 'quietism'
- Inability to express
- The need to express



Now think about the key aspects of Romantic writing:

The need to express coupled with the inability to do so in a definitive manner

- Exuberance
- Emotional overflow
- Flowery expression

At this point, it seems rather odd that there could be a viable link between Romantic writing and Beckett's creative practice, as the only connecting thread appears to be a writer's insatiable need to express alongside the difficult nature of clinching the exact expression one desires to convey.



# Resource Five

## Data Source

Closing the gap...

Beckett as the Last Romantic



Beckett read the German writer Goethe's *Faust* in August 1936 before his trip to Germany and took extensive notes on his reading, shown by two extant notebooks. It has been discovered that he transferred two phrases from his *Faust* notes into his 'Whoroscope' notebook; 'the sougning loom of time' and 'the green benediction of the fields'.

Beckett's reading of Romantic literature extended beyond English Romanticism. He was not unfamiliar with German, French and Italian Romantic writing, reading Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schlegel, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Giacomo Leopardi. His correspondence shows just how fluently his reading of, for example, Leopardi slipped into his own discourse. In 1930, Beckett copied out Leopardi's poem 'A se stesso' ('To Himself'), revealing a particular fixation with the lines: 'not only hope, desire is dead', and 'the world is dirt'. In letters to Maurice Nadeau (19/10/54), David Hayman (22/06/55), and Patrick Waldberg (29/06/55), variations of the former quoted line of Leopardi resurface in the epistolary fabric; for instance, he writes to Waldberg saying: 'not just the hope but the desire is dead.' This demonstrates the importance of knowing the material read by Beckett, otherwise quotations and allusions would be dismissed as his own words. Indeed, the boundaries between such allusion and his own expression became increasingly blurred from the early 1940s onward as he attempted to move away from the 'butin verbal' of his reading toward a more reductive mode of expression. Yet, against all seeming odds, it is precisely this move that exemplifies how the genesis of his creative practice can be traced back to Romantic thought.





# Resource Five

## Data Source

Beckett read Goethe's autobiography as well as JG Robertson's *A History of German Literature*, and in both these texts he would have encountered Goethe's belief that 'I, too, had driven myself around in all my knowledge . . . and I was always more unsatisfied and tormented'. He also read Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, wherein it states: 'the knowledge that the experience of twenty years has brought me is a poor thing, and even ignorance would be preferable'.

Samuel Beckett's Library tells us that Beckett owned a copy of Keats's letters, therefore he could well have read Keats's letter of 25th May 1818 to Benjamin Bailey, in which the poet expresses his discovery that 'a little more knowledge has made us more ignorant'. There is less evidence that Beckett might have encountered Schlegel's view that, 'while knowledge increases, ignorance increases to the same degree', yet this still chimes with the other Romantic expressions of knowledge being the very thing which prevents progress.

This evidence leads us to speculate about an exceptionally direct influence of this Romantic thought on lessness on Beckett's movement away from his accumulation of knowledge – the 'butin verbal' – towards a more minimal, reductive aesthetic of ignorance and impotence. In his acclaimed biography of the writer, James Knowlson quotes Beckett's comment on his movement from knowledge to ignorance:

I realised that Joyce had gone as far as one could in the direction of knowing more, in control of one's material. He was always adding to it; you only have to look at his proofs to see that. I realised that my own way was in impoverishment, in lack of knowledge and in taking away, in subtracting rather than in adding.



# Resource Five

## Data Source

Beckett recognised in Joyce the very thing that the previously quoted Romantic writers recognised in themselves; that too much knowing, and adding the product of it all into one's writing, does not help a writer achieve definitive expression, meaning the thing he wants to say in the way he wants to say it. Beckett's reading of this Romantic theory that knowledge in fact leads to inability led him to embrace the opposing mode of expression, that of ignorance. And if an excess of knowledge is evinced by voluminous proofs (as Beckett observed in Joyce) and lengthy expression, then a reduction or impoverishment of knowledge must be achieved by moving in the direction of lessness. In this light Beckett is, so to speak, the last Romantic, as he is the writer who confronted the implications of this Romantic thought on lessness in the most deliberate manner.



## Section B

Excerpt from 'The Way'  
by Samuel Beckett

8

The way wound up from foot to top and thence on down another way. On back down. The ways crossed midway more and less. A little more and less than midway up and down. The ways were one-way. No retracing the way up back down nor back up the way down. Neither in whole from top or foot nor in part from on the way. The one way back was on and on was always back. Freedom once at foot and top to pause or not. Before on back up and down. Briefly once at the extremes the will set free. Gait down as up same plod always. A foot a second or mile an hour and more. So from foot and top to crossways could the seconds have been numbered then height known and depth. Could but those seconds have been numbered. Thorns hemmed the way. The ways. Same mist always. Same half-light. As were the earth at rest. Loose sand underfoot. So no sign of remains no sign that none before. No one ever before so –

∞

Forth and back across a barren same winding one-way way. Low in the west or east the sun standstill. As if the earth at rest. Long shadows before and

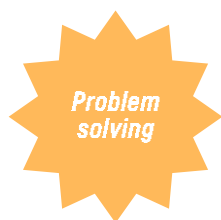
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# Resource Five

## Activities

- Activities**
1. Can you elaborate on the distinctions between Romantic and Beckettian expression?
  2. What is the main theme which links Beckett's creative struggle with that of the Romantic writers?
  3. Based on the knowledge acquired from this resource, what would you cite to evidence that Beckett adopted phrases from Romantic writers and made them his own?
  4. What is the phrase that Beckett used to suggest his discontent with knowledge and the extensive inner archive of phrases and words that accompany it?
  5. Explain how Beckett's movement towards minimalism can be seen as influenced by his engagement with Romanticism.
  6. Based on what you know from this resource in relation to previous modules, how would you dispute the belief that Beckett's writing is influenced by Romantic thought?
  7. Consider the excerpt from 'The Way' in Section B. Can you elaborate on how this short text suggests the writer's dissatisfaction with notions of the infinite and, as he put it, of 'knowing more'?





# Resource Five

## Further Reading



- Explore**
- 'Samuel Beckett's "Faust" Notes', by Dirk Van Hulle - <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25781736?seq=1>
  - 'Searching for the Blue Flower: Friedrich Schlegel's and Samuel Beckett's 'Unending Pursuits' of 'Infinite Fulfilment'', by Tine Koch - <https://www.jstor.org/action/doBasicSearch?Query=beckett+reduction>
  - "I Close My Eyes and Try and Imagine Them": Romantic Discourse Formations in Krapp's Last Tape, by Philip Laubach-Kiani - [https://www.jstor.org/stable/26468971?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=samuel+beckett+romantic+discourse&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dsamuel%2Bbeckett%2Bromantic%2Bdiscourse&ab\\_segments=0%2Fbasic\\_search\\_solr\\_cloud%2Fcontrol&efreqid=fastly-default%3A9a4b53bcb75f564145f0988c8a42ed67&seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/26468971?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=samuel+beckett+romantic+discourse&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dsamuel%2Bbeckett%2Bromantic%2Bdiscourse&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_solr_cloud%2Fcontrol&efreqid=fastly-default%3A9a4b53bcb75f564145f0988c8a42ed67&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

# Resource Six Overview



Topic Beckett's Romantic Silence

A-level Modules Texts across time

Objectives By the end of this resource, you will be able to:

- ✓ Elaborate on how Beckett's desire for silence can be seen as a Romantic one
- ✓ Justify the importance of surveying all the material consumed by a writer (i.e. not just primary texts)
- ✓ Construct a debate on whether Beckett's gravitation towards minimalism and silence was influenced by Romantic ideas

Instructions

1. Read the data source
2. Complete the activities
3. Explore the further reading

I CAN'T GO ON.  
I'LL GO ON.

- SAMUEL BECKETT



# Resource Six

## Data Source

### Section A

'I can't go on. I'll go on'



'The Way' suggests Beckett's aversion to the direction of onward-ness which espouses the continual addition of knowledge, whilst it also describes his struggle to find his 'way', his desired mode of expression: 'The one way back was on and on was always back'. If you think of the shape of the infinity symbol in light of this statement, you can see the predicament in which the writer felt he was caught; unable to escape the loop of linguistic unsettledness. One thing that he believed for sure was that he must continue to write, for he felt compelled by some need deep within him to do so. As the final sentence of *The Unnamable* states: 'I can't go on. I'll go on.' This famous phrase epitomises Beckett's sense of failure, impotence and obligation. Significantly, it reads like a condensed version of Keats's declaration in a letter dated 16th May 1817 that he felt the 'anxiety to go on without the Power to do so which does not at all tend to my ultimate Progression'. As the invaluable Samuel Beckett's Library tells us that Beckett's shelves were home to a copy of Keats's *Selected Letters* (1954) and not just to the bilingual *Poèmes choisis / Selected Poems* (1968), it is possible that he encountered this sentiment in Keats. For not only does the terminology – 'go on' – echo Keats's expression, but *The Unnamable*'s final words also clinch the poet's creative anxiety.

To be sure, Beckett and Keats appear to be kindred spirits in their artistic struggles. As the previous resource has outlined, both felt that the direction of knowing more, of adding to one's work, did not quite chime with their idea of progress. Indeed, we have established how Beckett subsequently felt the need for a creative regression – a move in the direction of lessness. Yet how to reach such lessness? How does one achieve the 'literature of the unword,' as Beckett termed it in a letter to Axel Kaun dated 9th July 1937? In this light, the ultimate goal is silence.



# Resource Six

## Data Source

It is thus significant that, in 'Assumption', a short text written and published as early as June 1929 in Eugene Jolas's Parisian magazine transition, Beckett appears to have set out his inevitable creative trajectory: 'The actual imposition of silence by an agent that drifted off itself into silence a few tables away was merely the easy climax of a long series of subtle preparations'. Beckett's entire oeuvre can be viewed as this 'long series of subtle preparations' as, with each work, he attempted to move closer to silence and stillness through a reductive aesthetic of lessness.

### A stain upon the silence

Beckett's desire for a 'literature of the unword', a mode of expression which involves the negation of language, stemmed from his belief that words and speech are a 'stain upon the silence'. Although the notion of expression as a contamination does not seem to be in tune with Romanticism's love of lyricism and flowery expression, it is again apparent that Beckett's thought is partly rooted in his reading not just of but also about Romanticism. It is known that he read Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony* with a particular interest in the text's introduction. On the penultimate page of this section, Praz writes of how Schlegel believed that the word and the form are only accessories, meaning they are mere embellishments, showing how Schlegel recognised words to be somewhat superfluous. He also goes on to state that:

The Romantic exalts the artist who does not give a material form to his dreams – the poet ecstatic in front of a forever blank page, the musician who listens to the prodigious concerts of his soul without attempting to translate them into notes. It is romantic to consider concrete expression as a decadence, a contamination.





# Resource Six

## Data Source

Therefore Beckett surely knew his belief that words are a stain upon the silence to be a Romantic one. His resultant desire for silence also found a parallel with Keats's writing, as Praz points toward the poet's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' to signify the Romantic celebration of 'the magic of the ineffable', meaning that which is inexpressible and wordless. Beckett was not only influenced by Romantic thought on lessness, to which the previous resource bears witness, but also by that Romantic reverence for silence which he came to through his reading of Praz. This also shows the importance of considering a writer's engagement with secondary as well as primary texts as it grants us insight into how past ideas were received by others, such as Praz, over time.



Keats's quietist nature left an indelible impression on Beckett's thought and writing. It is worth reconsidering the final two pages of Resource Two in connection with this resource to recap on Beckett's engagement with this particular Romantic poet. His fondness for quoting Keats's line, 'Take into the air my quiet breath', suggests his similar desire for his final exhalation to be less weighted by words. Indeed, Beckett's aspiration to achieve silence and stillness found a parallel in Romanticism's negotiation of the boundaries between expression and silence.

# Resource Six

## Data Source



### Section B

Excerpt from *The Unnamable*, by Samuel Beckett

THE UNNAMABLE 387

head gone, my tongue dead, the one I have tried to earn, that I thought I could earn. I'm going to stop, that is to say I'm going to look as if I had, it will be like everything else. As if anyone were looking at me! As if it were I! It will be the same silence, the same as ever, murmurous with muted lamentation, panting and exhaling of impossible sorrow, like distant laughter, and brief spells of hush, as of one buried before his time. Long or short, the same silence. Then I resurrect and begin again. That's what I'll have got for all my pains. Unless this time it's the real silence at last. Perhaps I've said the thing that had to be said, that gives me the right to be done with speech, done with listening, done with hearing, without my knowing it. I'm listening already, I'm going silent. The next time I won't go to such pains, I'll tell one of Mahood's old tales, no matter which, they are all alike, they won't tire me, I won't bother any more about me, I'll know that no matter what I say the result is the same, that I'll never be silent, never at peace. Unless I try once more, just once more, one last time, to say what has to be said, about me, I feel it's about me, perhaps that's the mistake I make, perhaps that's my sin, so as to have nothing more to say, nothing more to hear, till I die. It's coming back. I'm glad. I'll try again, quick before it goes again. Try what? I don't know. To continue.

Excerpt from 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', by John Keats

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

I.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,  
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape  
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
 Though winning near the goal--yet, do not grieve;

# Resource Six Activities



- Activities**
1. Consider The Unnamable's final sentence. Can you explain how this reflects Keats's thought?
  2. What phrase did Beckett use in 1937 to describe his desired mode of expression?
  3. Explain how Beckett's 1929 short story 'Assumption' foreshadows where he would go as a writer (lessness and silence are key here).
  4. How would you justify the belief that a writer's reading of secondary material is just as significant as that of primary sources?
  5. According to Praz, which Romantic writer believed that the word was superfluous?
  6. Explain how Beckett's belief that expression is a 'stain upon the silence' is characteristically Romantic. And how would you defend the claim that Beckett himself knew this?
  7. Based on what you know from this resource in addition to Resource Two, identify the English Romantic poet who Beckett was particularly fond of and discuss how his attentiveness to this poet suggests his attraction to wordlessness.
  8. Consider the excerpt from Keats's poem in Section B. What would you cite to show Keats's celebration of the unuttered?
  9. Using the excerpts in Section B and the knowledge you have acquired throughout these resources, discuss whether Beckett's desire to achieve silence is a Romantic aspiration.





# Resource Six

## Further Reading



- Explore**
- 'A Way with Words: Paradox, Silence, and Samuel Beckett', by C. J. Bradbury Robinson -  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/42965179?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/42965179?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)
  - 'SOUNDS AND SILENCE: Beckett's Music', by Mary Bryden -  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/25781227?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/25781227?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)
  - 'WRITING SILENCE: Samuel Beckett's Early Mimes', by Jonathan Tadashi Naito -  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/25781847?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/25781847?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

# Final Reflection Activity



These resources explore the importance of investigating how a writer's creative output is affected by time periods other than that of their contemporary climate, meaning the time in which the writer lived and the social, political and cultural occurrences of this time, as thoughts and theories from past times are transmitted to them through reading. This enables us to think about the synchronic and diachronic historicist perspectives in a unique way, highlighting the relevance of the literary past and a writer's engagement with it to our understanding of their creative development.

Studying texts across time helps us realise how the implications of past ideas can be confronted by writers centuries later and shape or impact the trajectory of their work. It is even more interesting when we have access to the material that a writer read, and thus to the influences acting upon them. However, there is much debate about the significance of Beckett's reading to his creativity.

With your understanding of Beckett's contemporary climate, the Romantic movement, and Beckett's engagement with Romantic literature, how would you critique his gravitation towards minimalism and silence?



## Part 3 – Study Skills, Tips & Guidance

This section includes helpful tips to help you complete this pack, as well as improve your study skills for any courses you take next year.

It also includes a few fantastic easy-to-use resources to know what to do next if you are hoping to go to university in the next few years, like UCAS advice and web links to more academic opportunities.

In this section:

### University Study Skills:

- ✓ Cornell Notes
- ✓ Key Instruction Words
- ✓ Academic Writing
- ✓ Referencing
- ✓ Evaluating Your Sources

### University Guidance:

- ✓ What next?

### Subject Guidance:

- ✓ More on studying your subject



# University Study Skills

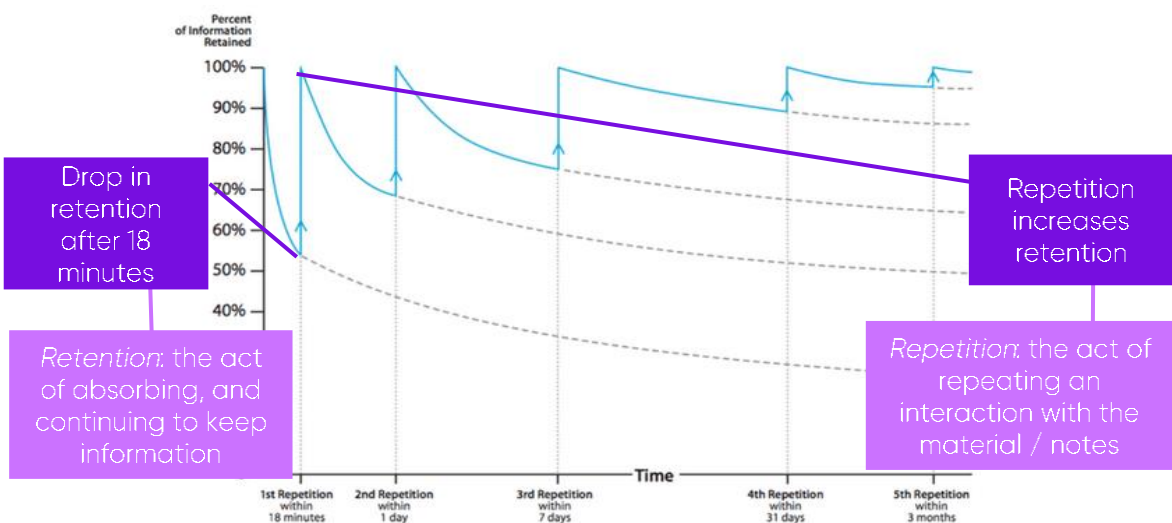
## Cornell Notes



### Why is good note taking important?

If it feels like you forget new information almost as quickly as you hear it, even if you write it down, that's because we tend to lose almost 40% of new information within the first 24 hours of first reading or hearing it.

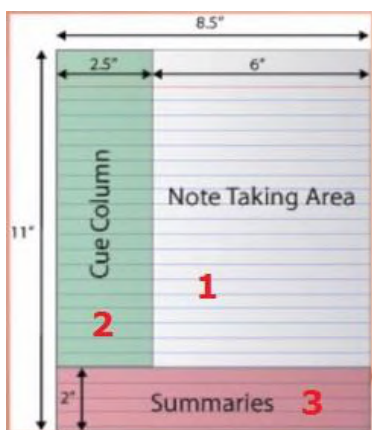
If we take notes effectively, however, we can retain and retrieve almost 100% of the information we receive. Consider this graph on the rate of forgetting with study/repetition:



### Learning a new system

The Cornell Note System was developed in the 1950s at the University of Cornell in the USA. The system includes interacting with your notes and is suitable for all subjects. There are three steps to the Cornell Note System.

#### Step 1: Note-Taking



1. Create Format: Notes are set up in the Cornell Way. This means creating 3 boxes like the ones on the left. You should put your name, date, and topic at the top of the page.

2. Write and Organise: You then take your notes in the 'note taking' area on the right side of the page. You should organise these notes by keeping a line or a space between 'chunks' /main ideas of information. You can also use bullet points for lists of information to help organise your notes.

# University Study Skills

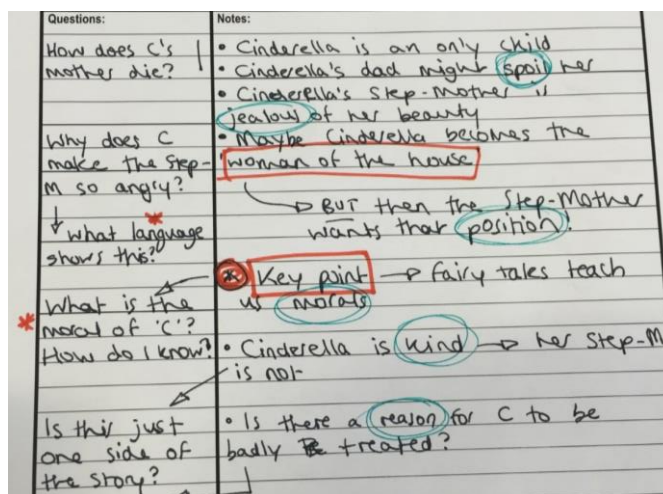
## Cornell Notes



### Step 2 Note-Making

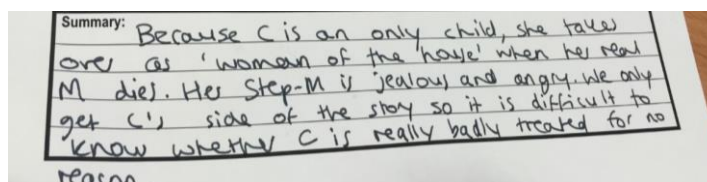
- Revise and Edit Notes:** Go back to box 1, the note taking area and spend some time revising and editing. You can do this by: highlighting 'chunks' of information with a number or a colour; circling all key words in a different colour; highlighting main ideas; adding new information in another colour
- Note Key Idea:** Go to box 2 on the left hand side of the page and develop some questions about the main ideas in your notes. The questions should be 'high level'. This means they should encourage you to think deeper about the ideas. Example 'high level' questions would be:
  - Which is most important / significant reason for...
  - To what extent...
  - How does the (data / text / ideas) support the viewpoint?
  - How do we know that...

Here is an example of step 1 and step 2 for notes on the story of Cinderella:



### Step 3 Note-Interacting

- Summary:** Go to box 3 at the bottom of the page and summarise the main ideas in box 1 and answer the essential questions in box 2.



Give the Cornell Note Taking System a try and see if it works for you!



# University Study Skills

## Key Instruction Words



These words will often be used when university tutors set you essay questions – it is a good idea to carefully read instruction words before attempting to answer the question.

**Analyse** – When you analyse something you consider it carefully and in detail in order to understand and explain it. To analyse, identify the main parts or ideas of a subject and examine or interpret the connections between them.

**Comment on** – When you comment on a subject or the ideas in a subject, you say something that gives your opinion about it or an explanation for it.

**Compare** – To compare things means to point out the differences or similarities between them. A comparison essay would involve examining qualities/characteristics of a subject and emphasising the similarities and differences.

**Contrast** – When you contrast two subjects you show how they differ when compared with each other. A contrast essay should emphasise striking differences between two elements.

**Compare and contrast** – To write a compare and contrast essay you would examine the similarities and differences of two subjects.

**Criticise** – When you criticise you make judgments about a subject after thinking about it carefully and deeply. Express your judgement with respect to the correctness or merit of the factors under consideration. Give the results of your own analysis and discuss the limitations and contributions of the factors in question. Support your judgement with evidence.

**Define** – When you define something you show, describe, or state clearly what it is and what it is like, you can also say what its limits are. Do not include details but do include what distinguishes it from the other related things, sometimes by giving examples.

**Describe** – To describe in an essay requires you to give a detailed account of characteristics, properties or qualities of a subject.

**Discuss** – To discuss in an essay consider your subject from different points of view. Examine, analyse and present considerations for and against the problem or statement.



# University Study Skills

## Key Instruction Words

### Con't

**Evaluate** – When you evaluate in an essay, decide on your subject's significance, value, or quality after carefully studying its good and bad features. Use authoritative (e.g. from established authors or theorists in the field) and, to some extent, personal appraisal of both contributions and limitations of the subject. Similar to **assess**.

**Illustrate** – If asked to illustrate in an essay, explain the points that you are making clearly by using examples, diagrams, statistics etc.

**Interpret** – In an essay that requires you to interpret, you should translate, solve, give examples, or comment upon the subject and evaluate it in terms of your judgement or reaction. Basically, give an explanation of what your subject means. Similar to **explain**.

**Justify** – When asked to justify a statement in an essay you should provide the reasons and grounds for the conclusions you draw from the statement. Present your evidence in a form that will convince your reader.

**Outline** – Outlining requires that you explain ideas, plans, or theories in a general way, without giving all the details. Organise and systematically describe the main points or general principles. Use essential supplementary material, but omit minor details.

**Prove** – When proving a statement, experiment or theory in an essay, you must confirm or verify it. You are expected to evaluate the material and present experimental evidence and/or logical argument.

**Relate** – To relate two things, you should state or claim the connection or link between them. Show the relationship by emphasising these connections and associations.

**Review** – When you review, critically examine, analyse and comment on the major points of a subject in an organised manner

# University Study Skills

## Academic Writing



### What is academic writing?

'Academic writing' is a specific way of writing when communicating research or discussing an argument/point of view. It has a logical structure, and it uses formal language. There is a particular tone, 'voice' and style to the language. Unlike creative or narrative writing, academic writing will also use different sources of information to support what is being said.

### The language of academic writing: do's and don'ts

- Do use words you know the meaning of and are confident using, it doesn't have to be complicated to be clear!
- Do not use contractions; don't, can't, doesn't, it'd. Do write out fully; do not, cannot, does not, it would.
- Do not use colloquialisms- this is 'writing as you speak'. Examples include misuse of the words 'literally' or 'basically', common phrases, such 'like chalk and cheese'.
- Do not use slang or jargon. For example, 'awks', 'lit', 'woke'.

### Expressing your opinion in academic writing

In academic writing, it is best practice to express an opinion without writing in the first person, which can often be challenging. Always bear in mind that your work should read like a voice that is guided by the evidence and not basic personal intuition.

Therefore, rather than saying 'In my opinion, this proves that', you can express the outcome of your reasoning in other ways:

- 'This indicates that...';
- 'The aforementioned problems in Smith's argument reveal that...';
- 'Such weaknesses ultimately mean that...', and so on.

### Signposting

Signposting guides your reader through different sections of your writing. It lets those who read your writing know what is being discussed and why, and when your piece is shifting from one part to another. This is crucial to for clear communication with your audience.

Signposting stems for a paragraph which expands upon a previous idea	Signposting stems for a paragraph which offers a contrasting view
Building on from the idea that ... (mention previous idea), this section illustrates that ... (introduce your new idea).	However, another angle on this debate suggests that ... (introduce your contrasting idea)
To further understand the role of ...(your topic or your previous idea) this section explores the idea that ... (introduce your new idea)	In contrast to evidence which presents the view that ... (mention your previous idea) an alternative perspective illustrates that ...
Another line of thought on ... (your topic or your previous idea) demonstrates that ...	However, not all research shows that ... (mention your previous idea). Some evidence agrees that ...

# University Study Skills

## Referencing



### What is a reference or referencing?

A reference is just a note in your assignment that tells your reader where particular ideas, information or opinions that you have used from another source has come from. It can be done through 'citations' or a 'bibliography'.

When you get to university, you will need to include references in the assignments that you write. As well as being academic good practice, referencing is very important, because it will help you to avoid plagiarism.

**Plagiarism** is when you take someone else's work or ideas and pass them off as your own. **Whether plagiarism is deliberate or accidental, the consequences can be severe.** You must be careful to reference your sources correctly.

### Why should I reference?

Referencing is important in your work for the following reasons:

- It gives credit to the authors of any sources you have referred to or been influenced by.
- It supports the arguments you make in your assignments.
- It demonstrates the variety of sources you have used.
- It helps to prevent you losing marks, or failing, due to plagiarism.

### When should I use a reference?

You should use a reference when you:

- Quote directly from another source.
- Summarise or rephrase another piece of work.
- Include a specific statistic or fact from a source.

# University Study Skills

## Referencing



### Is it a source worth citing?



Question your sources before referencing using these tips:

**Currency:** the timelines of the information

- When was it published or posted? Has it been revised or updated? Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?

**Relevancy:** the importance of the information for your needs

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question? Who is the intended audience? Have you looked at a variety of sources?

**Authority:** the source of the information

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor? What are the author's credentials? Is the author qualified to write on the topic?

**Accuracy:** the reliability and correctness of the source

- Is the information supported by evidence? Has the information been reviewed or refereed? Can you verify whether it is a personal or professional source? Are there errors?

**Purpose:** the reason the information exists

- Does the author make the intentions/ purpose clear? Is the information fact opinion or propaganda? Are there are biases? Does the viewpoint appear objective?



# University Study Skills

## Referencing

### How do I reference?

- There are a number of different ways of referencing, but most universities use what is called the Harvard Referencing Style. Speak with your tutor about which style they want you to use, because the most important thing is you remain consistent!
- The two main aspects of referencing you need to be aware of are:

#### 1. In-text citations

- These are used when directly quoting a source. They are located in the body of the work, after you have referred to your source in your writing. They contain the surname of the author of the source and the year it was published in brackets.
  - E.g. *Daisy describes her hopes for her infant daughter, stating "I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool." (Fitzgerald, 2004).*

#### 2. Bibliography

- This is a list of all the sources you have referenced in your assignment. In the bibliography, you list your references by the numbers you have used and include as much information as you have about the reference. The list below gives what should be included for different sources.
- Websites – Author (if possible), *title of the web page*, 'Available at:' website address, [Accessed: date you accessed it].
  - E.g. *'How did so many soldiers survive the trenches?'*, Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3kgjxs#zg2dtfr> [Accessed: 11 July 2019].
- Books – Author surname, author first initial, (year published), *title of book*, publisher
  - E.g. Dubner S. and Levitt, S., (2007) *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*, Penguin Books
- Articles – Author, '*title of the article*', where the article comes from (newspaper, journal etc.), date of the article.
  - E.g. Maev Kennedy, *'The lights to go out across the UK to mark First World War's centenary'*, The Guardian Newspaper, 10 July 2014.

# University Study Skills

## Evaluating your sources



Knowing about the different types of sources and what makes them worth using is important for academic work.

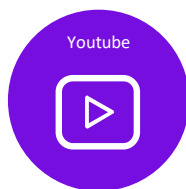
When doing research you will come across a lot of information from different types of sources. How do you decide which source to use? From newspaper articles to books to tweets, this provides a brief description of each type of source, and breaks down the factors to consider when selecting a source.



A platform for millions of very short messages on a variety of topics.



Blogs (e.g. Tumblr) are an avenue for sharing both developed and unpublished ideas and interests with a niche community.



A collection of millions of educational, inspirational, eye-opening and entertaining videos.



A reporting and recording of cultural and political happenings that keeps the general public informed. Opinions and public commentaries can also be included.



A collection of analytics reports that outline the objectives, background, methods, results and limitations of new research written for and by scholars in a niche field.



The information presented is supported by clearly identified sources. Sometimes each chapter has a different author.



Books or online – giving information on many different subjects. Some are intended as an entry point into research, some provide detailed information and onwards references.



A glossy compilation of stories with unique themes intended for specific interests.

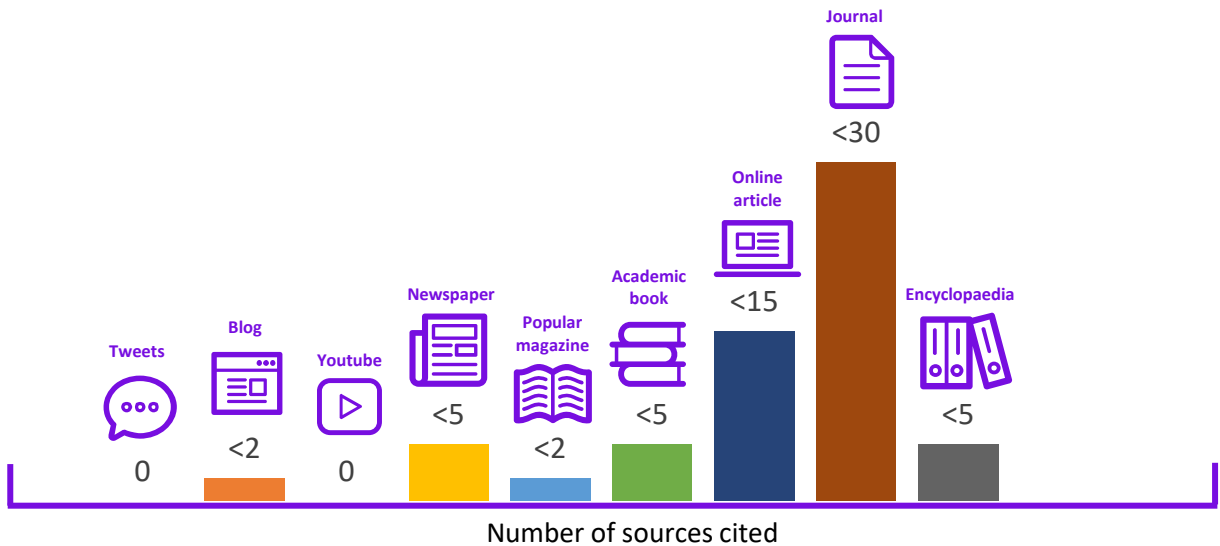
# University Study Skills

## Evaluating your sources



### Number of outside sources

When an author used many outside sources into their writing, they demonstrate familiarity with ideas beyond their own. As more unique viewpoints are pulled into a source, it becomes more comprehensive and reliable. This shows the typical number of outside sources used in each publication.



### Degree of review before a source is published

Two factors contribute to the amount of inspection that a source receives before it might be published: the number of reviewers fact-checking the written ideas, and the total time spent by reviewers as they fact-check. The more people involved in the review process and the longer the review process takes, the more credible the source is likely to be.

#### Number of reviewers



Time in review

#### 0 reviewers



seconds



minutes



minutes

#### 1-2 reviewers



hours



days



days

#### 3-4 reviewers



2-3 months



6-2 months



3-5 years



# University Guidance

## What next?



## University Guidance

Different people go to university for different reasons. You might have a particular job in mind or just want to study a subject you are passionate about. Whatever your motivations, going to university can help improve your career prospects, as well as develop your confidence, independence and academic skills.

## Choosing a course and university

Choosing the right course to study is an important decision so make sure you take time to research the different options available to you. Here are some top tips:

- ✓ You don't have to choose a course which you have already studied, there are lots of courses which don't require prior knowledge of the subject. You can apply skills gained from school studies to a new field.
- ✓ The same subject can be taught very differently depending on the course and university you choose. Take a look at university websites to find out more about the course content, teaching styles and assessment types.
- ✓ When choosing a university, think about what other factors are important to you. Do you want to study at a campus university or be based in a city centre? What accommodation options are there? Does the university have facilities for any extracurricular activities you're involved in?
- ✓ To research your options, have a look at university prospectuses and websites, as well as seeing if there are opportunities to speak to current students who can give you a real insight in to what life is like there.

### Insight into: University of Reading

The author of this coursebook attends the University of Reading.



The University of Reading runs a large number of sessions to help find out more about the process of applying to university as well as taster sessions and Open Online Courses in a number of different subjects. To find out more, visit: [www.reading.ac.uk/virtual-events](http://www.reading.ac.uk/virtual-events).

Chat to current University of Reading students via [Unibuddy](#) and get their views on what university life is like!

# University Guidance

## What next?



## Exploring Careers and Subject Options

- ✓ Find job descriptions, salaries and hours, routes into different careers, and more at <https://www.startprofile.com/>
- ✓ Research career and study choices, and see videos of those who have pursued various routes at <http://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>
- ✓ See videos about what it's like to work in different jobs and for different organisations at <https://www.careersbox.co.uk/>
- ✓ Find out what different degrees could lead to, how to choose the right course for you, and how to apply for courses and student finance at <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>
- ✓ Explore job descriptions and career options, and contact careers advisers at <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>
- ✓ Discover which subjects and qualifications (not just A levels) lead to different degrees, and what careers these degrees can lead to, at <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5457/informed-choices-2016.pdf>

## Comparing Universities

Use our platform [ThinkUni.org](http://ThinkUni.org) to take a short quiz about your preferences and interests to find out which universities might be a great fit for you.

Other popular resources:

- ✓ <https://www.ucas.com/>
- ✓ <https://www.whatuni.com/>
- ✓ <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>
- ✓ <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>
- ✓ <https://www.opendays.com/>



# University Guidance

## What next?



## UCAS and the university application process

All applications for UK degree programmes are made through [UCAS](#). There is lots of information on the UCAS website to guide you through the process and what you need to do at each stage.

### Apply

- Applications **open in September** the year before you plan to start university.
- You can apply for up to **five courses**.
- The deadline for most courses is **15 January**, though there is an earlier deadline of **15 October** for Oxford and Cambridge, medicine, veterinary medicine/science and dentistry.

### Decisions

- Some courses may require an interview, portfolio or admissions test in addition to UCAS application. Check individual university websites **details**.
- Check UCAS Track which will be updated with decisions from the universities you have applied for and to see your deadline for replying to any offers.
- You should choose a firm (or first) choice university and an insurance choice. If you already have your exam results or a university thinks your application is particularly strong, you might receive an **unconditional offer**.

### Results

- If you're holding a conditional offer then you will need to wait until you receive your exam results to have your place confirmed.
- Clearing & Adjustment allows you to apply to courses which still have vacancies if you didn't meet the conditions of your offer, have changed your mind about what or where you want to study, or have met and exceeded the conditions of your offer and would like to look at alternate options.

## Personal statements

A really important part of your application is the personal statement. The personal statement gives you the opportunity to tell universities why they should offer you a place.

Here are a few top tips for making your personal statement stand out:

- You can only submit one personal statement so it's important that you are consistent in your course choices. Make sure you have done your research to show your understanding of the subject area and passion for it.
- Start by brainstorming all your skills, experience and attributes. Once you have everything written down, you can begin to be selective – you only have 47 lines so won't be able to include everything.
- The ABC method: action, benefit and course can be a useful way to help demonstrate your relevant experience and how it applies to the course you're applying for.

# University Guidance

## What next?



UCAS

## Personal Statement do's and don'ts

Read the tips below from real life professors and admissions staff in university Biology and Psychology departments, on the 'do's' and 'don'ts' of what to include in your personal statement:

### English Literature

- Tell us about your adventures in extra reading. We want to know what you have read not on the curriculum and why you have chosen to read them.
- Tell us what the study and analysis of literature on or off the curriculum has taught you.
- Tell us about the skills you have that make you ready for the demands of studying literature at university, such as independence.
- Tell us what you are looking forward too when studying literature at university- is there a period you'd like to explore? This will also help you chose the right university course for you as you can check that the course offers what you are interested in.
- Finally, show us your writing skills, what are you like as a writer? It should sound like you and demonstrate your style of writing.

### Further useful resources

Be sure you know what you'll need to do to apply to university in the UK:

- ✓ Key dates and deadlines: [www.access-ed.ngo/timelines-for-applying-to-university](http://www.access-ed.ngo/timelines-for-applying-to-university)
- ✓ Get tutor advice on writing a UCAS personal statement at [www.access-ed.ngo/writing-your-ucas-personal-statement](http://www.access-ed.ngo/writing-your-ucas-personal-statement)
- ✓ An easy template to start practising your personal statement: <https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas-personal-statement-worksheet.pdf>
- ✓ Untangle UCAS terminology at <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/about-us/who-we-are/ucas-terms-explained>
- ✓ **Discover more about the** application process including when to apply and how to fill in your application on the [UCAS website](http://www.ucas.com).
- ✓ Read more useful advice about what to include in your personal statement on [UCAS](http://www.ucas.com), [the Complete University Guide](#) and [The Student Room](#).
- ✓ Attend one of our [virtual sessions](#) to find out more about applying and personal statements.

# More on studying this subject



## A Deeper Look Into English

- ✓ **Read:** The Oxford Companion to English Literature – <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Oxford-Companion-English-Literature-Companions/dp/0192806874#ace-g0979249316>
- ✓ **Watch:** : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSYw502dJNY>
- ✓ **Listen:** Here is the main link to the BBC's 'In Our Time' podcast where you will find a wealth of interesting talks on literature, culture and writers – the site is easy to navigate, just click on 'archive' to explore and listen to a range of fantastic talks with Melvyn Bragg and the top scholars in each field – <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2Dw1c7rxs6DmyK0pMRwpMq1/archive>
- ✓ **Do:** Research the English course and opportunities available to you at the University of Reading – <http://www.reading.ac.uk/literature-and-languages/>



[www.researchbasedcurricula.com](http://www.researchbasedcurricula.com)



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