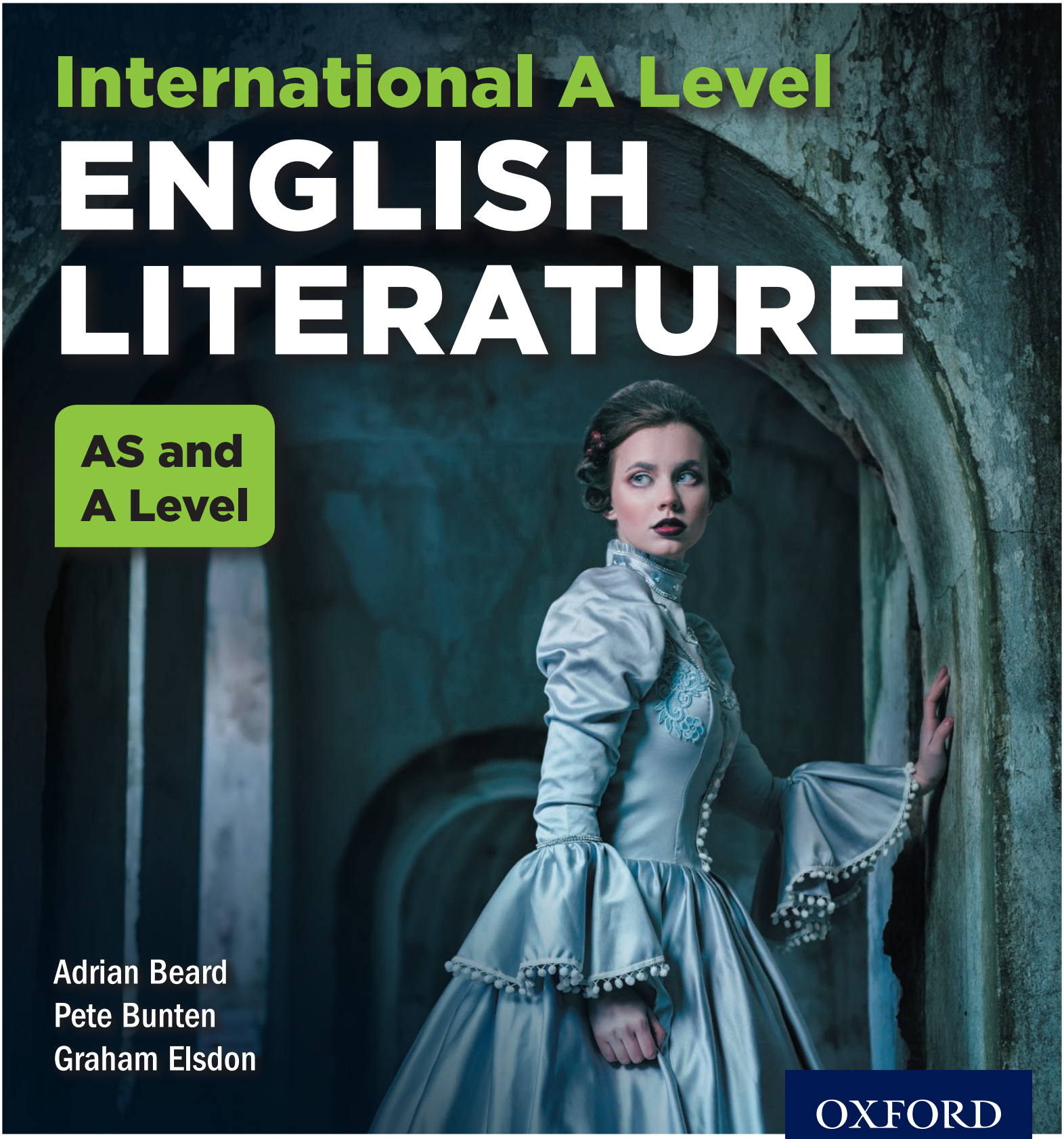
Published for
OXFORD INTERNATIONAL
AQA EXAMINATIONS

International A Level
ENGLISH LITERATURE

AS and
A Level



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How to use this book

A strong principle behind this book, and indeed the specification that it supports, is that A Level English Literature – at both AS and A level – involves more than simply the study of a collection of set texts. For this reason, it is important that you use this book carefully.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the whole specification, at both AS and A level. This introductory chapter should be read by all students early on in the course, so that you are aware of the specification's requirements.

Near the end of the book, Chapters 21–26 deal with topics directly related to A level Unit 4, where you have a choice between completing either NEA ('non-examined assessment', previously known as coursework)or an exam. Whichever option you choose, it is well worth reading all of these chapters, because they have a much wider importance than Unit 4 alone. These chapters deal with critical ideas and theories that are of relevance for both AS and A level students in all four units of the specification. This is because the specification requires you at all times to debate critical ideas. For this reason, it is recommended that you start looking at Chapters 21–26 early on in your course, and that you have completed them all by the time you take your first examination. Obviously, you will want to pay particular attention to the relevant sections – depending on whether you are preparing coursework for A level or studying for the alternative exam.

The central chapters of this book deal with the examined units:

- Chapters 2–8 deal with the first AS unit, called 'Aspects of dramatic tragedy'. Remember to read through all content in all chapters of this section – even if your specific set text is not being covered. Although the central chapters often deal with set texts, they are always looking more widely at aspects of the whole topic.
- Chapters 9–14 look at the second AS unit, called 'Place in literary texts'. As with the tragedy chapters, you are strongly advised to read through all content in each chapter. Thinking about all of the set text choices, rather than just your own, will broaden your understanding of the concepts and ideas contained within the unit.
- Chapters 15–20 look at A level Unit 3, called 'Elements of crime and mystery'. As with Units 1 and 2, you are strongly advised to read through all chapters in this section, regardless of the texts being discussed.

Most of the chapters contain explanations of key points and activities to help you understand them. Where the activities focus on a specific piece of text, or a specific issue, they are accompanied by a commentary. Obviously, it would be better if you had a go at the activity first and then checked your responses afterwards with those provided in the commentary. However, where activities are more general – tending to focus on your application of key points to the specific texts you are studying – there is no commentary. In such cases, it is vital that you complete the activity and then make notes that you can file away for future reference.

Extension activities have been provided at the end of many chapters. These are optional extras, but they will help you to become more confident in your wider knowledge of the topics under consideration. After each of the units has been completed, there are also suggestions for further reading.

Throughout this book, key terms have been emboldened and also defined at their first significant usage. There is a full glossary at the end of the book, which gathers together all of these definitions into one place for easy reference.

When it comes to revision for your exams, you should make use of the index provided to reuse this book sensibly – focusing on any specific aspects that you are revising at the time. At this point the glossary will also be of importance, by helping you to develop a critical vocabulary specific to this course.

An introduction to aspects of dramatic tragedy

2

Introduction

In this chapter you will:

- consider definitions of tragedy
- be introduced to some of the key aspects of the genre.

Genre is a useful method to categorize texts. Labelling a text and placing it in a category helps to create expectations and provides a loose framework by which readers can begin to judge and understand literature. But it's important to realize that genres evolve over time, and different writers make use of conventions in various ways. Genres are not fixed. Each new text adds to and potentially modifies the genre.

Dramatic tragedy is a mainstream literary genre with a long history. The texts that you will study for this unit cover Shakespearean or Jacobean tragedy, alongside later examples of the genre, and these texts will all differ in the way they use tragic conventions. Many books have been written about tragedy, but there is no universal, catch-all definition of the genre.

It is important to remember that you are dealing with two genres – *tragedy* and *drama* – and you need to bear in mind how the methods used in drama differ from those of prose and poetry. The remainder of this chapter will outline some of the aspects of these genres, but it's important to remember that this is not a checklist which will fit both of the texts you study all of the time.

Activity 1

Consult a range of dictionaries and websites. Make a collection of the definitions of 'tragedy'. For further reading on the complexity of defining the term, you might read Chapter 1 of Terry Eagleton's *Sweet Violence*.

There is no commentary with this activity.

A simple definition

Despite the difficulties of precisely defining the genre, it is possible to identify aspects or features that allow us to label texts as tragedies. It may well be that some tragic aspects are more evident in some texts than others. The important thing is to explore how tragic aspects are used and manipulated in the two texts you study. The specification itself offers a simple definition of tragedy as a genre about:

> 'a **tragic hero or heroine** who is flawed in some way, who suffers and causes suffering to others'.

This simple definition serves as a useful starting point, but as you study your texts, you may well come to refine even this definition, especially if you are studying a text such as *Waiting for Godot*. Although it's often futile to attempt to pin down a precise description of the genre, it may help to look at some of the ways in which the term 'tragedy' is applied to different stories and events. In Activity 2, consider how the term is used in a modern sense.

Key term

Tragic hero or heroine. The central character in a tragedy who, through fate or their own flaw, suffers loss and experiences suffering.

Activity 2

The term 'tragedy' is used frequently to describe real-life events. Consider the way in which the term is used in the following newspaper article, in which a woman recounts the devastation of losing her sister to the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami in the Indian Ocean, which killed over 200 000 people from many countries.

Why might the experiences recounted in this article be labelled a tragedy?

Tragedy in Thailand: It's taken 10 years to accept that my sister died in the tsunami

'The first we heard was when someone rang to ask if we'd seen the news. We put on the TV but it was so hard to get a sense of it. You saw this water […] but you just didn't understand how big it was.'

Nathalie Archer, her parents and three children had gathered for Christmas when the Boxing Day tsunami struck. Nathalie's younger sister Sam was on holiday in Thailand, staying in a beach bungalow in Khao Lak, on the Andaman coast.

'My mother was very tearful,' says Nathalie. 'Maybe it was a mother's instinct. She kept saying she knew Sam was dead. I was shaking her, saying, "Stop it! That isn't true."'

Nathalie's absolute conviction that her sister had not perished in the tsunami was to last not weeks or months, but years. Khao Lak was the coastal area hardest hit in Thailand, a sleepy beachfront paradise where families lost generations in one brutal stroke. (It was here that the late Richard Attenborough lost his daughter and granddaughter.)

Denial is said to be the first stage of grief and, 10 years on, Nathalie has struggled to move beyond it. The tsunami swept her sister away so suddenly, eventually delivering her body back damaged beyond recognition. For Nathalie, the decade since the catastrophe has been dominated by a refusal to accept Sam's death as well as by her extraordinary efforts to keep her memory alive.

Anna Moore, 'Tragedy in Thailand: It's taken 10 years to accept that my sister died in the tsunami', *The Guardian*, 6 December 2014

A candlelight vigil to commemorate the 2004 tsunami victims ▶

Commentary

It's no surprise that the awful events of this **story** could be called tragic in the widest sense. People often use the term to describe events which are deeply sad or unexpected. Terminal illness, a serious business mistake, or even sporting defeat, may also be deemed tragic in common terms – but there are some differences in the way the term 'tragedy' is used in literary contexts. Nonetheless, you may have noted the following aspects of the story described in this newspaper article which have a decidedly sad air about them:

1. The story centres on a death, with a sense of the undeserved nature of the loss.
2. Suffering is a central part of the story, with attention being drawn to the lingering emotional trauma of the loss.
3. There is a domestic quality to the story, with the participants being family members.
4. The setting for the death seems unexceptional and the people involved appear to be 'ordinary' and at the mercy of events beyond their control.
5. There is the inability to comprehend the events – the tsunami itself and the struggle to accept the loss of a loved one.
6. There is a sense of magnitude, with the power of nature contrasted with the powerlessness of humanity and the scale of the deaths.
7. Sheer bad luck seems to play a part, rather than any grand cosmic design.
8. The story, and Nathalie's efforts to maintain the memory of Sam, provide a way of coming to terms with awful events.

Many of the elements identified in the article above are found in literary texts: death, suffering and the nature of life all feature heavily in the texts you will study, and – as with more recent literary tragedy – there is a focus on the 'common person', rather than characters of high status. Yet there are some important differences in the way the terms 'tragedy' and 'tragic' are applied in a literary way. In common usage, 'tragic' means something like 'sad', whereas literary tragedy is a more artistic rendering of suffering. It explores relationships between characters, their actions and **fate**.

Tragedy as a literary concept

One key difference between the common use of the term and the literary understanding of the label 'tragedy' is to do with the way in which tragic characters often bring about their own downfall. In literature, tragedy is about the way in which suffering results from errors of action or judgement made by the central character. Likewise, tragic characters are often made to realize that they are suffering, with space given over in the text for **protagonists** (and sometimes **antagonists**) to reflect upon the nature of their isolation and their inability to avoid their fate.

Above all, literary tragedy provides a way of exploring and coming to terms with life's darker moments. It is an artistic representation of the things that cause us pain. And yet in doing so, it brings not only a pitying response from the audience, but also a sense of enjoyment. In watching the rendition of awful events, you may leave the theatre with a more rounded grasp of the way life works, or the sense that suffering can be confronted stoically. It's likely that some pleasure is derived from the way in which the play unfolds, the elevated quality of the language, and the manner in which horrible things are encapsulated in well-crafted art.

Key terms

Story. An account of people and events told for an audience. Close to the word *story*, but worth distinguishing from it is the term **plot**, which is the chain of circumstances that connect the people and events and put them in some sort of relationship with each other.

Fate. The idea that something beyond human control shapes a person's life; something predetermined or unavoidable.

Protagonist. The central character. The protagonist is often seen in opposition to the antagonist.

Antagonist. An opponent against whom the protagonist must struggle.

At this point in your studies, it will help to further define some of the aspects of tragic drama. You will have seen from earlier activities that there seems to be an unhappy air to the events of tragic texts. In Activity 3, you will explore the features – or aspects – which connect two dramatic texts and see how different playwrights use these aspects.

Activity 3

Read the following summaries of two tragedies from different time periods. These summaries have been taken from *Tragedy: A Student Handbook* by Sean McEvoy.

What similarities and differences are there between these tragic texts?

***Macbeth* by William Shakespeare** (1606)

In feudal Scotland King Duncan has just defeated a rebel army with the aid of two noble warriors, Macbeth and Banquo. Three witches appear and foretell to Macbeth that he will be king, and that Banquo's descendants will also be monarchs. When Duncan comes to stay at Macbeth's castle, emboldened by Lady Macbeth, the host kills his guest and blames the murder on the king's grooms. Duncan's two sons flee, the elder, Malcolm, to England. Macbeth kills Macduff's wife and children. Macbeth returns to the witches, who confirm that Banquo's son will be father to a line of kings, but assure Macbeth that he will not be killed by man born of woman and will be safe until Birnam Wood marches upon his castle. Macbeth is confident that he is invincible. Lady Macbeth, tormented by the blood on her hands, goes mad and kills herself. When Malcolm invades with the aid of an English army, they disguise their numbers by cutting down the wood to use as camouflage. Macbeth's troops melt away and he is killed in battle by Macduff, a man 'ripped untimely from his mother's womb' – born by Caesarean section. Malcolm becomes King of Scotland.

***A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller** (1955)

Eddie Carbone is a life-long dockworker, living in the rundown Red Hook area of New York with his wife Beatrice and his orphaned niece Catherine. The family agree to take in two of Beatrice's Italian cousins – Marco and Rodolfo – who are entering the country illegally in order to escape from poverty back home.

Following the Italian code of family loyalty, Eddie believes it is an honour to take the two men in and they both come to work with him on the docks. When Rodolph takes an interest in Catherine, Eddie begins to think suspiciously of the blonde-haired, good-looking Italian who sings, dances, makes dresses and cooks. Eddie proclaims repeatedly that Rodolfo is 'not right' as his true, less than paternal, feelings for his niece become clear.

After Catherine and Rodolfo reveal their feelings for each other, Eddie tries to find a way to stop their union legally, calling on the lawyer Alfieri. When this fails and the couple announce they are to marry, Eddie calls the immigration department and gives his relations up. This act brings shame on Eddie who, in a final confrontation with Marco, draws a knife to defend his honour. Marco is too strong and turns the blade on Eddie, killing him in front of his family, in the street.

Scarlett Johanssen, Liev Schreiber and Morgan Spector in a 2010 New York stage production of Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*

Commentary

In terms of similarities, you may have noted the following points:

1. Both texts focus on the actions of a central protagonist, who appears to have a weakness. In Macbeth's case, his flaw is his ambition which drives his actions, and in Eddie's case, his feelings of jealousy seem to define him.
2. Both texts centre on issues of power and control. The acquisition, maintenance and loss of power – male power in particular – are explored, with the protagonist losing status by the end of the play.
3. Both texts feature characters who threaten the protagonist. The witches (and to an extent Lady Macbeth) act upon Macbeth, and Rodolfo acts as a catalyst within the **narrative** – bringing about Eddie's demise
4. There is a feeling that both characters, despite being the central protagonists, do things that the audience view as wrong. It should be noted, however, that many readers of these two plays retain some sympathy for the main characters.
5. Violence, disorder, suffering and the ultimate death of the protagonist are in evidence. Death appears to be a way of solving the problems set up in the play.

You may well have noted many differences between these texts. Perhaps the most important relates to the status and position in society of the characters, and the settings in which the stories take place. In Chapter 3 you will look at how tragedy develops over time, but for now it may help to know that there are two main forms of tragedy: **classical tragedy** and **domestic tragedy**.

- Classical tragedy (sometimes called epic tragedy) was first written by ancient Greek dramatists, such as Euripides and Sophocles. It deals with weighty subject matter, explores the breakdown of societies, and features people of status and power. Shakespeare and his contemporaries went on to develop this ancient form.
- Domestic tragedy (or modern tragedy) also deals with serious matters, but explores them in family situations – focusing on 'ordinary' characters and the chaos of 'normal' life. Playwrights such as Ibsen, Miller and Williams explored this type of tragedy, with later writers such as Beckett experimenting even further with the genre.

Key terms

Narrative. Narrative involves how people and events are shown, and the various methods used to do this. Considering narrative involves looking at what the writer has chosen to include (or not), and how these choices can lead the reader to various interpretations. The English word 'narrative' derives from the Greek *gnarus*, meaning knowledge – so a helpful starting point for thinking about narrative, is to consider the following three-part question when looking at a text: *Who knows what, when do they know it and how do they know it?*

Classical tragedy. Tragic plays, first written in ancient Greece or Rome, which explore weighty matters where a breakdown in the social order is central.

Domestic tragedy. A drama set in a household, apparently without grand or ambitious themes. A domestic tragedy explores the tensions and chaos in family life.

Aspects of dramatic tragedy

Key terms

Complication. An event in a narrative which introduces another conflict, or intensifies an existing problem.

Catastrophe. In common terms, a momentous negative event. In a narrative, this is the point where the plot unravels, and the action comes to a close.

Order. A situation where there is peaceful coexistence.

Disorder. The reversal or destruction of the normal order in society.

Climax. The highest point in a narrative, where tension reaches a peak.

Resolution. The part in a narrative where a problem is resolved.

Plot. The main events of the narrative, the storyline.

Subplot. A secondary part of the narrative, not usually involving the main characters, but related thematically to the main plot.

The specification helpfully provides an outline of some of the main aspects of dramatic tragedy. This is not a checklist to apply to every tragedy you study, but as you read your texts, it will be useful to consider:

- what type of tragic text it is – either classical and about public figures (like Lear), or domestic and about representations of ordinary people
- the settings for the tragedy – both places and times
- the journey towards death of the protagonists, their flaws, pride and folly, their blindness and insight, their discovery and learning, their being a mix of good and evil
- the role of the tragic villain or opponent, who directly affects the fortune of the hero, who engages in a contest of power, and is partly responsible for the hero's death
- the presence of fate – how the hero's end is inevitable
- how the behaviour of the hero affects the world around him – creating chaos and affecting the lives of others
- the significance of violence and revenge, humour and moments of happiness
- the structural pattern of the text as it moves through **complication** to **catastrophe**, from **order** to **disorder**, through **climax** to **resolution**, from the prosperity and happiness of the hero to the tragic end
- the use of **plots** and **subplots**
- the way in which language is used to heighten the tragedy
- ultimately, how the tragedy affects the audience – acting as a commentary on the real world, moving the audience through pity and fear to an understanding of the human condition.

You may notice how many of these aspects blend AO1 (meanings, interpretations and significances of context) and AO2 (dramatic method). Success in this course means not only thinking carefully about the significances – the meanings which arise – but also the way in which the texts are structured. Structure includes things like settings, plot and sequence, disorder and resolution, and the language used by characters. You will explore the structure of tragedies in Chapter 3, but during your initial reading of your two plays, try to keep an eye on the way in which the play introduces the central problem of the drama and how the action complicates events before a resolution is reached.

Activity 4

Some of the concepts and terms used in the bullet list above may be unknown to you. It's important that you familiarize yourself with these aspects, because you will return to them again during the course of this book. More importantly, you should begin to consider how these different aspects manifest themselves in the tragedies you are reading.

- Check that you know the meanings of the words and their associated concepts.
- To what extent are these aspects present in the texts you are studying?

There is no commentary for this activity.

Dealing with drama

Writing about drama texts offers different challenges to those of dealing with prose and poetry. Plays are primarily designed to be watched, and although it's possible to read a play in isolation, watching a film version or performing parts of the play in class will help to bring out the dramatic qualities of the text. Performance relies heavily on staging, costume, delivery of lines and body language, so you will need to consider the different effects generated by these elements of drama. Every performance of a text can be subtly different, so part of your studies must include seeing different film versions of your texts and also experimenting with different ways in which you could stage a play or deliver key lines from the text.

Plays are a much more 'open' text type than prose. In a novel, there is a narrator whose presence offers the reader comments about characters and situation. Settings can be described in detail and, in a basic way, a novel contains many more words in which motivation and characters' internal thoughts can be explained. The words of the novel translate into 'pictures' in the reader's mind, so the reader is more active in making the novel come alive. By contrast, drama relies upon performance context: before the audience witness the performance, a director and the cast have already determined a 'reading' of the play. Deciding the overall concept of the play, or even the way in which individual lines are delivered, can produce very different effects.

Stage drama relies on speech and action to tell its tale. It has less time to tell its story than a novel, and – to convey characters' internal thoughts – techniques such as **aside** and **soliloquy** sometimes have to be used. When looking at the text on the page, it's also worth considering the cues contained in the text. Stage directions and when characters make their entrances and exits are often worth noting when looking at the shape of the drama, as is the distribution of lines and who speaks first and last in scenes.

Key terms

Aside. A line or lines spoken by a character which is only heard by the audience – and not the other characters on stage.

Soliloquy. A speech in which a character reveals their thoughts and feelings directly to the audience.

Activity 5

In the following excerpt from Act 1, Scene 1 of the Shakespearean tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, a fight between the servants of the two opposing houses has occurred. Benvolio, one of the Montague clan, is attempting to stop the fight. Tybalt is a more aggressive character from the Capulet household. The fight is ended by Prince Escalus, an authority figure who issues a warning that future riotous behaviour will result in death.

As you read this excerpt, consider:

- how the stage directions leave room for a director to interpret the text
- the effect of the characters' entrances, the order of speaking and the distribution of lines
- how the action sets up the potential for future tragic events.

[They fight]
[Enter BENVOLIO]

BENVOLIO
Part, fools!
Put up your swords; you know not what you do.
[Beats down their swords]
[Enter TYBALT]

TYBALT
What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?
Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO
I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword,
Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT
What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:
Have at thee, coward!
[They fight]
[Enter, several of both houses, who join the fray;
then enter Citizens, with clubs]

FIRST CITIZEN
Clubs, bills, and partisans! strike! beat them down!
Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!
[Enter CAPULET in his gown, and LADY CAPULET]

CAPULET
What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!

LADY CAPULET
A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?

CAPULET
My sword, I say! Old Montague is come,
And flourishes his blade in spite of me.
[Enter MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE]

MONTAGUE
Thou villain Capulet,—Hold me not, let me go.

LADY MONTAGUE
Thou shalt not stir a foot to seek a foe.
[Enter PRINCE, with Attendants]

PRINCE ESCALUS
Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,—
Will they not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets,
And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments,
To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate:

> If ever you disturb our streets again,
> Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
> For this time, all the rest depart away

Commentary

The stage directions are fairly minimal, allowing the director plenty of scope for interpretation. In the 1996 Baz Luhrmann film version of this play, the direction 'they fight' is interpreted imaginatively, which fits in with the overall concept of his version of the play. Weapons are modernized, and comic touches and filmic techniques are used liberally. The play's violent opening signals that it will deal with conflict – a staple aspect of drama – and also informs the audience very quickly about the opponents in the play. The manner in which characters enter and stand on the stage also has to be decided, with the stance and appearance of the actors determining greatly how a character comes across. For instance, Benvolio engages in a fight with Tybalt – despite seeming to desire peace. Perhaps one portrayal of Benvolio might suggest that he is more physically aggressive than his lines suggest. Maybe, in performance, the words he addresses to Tybalt are delivered in an accusatory or sarcastic way, rather than a peaceful manner, and his body language might indicate a more confrontational manner. Such decisions have important consequences for the way in which you react to characters.

In this scene, attention is drawn to the different characters' values, and the contrast between violence and temporary peace in the scene alerts the audience to the uncontrollable nature of the feud. The introduction of more senior characters of the household as the scene progresses informs us of the level of the feud, but you may have noticed that there is disagreement between Lord and Lady Montague too. The exchange of lines is rapid at this point, and seems to indicate the passion of the scene.

The most significant lines and lengthiest speech in the scene are given to the Prince, whose dramatic function is to inform the audience about previous brawls, and to set up the future possibility of tragic events. Some of the aspects of tragedy are evident here: violence, revenge and family disunity. This speech helps to convey information and lead the audience to expect future conflict.

Although your course is not primarily about theatre studies, it is essential that you consider the play as a drama. Here are some aspects you might consider:

- How is the central dramatic conflict of the text brought out in the play? What is the balance between dialogue and action in showing the drama of the text?
- How are characters' thoughts and feelings revealed? Is aside, soliloquy or **chorus** used? Who speaks first and last in each scene? Which characters are given the most dialogue?
- What is the significance of stage directions? How do they suggest place, character and action?
- How can settings and the world of the play be represented on stage? Are there any important props or staging devices which are significant to the meanings of the play?
- At which points do the characters make entrances and exits? Who knows key information and who doesn't?
- How might costume or casting suggest certain readings of the play, e.g. how might an all-female cast of *Hamlet* affect our view of the play?

Key term

Chorus. In ancient Greek drama, a group of performers who comment with a collective voice on the play's action; in later dramas, the chorus could be a solitary performer, who assists the audience by providing narration.

David Tennant playing Hamlet from the Royal Shakespeare Company 2008 production. The representation of Hamlet on a British postage stamp shows how important Shakespeare's plays are still considered to be – over 400 years since they were first written and performed.

The significance of dramatic tragedy

Dramatic tragedy, like any other genre, is open to a range of interpretations and readings. How you react to the content of the plays you study will depend partly on your own context and beliefs about the way in which societies should be organized.

This unit requires you to think carefully about the debates arising in your texts – and what they signify. The application of different readings and critical perspectives is a key part of literary study, and in the following chapters you will explore a variety of views about dramatic tragedy. You will look more closely at different aspects of the genre and then apply them to the texts you are studying. Even if some of the material is unfamiliar to you, it will help you to refine your knowledge of the genre.

Extension activities

Some useful initial questions to ask about significance in the texts you are studying from this genre include:

- What is being shown about the nature of the conflict at the heart of the drama?
- What are the relative statuses of the characters? Do they remain constant throughout the story?
- Is there anything to be said about gender and power? Is this a text where men fight and woman are silent or absent?
- Which aspects of the world of the text change by the end of the narrative? Is there any sense of positivity at the end of the play? What values are ascribed to the world as represented in the text?
- To what extent do you sympathize with the actions and values of the protagonist?

Summary

In this chapter you have learned that dramatic tragedy:

- focuses on the actions of a central protagonist, who exhibits some form of weakness
- is structured around conflict – which is usually resolved by death
- may be about either domestic situations and ordinary characters, or more powerful ones
- offers different challenges to those of writing about prose texts.