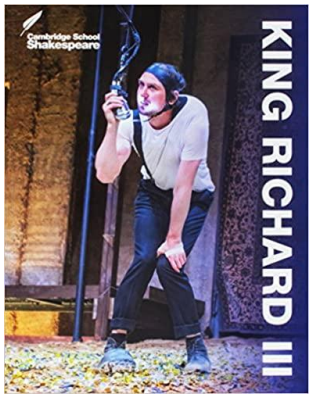
TRANSITION TASKS: ENGLISH LITERATURE June-September 2026

You will need a copy of the set texts for September.

We recommend the following versions:

Richard III



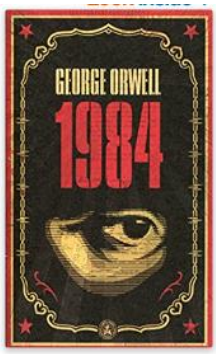
ISBN:

ISBN-10

1108456065

1984:

- ISBN-10 : 0141036141



Before you start PART ONE, read this information on research skills:

- **How to do research - research skills for A levels and university – CIFE**

PART ONE: 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' Dystopian Literature

(1) Buy a copy of George Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' and read it.

(2) Complete the research questions on George Orwell. Use the website links to help.

1. What was George Orwell's real name?

2. When was he born?

3. When did he die?

4. Find the title of two books that he wrote during the 1930s, what were they about?

5. What war did George Orwell fight in during the 1930s? What happened to him

6. What did George Orwell do during WW2?

7. What events inspired him when writing 1984?

8. Where did he write 1984 and what was happening to him when he wrote it?

9. How important is George Orwell's life in understanding the inspiration behind 1984? Explain your answer in detail.

Websites to help:

Basic biography: http://www.biography.com/people/george-orwell-9429833

Short Biography – BBC historic figures
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/orwell_george.shtml

Guardian Articles The Masterpiece that Killed George Orwell
http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/may/10/1984-george-orwell

(3) Extension: Read one of the other dystopian novels on the list below.

Wider reading: (Some of these are available online links provided)

Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale

H.G. Wells, The Time Machine http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6620/6620-index.htm

Aldous Huxley, Brave New World https://archive.org/stream/ost-english-brave_new_world_aldous_huxley/Brave_New_World_Aldous_Huxley_djvu.txt

Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451

J G Ballard, A Drowned World

Doris Lessing, Memoirs of a Survivor

PD James, Children of Men

Cormac McCarthy, The Road

When you have finished the novel write a review of the novel, consider the impact of the following:

- **Dystopian features**
- **Impact of the plot**
- **Language/ structure and form**
- **Link to other ideas/ other texts.**

PART TWO: 'Richard III': Shakespeare

Buy a copy of 'Richard III' by William Shakespeare

Available online here:

http://shakespeare.mit.edu/richardiii/full.html

It is also a very good idea to buy a copy of York Notes at the same time.

Richard III: York Notes Advanced everything you need to catch up, study and prepare for and 2023 and 2024 exams and assessments: everything you need ... prepare for 2021 assessments and 2022 exams: Amazon.co.uk: Warren, Rebecca, Shakespeare, William: 9780582431430: Books

Complete the following tasks:

1. Research the historical facts about Richard III, including all that we have learnt about him in very recent times. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-III-king-of-England

2. Find, and copy out so that you can understand it(!) a copy of the family tree as it relates to characters in the play. Make sure that you can identify who is related to whom.

http://robertspage.com/shakhist.html

3. Make detailed notes on the following contextual ideas which will be important in the play: (There are some links to website you can use as a starting point)

- The War of the Roses https://www.britannica.com/event/Wars-of-the-Roses
- The Chain of Being https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Chain-of-Being
- The Machiavel https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/richard-iii-and-machiavelli

- The concept of tragedy – Aristotle; Boethius https://www.ancient.eu/Greek_Tragedy/
- Holinshed on the historical figure of Richard III https://www.le.ac.uk/richardiii/history/literature.html

  The website referred to here are a starting point – please research around the topic and collate a detailed set of notes on each topic.

4. Read the first soliloquy. What has just happened? What is Richard's reaction to this? Why?

GLOUCESTER
Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other:
And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,

This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,
About a prophecy, which says that 'G'
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here
Clarence comes.

Enter CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY

Brother, good day; what means this armed guard
That waits upon your grace?

*For extra help visit 'No Fear Shakespeare – Richard III' for a modern translation
https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/richardiii/

5. Extension: Find out how many famous actors have played the part of Richard over time. If possible, find and print out pictures of them and details of how they interpreted the role.

EXTENSION **PART THREE: 'Christina Rossetti Poetry' (OPTIONAL)**

(1) Read this article and make notes:
https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/christina-rossetti-religious-poetry

Then to check your understanding, make a mind map showing what you know about Christina Rossetti and religious poetry.

(2) Historical research

Use the websites below and the internet/ books to help you to research and make notes on the following topics:

1. First reform act in Britain
2. Accession of Queen Victoria
3. Chartist movement
4. J.H. Newman joins the Church of Rome
5. Revolutions in France, Germany, Austria, Poland and parts of Italy.
6. Married Women's Property Act
7. Society of the employment of Women
8. Second Reform Act
9. University and medical education open to women. (Emily Davies and Barbara Bodichon)
10. Age of sexual consent raised to 16.
11. Pre-Raphealite poetry- find three poets that you quite like
12. Rossetti's life and works

https://crossref-it.info/textguide/christina-rossetti-selected-poems/28/0

http://victorianweb.org/authors/crossetti/index.html

Radio programme about Christina Rossetti

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b017mvwy

Developing wider understanding of Literature:

There are a wide range of documentaries relating to English Literature on BBC Iplayer. Visit this page for some suggestions.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/literature