

Year 12: Phase Two Work

Coursework: *On Chesil Beach*

Key information about the coursework

- You will be writing a 2500-3500 word assignment based on the reading of two prose texts by different authors, one published pre-2000 and one published post-2000 (*On Chesil Beach*).
- The task for this assignment must allow learners to show knowledge and understanding of ways in which texts relate to one another and to literary traditions, movements and genres. Learners are also required to consider the significance of different cultural and contextual influences in relation to their chosen texts.
- This component is designed to enable learners to pursue wider reading that is of interest to them and to undertake independent and sustained studies of literary texts. In selecting a text from post-2000, learners are given the opportunity to engage with, and reflect on, literature published within their own lifetime.
- You will be assessed on AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 & AO5.

- 1) Look at Chapter 1 again (pages 3-33).
 - a) Create a 'Themes' sheet and prepare notes and evidence from 'On Chesil Beach' on the Florence and Edward's different 'feelings' with regard to their wedding night.
 - b) Write an essay response: **How does McEwan characterise the differences in expectation and anxiety shown by Edward and Florence in chapter 1 of 'On Chesil Beach'.**
- 2) Based on your reading of the first three chapters of the novel, make notes on the ways in which Florence is depicted as being a victim.
- 3) The Themes of Sex, Gender and Desire: Complete the following tasks:

Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire

One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.
—Simone de Beauvoir

Strictly speaking, "women" cannot be said to exist. Woman does not have a sex. Julia Kristeva

The deployment of sexuality ... established this notion of sex.
—Michel Foucault

The category of sex is the political category that founds society as heterosexual.
—Monique Wittig

Read these quotes on feminism by famous critics. Discuss what you think they mean with your peer and how they may apply to "On Chesil Beach."

Stretch and challenge: To what extent is Edward's masculinity and sexual identity constructed by the time he lives in?

- a) Answer the following questions. Write two paragraphs for each question.
- i) To what extent is sex presented in terms of power relations in which women are oppressed?
 - ii) Judith Butler believes that gender and even sex itself is constructed by society? In what way do you think this is true in relations to 'On Chesil Beach'?

4) Reading pages 37 to 75.

- a) Reading over pages 49 to 56 – skimming for key quotations and evidence – what do you find out about Florence's relationship with her:
- i) Mother? Write a PEE
 - ii) Father? Write a PEE
- b) In what ways are both Florence and Edward from dysfunctional families? Consider:
- Florence's abuse (find quote)
 - Florence's father being an oppressive patriarch (find quote)
 - Edward's mother's brain damage (find quote)
 - Edwards's home and the sense of pretence about normality (quote)

5) Complete the Flip Learning Sheet on Places in *On Chesil Beach*.

6) Read up to page 95.

- a) Find at least two key quotes from the novel for the following themes:
- Patriarchy
 - Women as Victims
 - Dysfunctional relationships
 - Power

Annotate the extract. Answer the questions as you go.

1. Where is Chesil Beach? What is geographically interesting about it?

Then their childhoods and school years were over, and in 1958 they both chose London – University College for him, for her the Royal College of Music – and naturally, they failed to meet. Edward lodged with a widowed aunt in Camden Town and cycled into Bloomsbury each morning. He worked all day, played football at weekends and drank beer with his mates. Until he became embarrassed by it, he had a taste for the occasional brawl outside a pub. His one serious unphysical pastime was listening to music, to the kind of punchy electric blues that turned out to be the true precursor and vital engine of English rock and roll – this music, in his lifelong view, was far superior to the fey three-minute music-hall ditties from Liverpool that were to captivate the world in a few years' time. He often left the library in the evenings and walked down Oxford Street to the Hundred Club to listen to John Mayall's Powerhouse Four, or Alexis Korner, or Brian Knight. During his three years as a student, the nights at the club represented the peak of his cultural experience, and for years to come he considered that this was the music that formed his tastes, and even shaped his life.

2. Where is the Hundred Club and why is it famous?

3. Why is Bloomsbury an important place in 20th-century literary history? By cycling through it, what sort of image of himself do you think Edward is trying to project?

Florence was on the other side of town, near the Albert Hall, in a prim hostel for female students where the lights went out at eleven and male visitors were forbidden at any time, and the girls were always popping in and out of each other's rooms. Florence practised five hours a day and went to concerts with her girlfriends. She preferred above all the chamber recitals at the Wigmore Hall, especially the string quartets, and sometimes attended as many as five in a week, lunchtimes as well as evenings. She loved the dark seriousness of the place, the faded, peeling walls backstage, the gleaming woodwork and deep red carpet of the entrance hall, the auditorium like a gilded tunnel, the famous cupola over

4. Briefly compare and contrast the Albert and Wigmore Halls. What does Florence's preference for the latter imply about her character?

the stage depicting, so she was told, mankind's hunger for the magnificent abstraction of music, with the Genius of Harmony represented as a ball of eternal fire. She revered the ancient types, who took minutes to emerge from their taxis, the last of the Victorians, hobbling on their sticks to their seats, to listen in alert critical silence, sometimes with the tartan rug they had brought draped across their knees. These fossils, with their knobbly shrunken skulls tipped humbly towards the stage, represented to Florence burnished experience and wise judgement, or suggested a musical expertise that arthritic fingers could no longer serve. And there was the simple thrill of knowing that so many famous musicians in the world had performed here and that great careers had begun on this very stage. It was here that she heard the sixteen-year-old cellist Jacqueline du Pré give her debut performance. Florence's own tastes were not unusual, but they were intense. Beethoven's Opus 18 obsessed her for a good while, then his last great quartets. Schumann, Brahms, and then, in her last year, the quartets of Frank Bridge, Bartok and Britten. She heard all these composers over a period of three years at the Wigmore Hall.