Senior Reading (Y567)

Autumn 2021

For our reading classes together over the autumn term, we will be exploring each book in three lessons, with the first offering a general overview, the second delving into the stylistic and narrative elements of the writing and the final lesson offering a closer, more thorough examination of the text itself through the use of close textual analysis and with particular attention paid to literary techniques and structural devices. These lessons are designed to help the students develop new frameworks through which to read and understand literature, equipping them with the vocabulary with which to discuss themes, genre and morals.

*Lesson 1:* **Little Women**

In lesson 1 we will consider the context and introductory material surrounding *Little Women,* considering the context of the novel and what learning about the author, Louisa May Alcott’s life can tell us about the message of the book. We will learn about the American Civil War and consider the way gender functioned in 1800s America. The students will be given the chance to evaluate their own feelings and opinions on the novel through this lens, thinking about why the history matters. We will consider what the book says about the social norms of its time and debate whether or not it is a feminist book, considering how the book ends. Finally, we will discuss the genre of autobiography and consider *why* Alcott wrote the book.

*Lesson 2:* **Little Women**

In lesson 2 we will dive further into the novel, thinking about some of the core themes and ideas within the novel. We will consider the role of symbolism in the story, considering the key motif of burning and considering how this connects to the themes of conformity. We will look at narrative voice and perspective, and the class will have a chance to experiment with changing the point of view the novel is written from. Finally, we will consider the characterisation in the novel, thinking about Beth’s identification of each sister as a particular type of bird. Overall, the class will be asked to consider *why* the author has made the stylistic and narrative choices she has made, analysing the author intent.

*Lesson 3****:* Little Women**

In lesson 3 we will be focusing on developing the students’ analytical skills, looking at closely analysing the text of the novel. We will work on analysing key passages and quotations from the book, asking ourselves what particular wisdom can be drawn from this. The class will also have a chance to collaborate as a group in this lesson in creatively re-imagining parts of the novel, thinking about how to mirror Alcott’s style whilst also putting their own innovative twist on her writing and ideas. This lesson will teach the class to read literature as both the audience and writer, analysing and explicating in equal measure, in order to develop their relationship with reading and understanding the deeper meaning beneath *Little Women’s* surface.