

School of Humanities University of Kent

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Kickstart

The Basics: English & Creative Writing





Welcome Week
29th Sept – 3rd Oct 2025

Support and wellbeing at Kent – *there is
always someone to help*



Engagement Support

If you are struggling to meet

(or if you miss) a deadline.

If you are missing a lot of teaching and cannot attend and engage with your studies.

Help if you are finding it hard to navigate life at University.

If you have an issue and need to speak to someone.

If you are worried about another student, and want someone to check-in.



Get in contact: Email, call, meet on Teams or in-person by appointment, or drop-in and visit.

Student Support & Wellbeing

Wellbeing & Mental Health Support

-  Counselling, mental health advice, and emotional wellbeing guidance.
-  Confidential, non-judgmental support whenever you need it.

Disability & Health Support

-  Support for students with disabilities or long-term health conditions.
-  Tailored help to manage your academic journey with confidence.

Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)

-  Once registered with us, we'll work with you to create an ILP
-  Includes reasonable adjustments for your studies and assessments.
-  Find out more about [Inclusive Learning Plans](#).



Specialist Support & Safeguarding

-  Help with issues such as harassment, sexual violence, bullying, discrimination, or hate incidents.



Report and Support Tool

-  Report concerns anonymously or with your name:



Visit: ReportAndSupport.kent.ac.uk

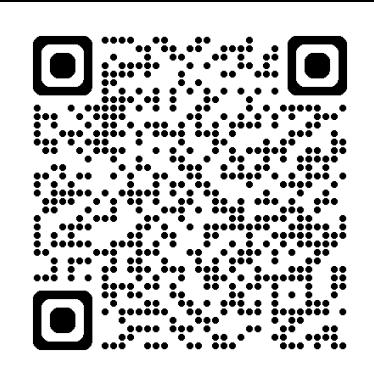


Get in Touch

Visit: Kent.ac.uk/student-support



Email: KentSSW@kent.ac.uk



Engagement Support EngagementSupport@kent.ac.uk

We provide all taught students with personalised and individual advice and practical support for your specific circumstances.

Employability and Placements CareerHelp@kent.ac.uk

We can help with specialist careers advice as well as employability and placement development and support.

Student Voice, Events and Experience StudentExperience@kent.ac.uk

We can help with questions about Student Voice Forums, student representation, module evaluations, academic communities, events and student feedback.

Course administration ProgAdmin@kent.ac.uk

We are responsible for all UG, and PGT student administration including timetabling and exams processes.

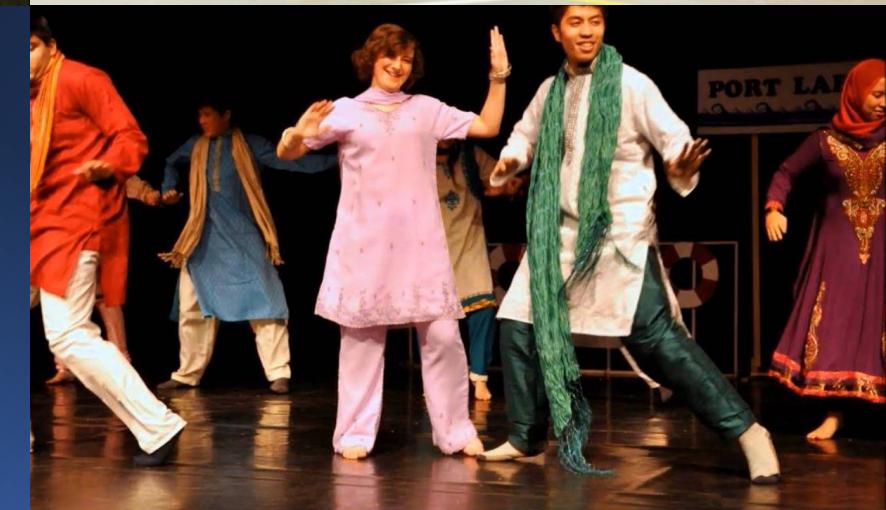
IT and Technical services HelpDesk@kent.ac.uk

We can help with IT support requests including email and software, IT in teaching spaces, and provision of computer hardware for staff in the Division as well as questions about campus buildings, furniture and telephones.



Important email addresses

Nexus staff can help with any query, signposting you in the right direction.



Join a society

Different to School

- Usually all led by one teacher, a generalist
- All classroom-based, typically groups 10-30
- Lots of learning based around curriculum questions and topics
- Things marked in scores of up to 9 or A / B / C etc.



The idea of a University – what is it for?

Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890).

Newman's *The Idea of a University* (1873) is an occasional work. It is not a systematic treatise.

Indeed, it consists of two books: the *Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education* (1852) and *Lectures and Essays on University Subjects* (1859), a collection of lectures and articles that Newman wrote as the founding president of the Catholic university.

The Idea of a University is still a classic work on university education; it is famous for its advocacy of a “liberal education” as the principle purpose of a university. In this case the first university for Irish Catholics.



A University as a space for enquiry

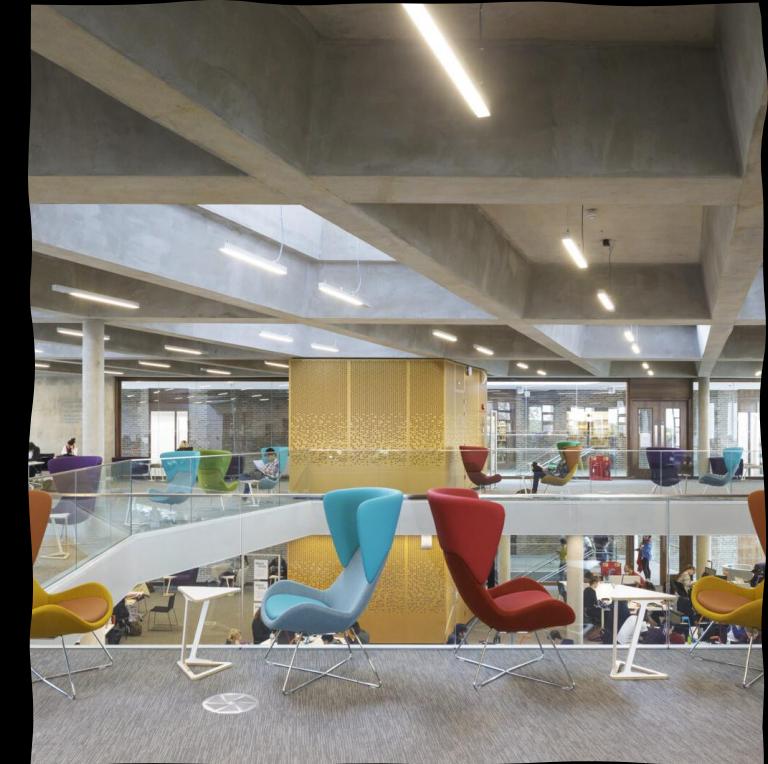
- ‘This, I said in my foregoing Discourse, was the object of a University, viewed in itself, and apart from the Catholic Church, or from the State, or from any other power which may use it; and I illustrated this in various ways.’
- On the purpose of university, he writes: ‘It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it.’
- Knowledge and utility



University

- Multiple lecturers/teachers, all specialists
- Varied format – groups from 1 to 100 – different locations and aims or styles
- Lots of learning based around arguments and sources and connections or comparisons = bodies of knowledge
- Things marked by traditional criteria: “percentage” with 70+ excellent, 60-70 very good, 50-60 good, 40-50 pass.





Finding your teaching space at Kent
: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/maps>

Lectures

- Usually two hour, once or twice a week, per module.
- All students on a module attend; can be 80+
- Led by a lecturer (often the module convenor)



Seminars/Workshops

- Length and frequency depend on the module.
- No more than 25 students; usually closer to 15-16.
- Led by a seminar leader; may be the same as the lecturer, may be different.



The library

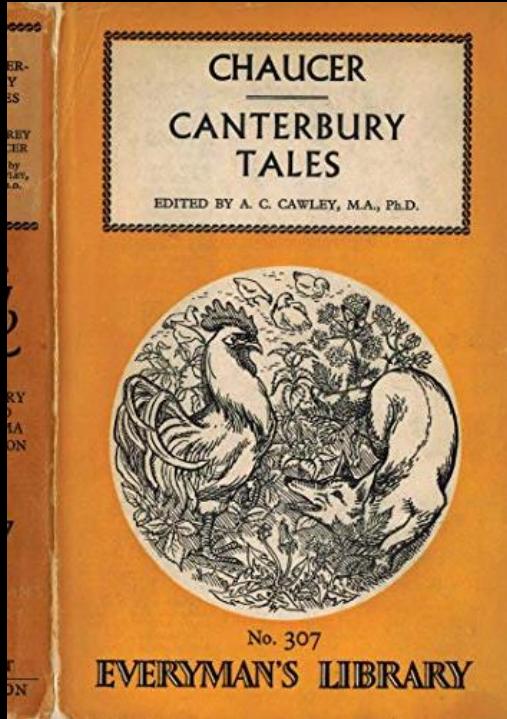
<https://www.kent.ac.uk/library>





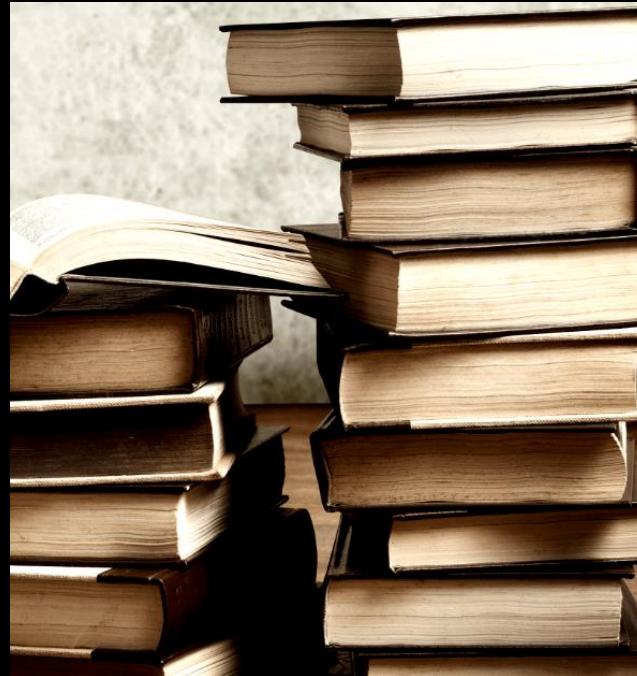
Autumn Term

Autumn Term Modules



Spring Term





Spring term modules

Year 2 Module Choices

Modernism

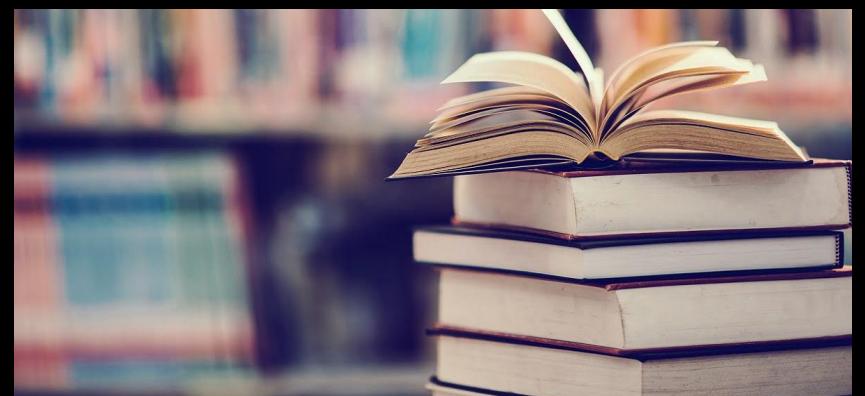
18th-century literature

Victorian literature

The contemporary

Nineteenth-century American literature

American literature in the twentieth century





Summer term

Time Management & Procrastination

We will cover...

- Independent learning
- Planning your time & working to deadlines
- Prioritising your tasks
- Avoiding procrastination

What is independent learning?

- Also known as ‘self-directed learning’ or ‘autonomous learning’
- Taking control of your own learning activities
- Doing your own research
- Taking initiative
- Making your own informed decisions



An independent learner...

- Does not require continuous instruction during their studies
- Does not expect all knowledge to be given to them
- Does not need their work to be constantly monitored



Independent learning does not mean that you are alone. You have the support of your lecturers, others on your course/module, and the Skills for Academic Success (SAS) team.

How to study independently

- Familiarise yourself with the content and structure of each of your modules.
- Make sure you can access the weekly materials and reading.
- Take note of all important dates and deadlines. These can be built into a study planner to help you organise your time.
- Check procedure for submitting work.

Planning your time

Create study planners, including

Long term goals:

- Module start and end dates
- Assignment deadlines
- Stages of work broken into small tasks

Daily schedule:

- Work out your priorities
- Set aside study time
- Complete tasks that align with your long-term plan



SAS termly & weekly time planners:

student.kent.ac.uk/studies/time-management

Long-term schedule

Study Planner - Autumn 2023								University of Kent Student Learning Advisory Service
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
Wk 8	25-Sep	26-Sep	27-Sep	28-Sep	29-Sep	30-Sep	01-Oct	
	am	Term starts						
	pm							
	eve							
Wk 9	02-Oct	03-Oct	04-Oct	05-Oct	06-Oct	07-Oct	08-Oct	
	am							
	pm							
	eve							
Wk 10	09-Oct	10-Oct	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct	15-Oct	
	am							
	pm							
	eve							
Wk 11	16-Oct	17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	22-Oct	
	am							
	pm							
	eve							
Wk 12	23-Oct	24-Oct	25-Oct	26-Oct	27-Oct	28-Oct	29-Oct	
	am							
	pm							
	eve							
Wk 13	30-Oct	31-Oct	01-Nov	02-Nov	03-Nov	04-Nov	05-Nov	
	am							
	pm							
	eve							
Wk 14	06-Nov	07-Nov	08-Nov	09-Nov	10-Nov	11-Nov	12-Nov	
	am							
	pm							
	eve							
Wk 15	13-Nov	14-Nov	15-Nov	16-Nov	17-Nov	18-Nov	19-Nov	
	am							
	pm							
	eve							
6	20-Nov	21-Nov	22-Nov	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	
	am							

- You always need to know what's happening across
 - The year
 - The term
 - The month
 - The week
- Record assessment times in particular
 - Coursework + exams
- Record & set personal milestones
 - “By this time...”
- Record other commitments & **breaks**
- **Use** all this information to **plan**

Link to study guides:

[Time management - Help - University of Kent](#)

Managing assignments

Break your larger goals/deadlines into smaller steps.

E.g., for an essay assignment:

1. Understand the question (& brainstorm the answer)
2. Make an initial essay plan
3. Gather research material
4. Finalise essay plan
5. Write main body paragraphs
6. Write introduction
7. Write conclusion
8. Edit & proof-read

To make the most of each day

- Be goal focussed
- Vary your activities
- A mixture of topics
- Prioritise
- Set SMART targets

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-defined

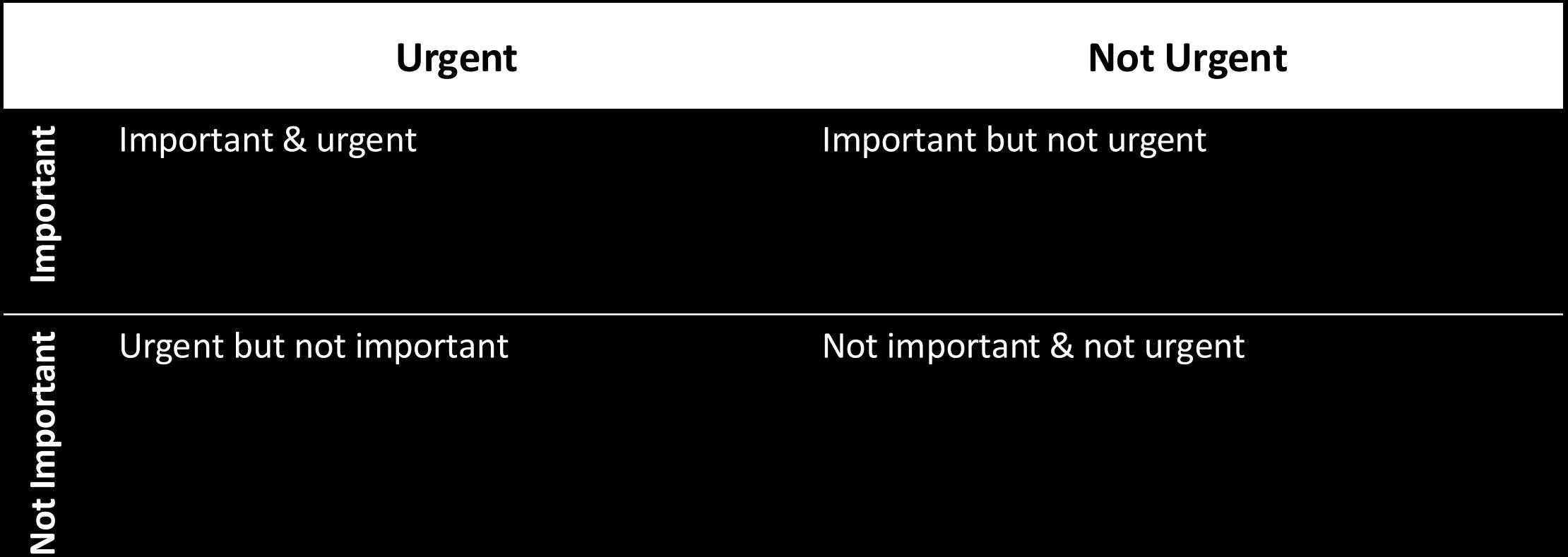
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
27	28	29	30	1 Jul
09:00 SA462 Report Final proof-read and submit (deadline 12:00)	SA310 Research Search and select	9.00 Dentist SA310 Library Notes selected Journals	SA322 Seminar GLT4	SA341 Presentation Set-up GLT7
10:00 Break	Break	Break	Tidy notes	Break
11:00 Break SA310 Seminar GLT4	SA 341 Group presentation 1st draft text	SA310 Library Notes selected Journals	SA322 Question/Essay plan	SA341 Group presentation GLT7
12:00		Lunch/Asda shop		Lunch
13:00 Tidy notes Lunch	Lunch	SA322 Lecture GLT4	Meet BL for lunch Gulbenkian	SA310 Library complete/correlate research
14:00	SA310 Library Notes Chapters 1-5 Jones		SLAS session	
15:00		Tidy notes	SA341 Group presentation Rehearsal Room GLT4	
16:00	Break	Break		Break
... 17:00 SA310 Preliminary Essay Plan	SA310 Notes - Brown, Smith	SA341 Group presentation meeting: finalise text and images Room GLT4	Tutorial with RP MSTEams	SA310 Revise Essay Plan - Start writing
18:00 Gym	Cook meal for house	Football squad	SA341 Reccy GLT7 presentation venue	JR birthday party Union building

You know when you work best – so plan accordingly

Urgent, important, or both?

Characteristic	Important tasks	Urgent tasks
Definition	Tasks that contribute to your long-term goals and values	Tasks that require immediate attention
Deadline	May not have an immediate deadline	Have a tight deadline
Consequences	Not completing important tasks may have negative consequences in the long term	Not completing urgent tasks may have immediate negative consequences
Examples	Writing your dissertation, learning a new skill, building relationships	Responding to an email from your supervisor, preparing for a presentation, paying bills

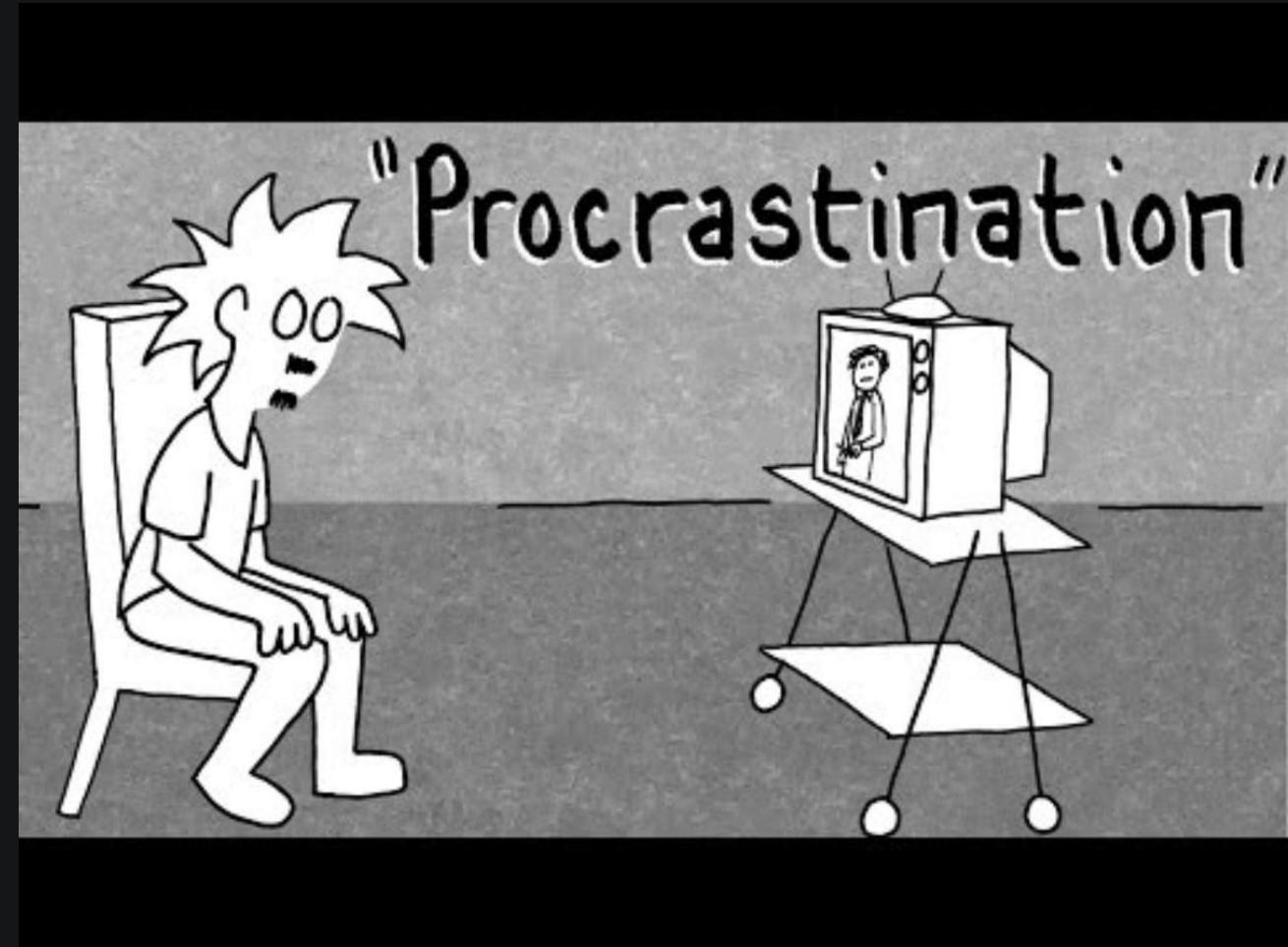
Eisenhower matrix



What is procrastination?

The act of delaying something that you should do, usually because you do not want to do it.

Oxford Dictionary



Procrastination triggers

Distractions

Eliminate distractions from your study environment. Turn off your phone, close unnecessary tabs on your computer, find a quite place to work. Avoid spending too much time on social media.

Mental or physical health challenges

Take care of your mental and physical health. This means eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly. If you are struggling with mental health challenges, seek help from student support and wellbeing.

Perfectionism

Set realistic goals for yourself and **don't try to be perfect**. Remember that done is better than perfect.

Procrastination triggers

Fear of failure

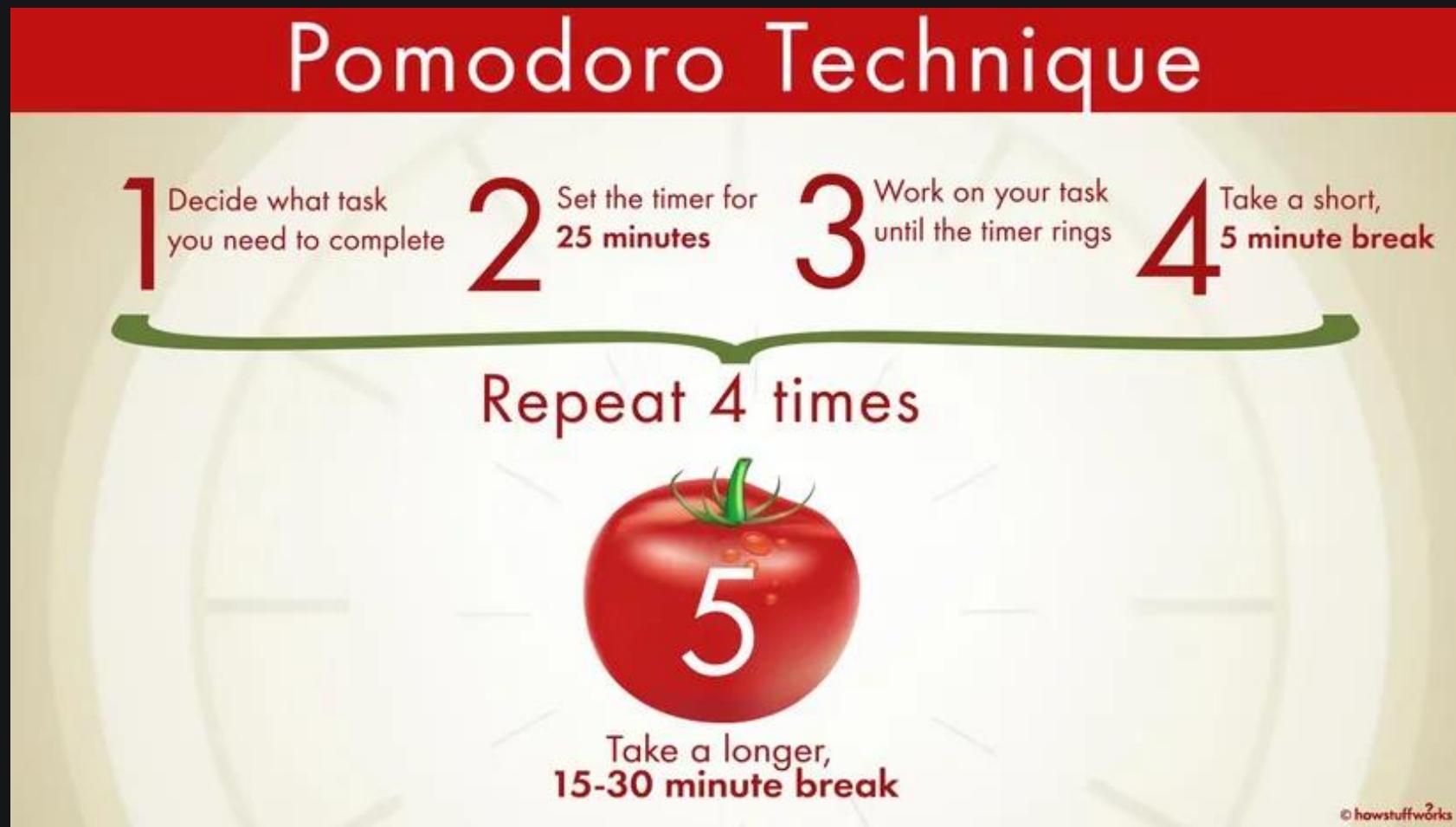
Everyone makes mistakes! Failure is part of the learning process. Focus on the positive aspects of your work and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

Lack of motivation / lack of time management skills

Break large tasks down into smaller, more manageable tasks. Set realistic deadlines for yourself, prioritise tasks, and reward yourself for completing tasks. Find a study buddy or accountability partner who can help you stay on track.

Everyone is different. What works for one person may not work for another. Experiment with different strategies and find what works best for you. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

The Pomodoro Technique



Dissertation Gantt chart

For example...

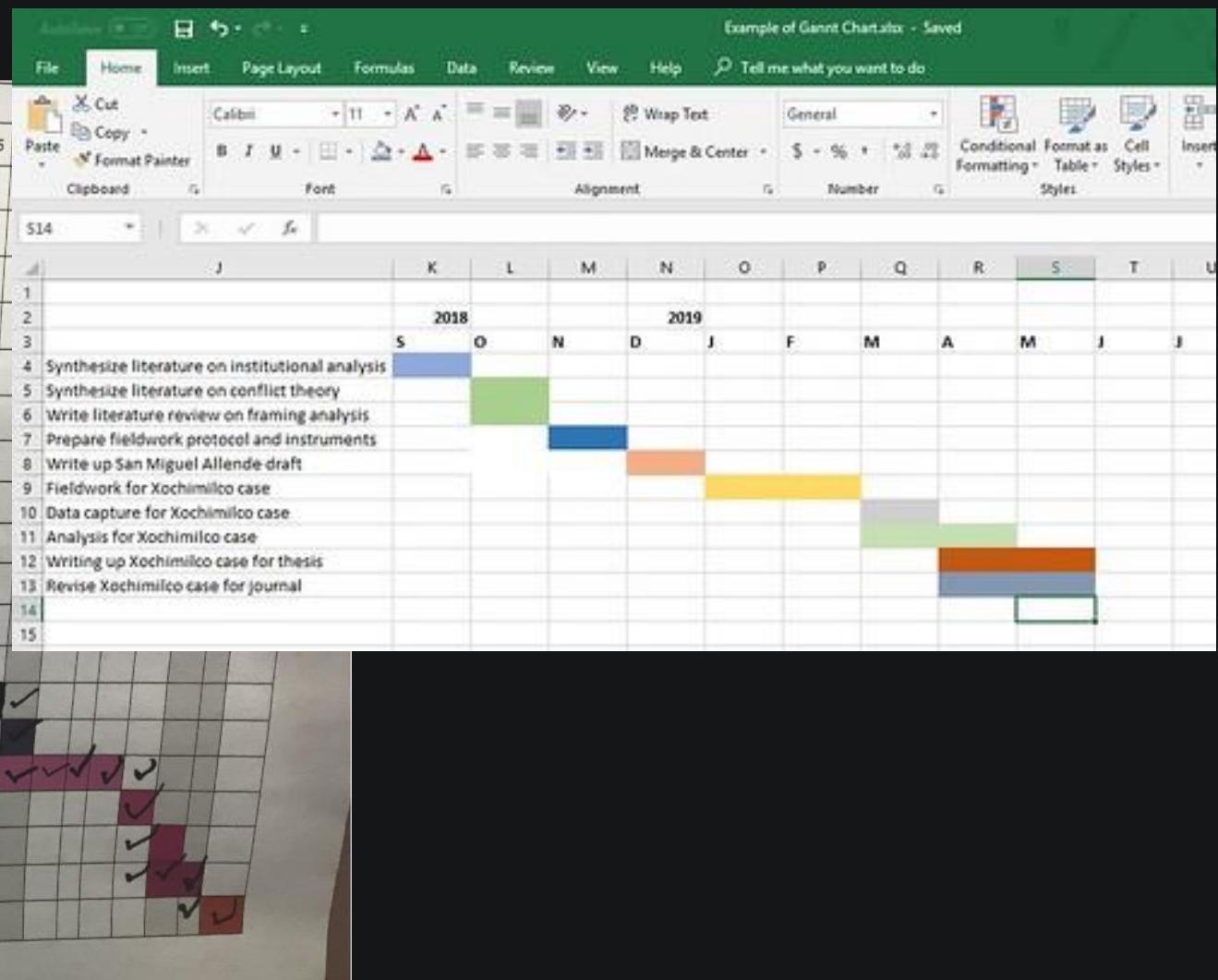
This timeline is just an illustration and will vary for each individual!

Task	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Literature review	■						
Findings & discussion			■		■	■	
Introduction					■		
Conclusion					■		
Abstract					■		
Bibliography					■	■	
Appendix					■		
Proof read & submit						■	■



Dissertation Gantt chart

	Sept			October			November			December			January										
Week beginning	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	5	
Identify Primary Sources	✓																						
Identify Secondary Sources & Theories	✓	✓	✓																				
Type Up Proposal Form & Submit (29 th)		✓✓																					
Close Reading (Primary Sources)				✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓											
Fill in Research Timetable & Submit (27 th)					✓	✓	✓	✓															
Complementary Research + Reading Secondary Sources					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓						
Compile Notes																							
Type Up Literature Review & Submit (24 th)								✓	✓	✓	✓												
Plan Chapter Structure													✗										
Outline/Allocate Material to Sections													XXX				✓						
Draft Introduction + Chap 1														✗									
Draft Chapter One Two														XX	✓								
Draft Chapter Two Three															XX	✓							
Draft Conclusion + Abstract																✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓							
Revise & Edit Drafts																							
Write Final Abstract																							
Compile & Format Final Draft																							
Proof-Read Dissertation																							
Print/Bind/Submit Dissertation (13 th)																							



If things get tough...

Stay consistent, maintain momentum, and imagine yourself travelling towards that light at the end of the tunnel...



Get in touch...

Skills for Academic Success

www.kent.ac.uk/sas

- Study guides
- Video tutorials
- 1:1 appointments



[instagram.com/slaskent](https://www.instagram.com/slaskent)

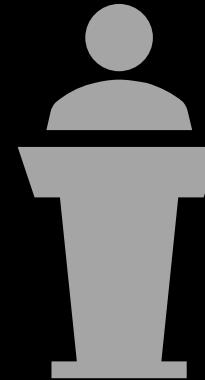


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Notes & Active Reading



English Kickstart

Dr Will Norman

Notes

English Kickstart I

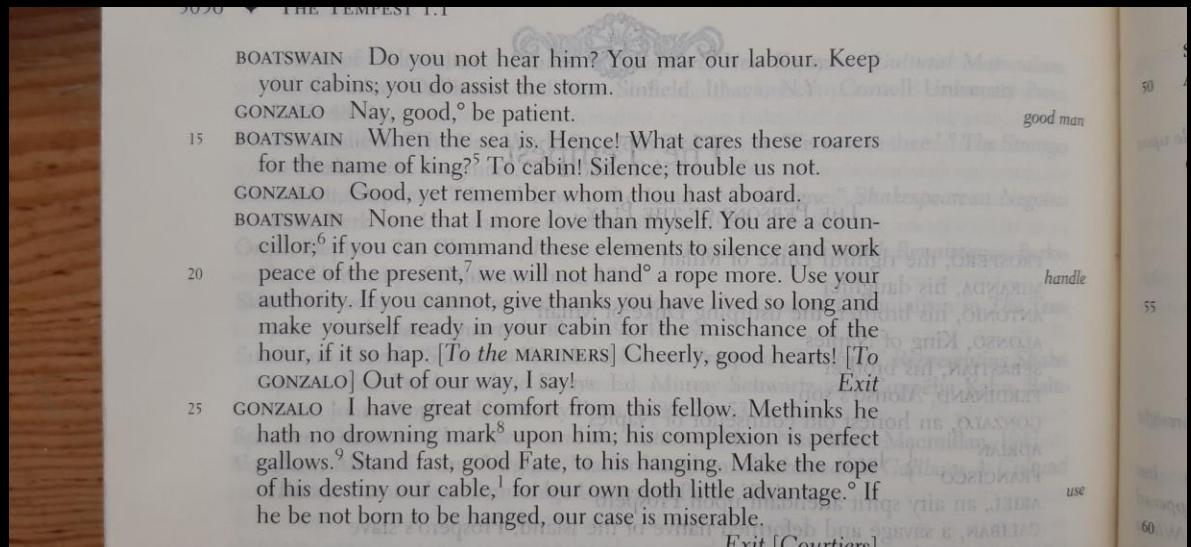
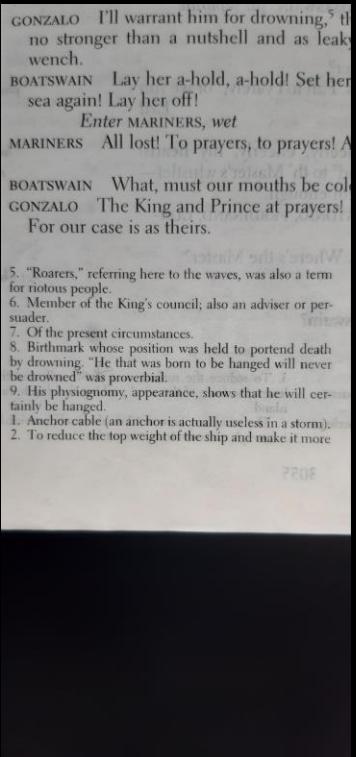
What are
notes for?

Explanatory notes in a
primary text

Discursive notes

Citational notes (MRHA
style)

Explanatory Notes for The Tempest (Norton Edition)



Anything wrong with these notes?

Nabokov's tendency to experiment with new literary forms is clearly exemplified in his 1962 novel *Pale Fire*.^[1] Critical opinion on the novel is divided, however. James Quilty argues that *Pale Fire* represents "a clear development from his earlier fiction, skillfully drawing on techniques and devices he had used for decades but deploying them in new ways."^[2] Zina Grey, on the other hand, claims that *Pale Fire* is an exception in Nabokov's career corresponding to a particular moment in American literary history.^[3] In this essay, however, I am going to build on Sebastian Knight's claim that *Pale Fire* opens up new opportunities for thinking about fiction's relation to poetry.^[4] In doing this, I want to take up Nabokov's own description of the novel as a "hybrid form."^[5] By considering poetry and fiction together, we will gain a clearer view on what Nina Rechnoy calls Nabokov's "combinatory imagination"^[6]

[1] Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962). To be fair, Nabokov did experiment in other novels too, like *Bend Sinister*.

[2] James Quilty, A Study of Vladimir Nabokov

[3]

www.awebsitelfoundafteragooglesearch8969780563bjkklhfdauih;kj

[4] Sebastian Knight's article on JSTOR

[5] Nabokov

[6] Nina Rechnoy, "Nabokov's Combinatory Imagination," *Journal of Literary History* 67, no. 4 (2023): 768.

Ah, that's better!

Nabokov's tendency to experiment with new literary forms is clearly exemplified in his 1962 novel *Pale Fire*. Critical opinion on the novel is divided, however. James Quilty argues that *Pale Fire* represents "a clear development from his earlier fiction, skillfully drawing on techniques and devices he had used for decades but deploying them in new ways."^[i] Zina Grey, on the other hand, claims that *Pale Fire* is an exception in Nabokov's career corresponding to a particular moment in American literary history.^[ii] In this essay, however, I am going to build on Sebastian Knight's claim that *Pale Fire* opens up new opportunities for thinking about fiction's relation to poetry.^[iii] In doing this, I want to take up Nabokov's own description of the novel as a "hybrid form."^[iv] By considering poetry and fiction together, we will gain a clearer view on what Nina Rechnoy calls Nabokov's "combinatory imagination"^[v]

[i] James Quilty, *A Study of Vladimir Nabokov* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 17.

[ii] Zina Grey, "Pale Fire and American Literary History," *The Literary Magazine*, 23 July 2020. Litmag.com.

[iii] Sebastian Knight, "Pale Fire's fiction and poetry," *Nabokov Studies*, 45, no. 3 (1999): 44.

[iv] Vladimir Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (New York: Penguin, 1967).

[v] Nina Rechnoy, "Nabokov's Combinatory Imagination," *Journal of Literary History* 67, no. 4 (2023): 768.

Referencing, Footnotes, Bibliography

- The style of referencing that students of English and Creative Writing are required to use, is that of the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association). Your handout has been written to help students with English-specific essays. A more detailed overview of the MHRA Style can be found here:
<http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/ai/MHRAStyleGuide2009.pdf>.
- The complete MHRA Style Guide referred to at the start of the document can be downloaded from:
<http://www.mhra.org.uk/style/download.html>

What is referencing?

- Referencing means acknowledging the original author or source of any material you use within your essay, including original works (primary sources) and historical and critical opinion (secondary sources) whether it be a direct quote or a summary.
- When referring to existing works within an essay, two types of referencing need to be used:
 - The first type of referencing takes the form of footnotes in the essay text. For further information about footnotes, please see section 4.
 - The second type of referencing is the bibliography, a list that is placed at the end of the essay, of all the material consulted in the preparation of the essay. For information about writing a bibliography, please see section 5.
- NB: Both footnotes and a bibliography are required in all English essays you write (and most others); referencing is formatted slightly differently in footnotes from bibliographies.

Quotations

- There are two main ways of displaying quotations within an essay, depending on its length:
- If a quote is less than forty words long or two complete lines of verse, it can be placed within the main text, enclosed within single quotation marks (double quotation marks should be used only for a quote within a quote).
- If a quote is longer than outlined above, it should be presented as a separate paragraph, but with the text single-spaced and indented from the left hand margin. Quotation marks are not necessary, except single quotation marks for a quote within the quote.
- If you are quoting more than one line of verse (e.g. poetry, drama etc.) within the main text, line breaks should be indicated using an upright '|'. If you choose to omit text within a quote, replace it with an ellipsis [...].

Examples



- **Short quotations** are enclosed within single quotation marks and integrated within your own sentences. If the quotation is in verse, add an upright stroke (|) to show the separation of the lines.
- *Example:* 'I had seen birth and death | But had thought they were different', muses Eliot's Wise Man.

Examples

- **Long quotations** are offset from the main paragraph by one space (down) and two tabs (to the right). These quotations are normally longer than two lines of text (or forty words) and should not be enclosed in quotation marks.
- *Example:*
 - This play [writes Dr Johnson, referring to *Cymbeline*] has many just sentiments some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expense of much incongruity.
 - See second last page of handout.

Examples

- **Quotations from a play or poetry that are more than two lines long** should be offset from the main text (one space down and two tabs to the right) and should include the speakers' names but should not be enclosed in quotation marks.
- See handout.

Active Reading

English Kickstart
Dr Will Norman

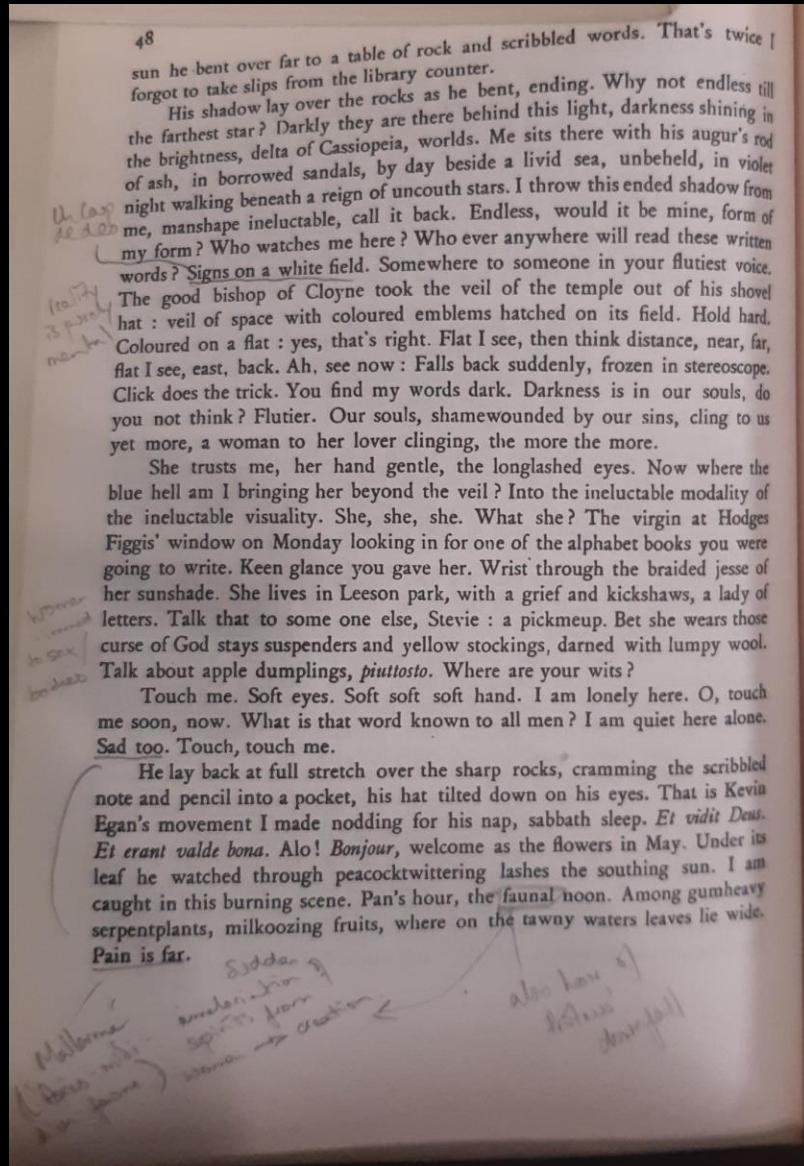
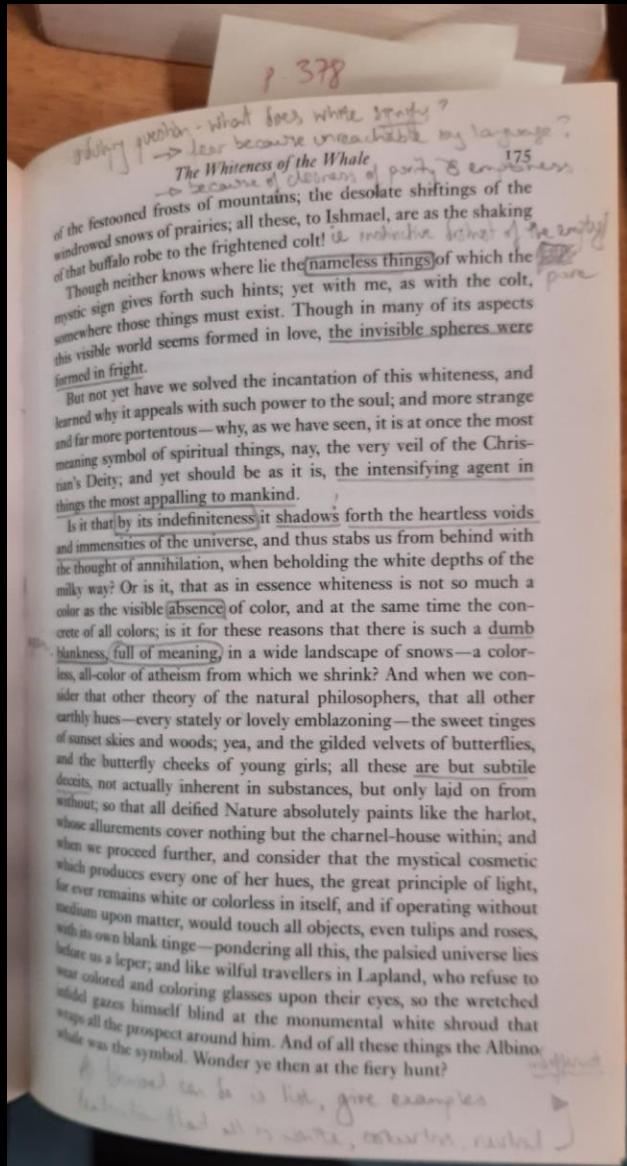
What is Active Reading?

- Keeping a record of your responses to a text
- Types of active reading:
 - Annotating your copy with your own marginalia
 - Making and keeping notes on each text in a separate document
 - Keeping a personal research log recording key insights and questions

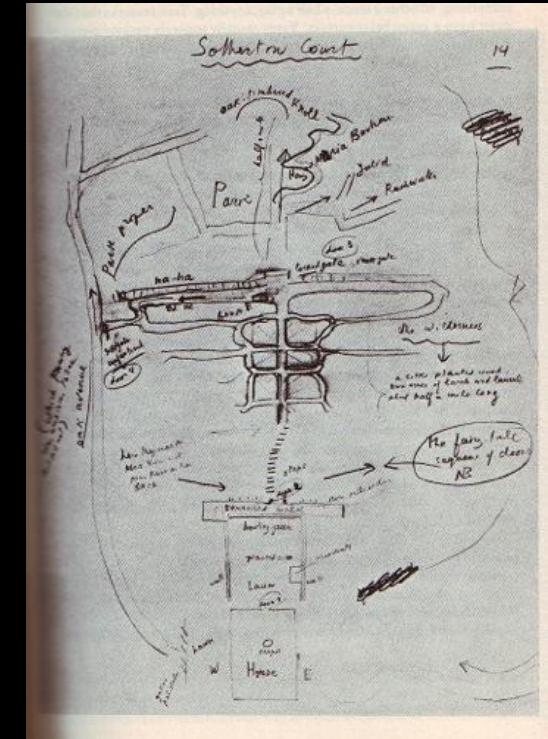
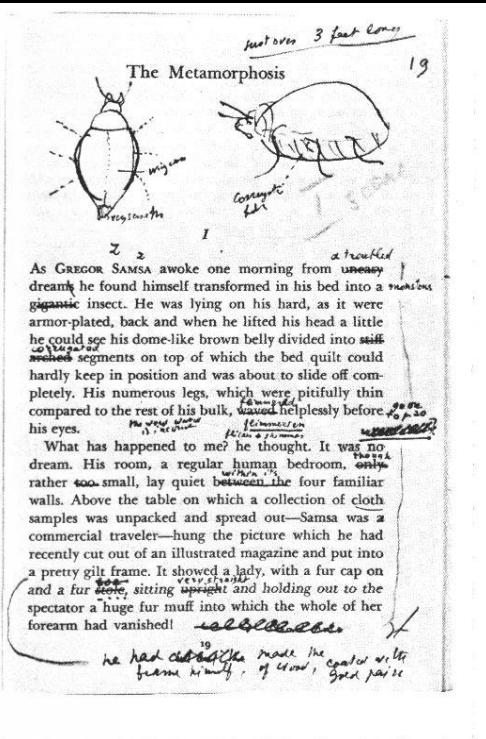
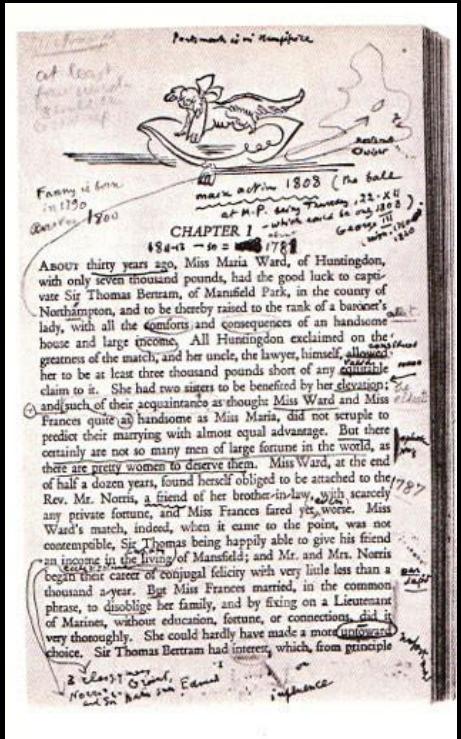
Annotations and Marginalia



- Great for jotting down brief thoughts that occur **as you read**:
- Identifying particularly significant words, lines, passages (come back to this . . .)
- Identifying patterns (I've seen this before / this reminds me of . . .)
- Recording flashes of insight (EUREKA!)
- What's this word (I'll look this up and note what it means)
- I don't understand! (I'll come back to this later, and maybe ask about it in seminar)
-



Vladimir Nabokov's Annotations



Separate Notes

- Electronic or hand-written - whatever works for YOU
- Copy / paste / transcribe key lines/passages. Writing it yourself makes you think about it differently!
- Works better for longer more discursive notes working through interpretations, more complex questions that have been raised in you by the text
- These kind of notes can become paragraphs in essays, or even the starting point for a whole essay
- There is only one reader - you - so don't be self-conscious, just let it flow.

Personal Research Log (Reading Log)

- Do this at the **end of the day's reading before closing your books**
- **Make a record of what you have read (be honest, no one else will see this!)**
- **Make a record of the most important things you have learned. Keep it brief - this is a memory tool, and a way of making yourself reflect back.**
- **Make a record of what you are going to read tomorrow. This is your way of creating an *intention*.**
- **If you tend to feel anxious about work, this log will help to allay your worries**

... and briefly
on plagiarism

- Check out the university [webpage](#) on plagiarism
- Plagiarism and bad practice
- Plagiarism and AI
- How to avoid plagiarism
- Be organized
- Have respect for yourself and your intellectual community
- Take citational notes seriously

Welcome Survey: School
of Humanities



English and
Creative Writing
Survey – Please fill
in