

# AQA A level English Language and Literature

The study of the combined A level joins together two disciplines; the study of language and linguistics and the study of literature.



# Meet the Teachers

My name is Mrs Monaghan. I have been teaching English at Our Lady's for thirteen years now and have been head of English for the last three years. I am also an examiner for the A level Language and Literature paper 1. My degree is in English Literature and I love to read lots of different genres. At the moment I'm reading 'The 5am club' by Robin Sharma.



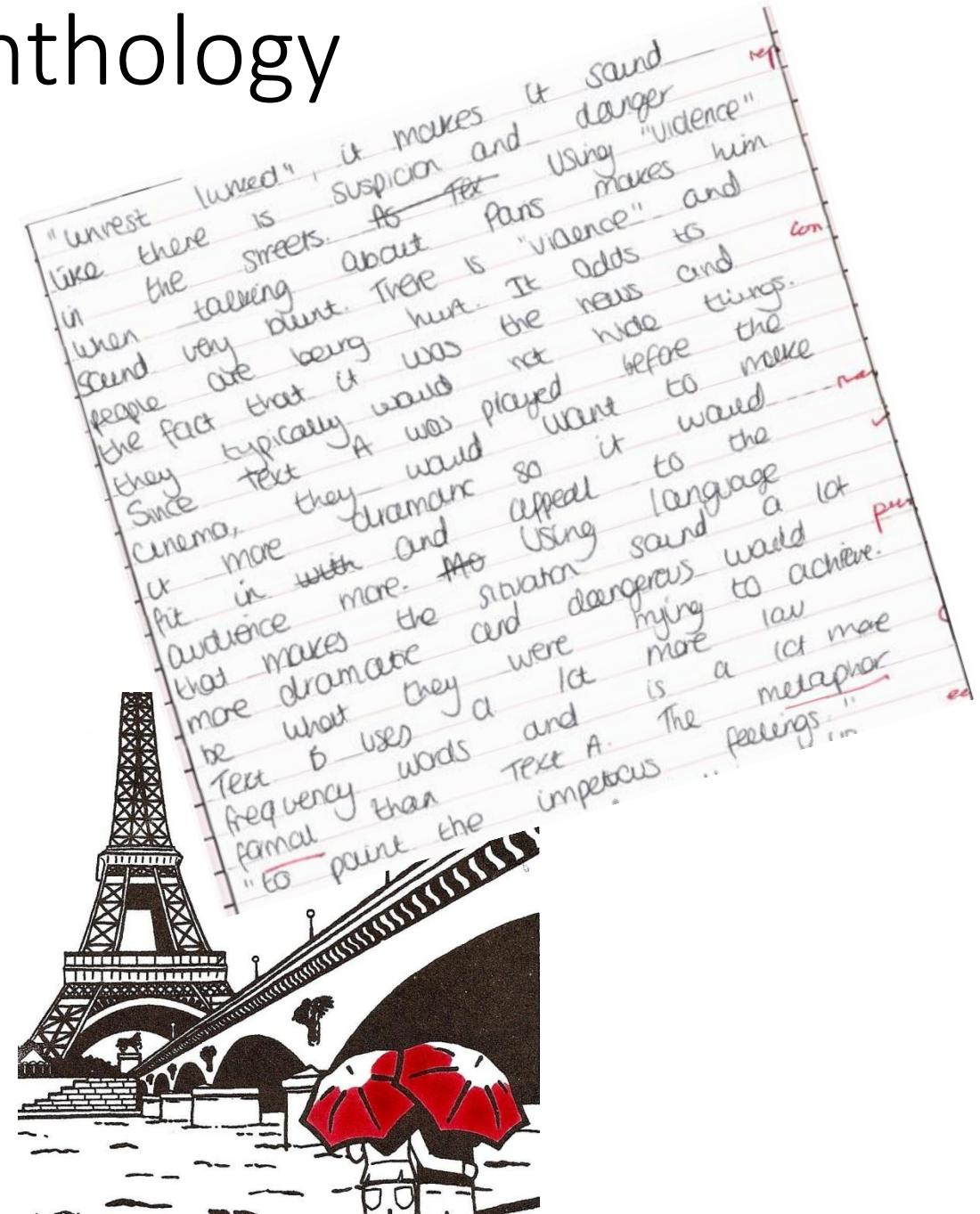


Hello! My name is Ms Bargh. I have been teaching English for 16 years and Our Lady's is the third school I have worked in. I have taught A Level for the past 10 years and my main interest is in English Literature, which is what my degree is in. I look forward to meeting you all in September.

# Remembered Places – Paris Anthology

The Paris anthology offers opportunities for detailed exploration of the representation of place. In studying, thinking, and writing about the anthology, students consider:

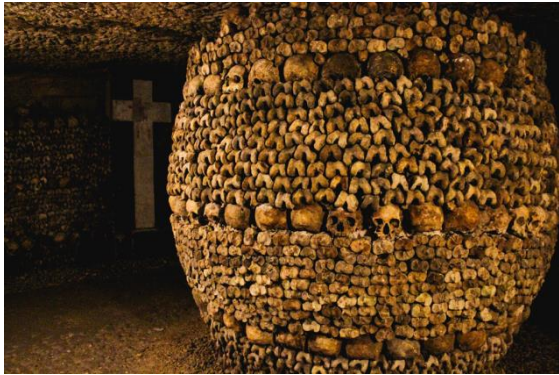
- the ways in which writers and speakers present places, societies, people and events
- the influence of contextual factors such as time period, race, social class and gender on the content and focus of narratives
- the affordances and limitations of different media
- different generic conventions and different purposes for communicating ideas and viewpoints about travel, people and places
- how people and their relationships are realised through point of view, attitude, specific registers, physical descriptions, speech and thought.



# Paris Trip



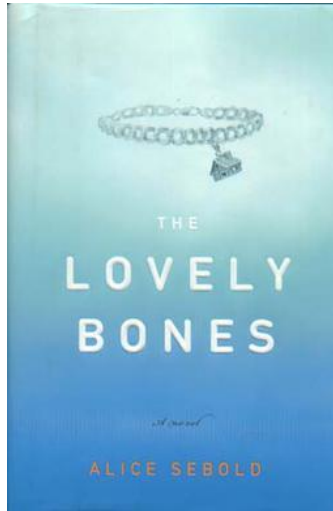
If there is enough interest, we aim to take a short trip to Paris itself during the holidays to help you really understand the Parisian culture you study in the anthology.



While there, the itinerary will take us to many of the places written or spoken about in the Paris anthology, including travelling on the Eurostar; visiting the catacombs, the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre museum as well as tasting some of the excellent French cuisine.



# Imagined Worlds-The Lovely Bones



In this part of the subject content, you will explore the imagined worlds of the *Lovely Bones* which is characterised by an unusual narrative, narrator and events.

You will analyse the language choices made by writers in order to study the following:

- point of view
- characterisation
- presentation of time and space/place
- narrative structure.
- genre

Susie's fantastical narrative where she is able to move backwards and forwards in time shows how her relationship with her mother was framed within Abigail's desire to maintain a motherly role and her own identity. Sebold places Abigail telling stories of 'Persephone and Zeus' to Susie and Lindsey next to her remark about her determination to get a 'master's in English' and some possible career in her own right once the children had grown up. Sebold uses the narrative of bathtime to create a changing, inconstant characterisation that highlights the intimacy of Abigail's time with her daughters, where they talk of 'boys that teased us' but also, in Susie's eyes, marks how dedicating her time to motherhood meant that many of Abigail's own dreams remained unfulfilled. This is a recurring theme throughout the novel and is highlighted by Susie in many places, for example remarking to Franny in chapter 3 that she misses her mother, and then commenting on the significance of the photograph in the same chapter of the 'mother-stranger'. Given that Susie is narrating outside of the events themselves, we see that her experiences inform what she sees are Abigail's wants and desires. This shapes the novel since the reader sees Susie observe rather than partake in experiences.

# Poetic Voices-Carol Ann Duffy

This part of the course is concerned with the nature and function of poetic voice in the telling of events and the presentation of people. In studying the role of language in the construction of perspective, you will explore and analyse:

- the presentation of time: understanding the past, reviewing past experiences, the manipulation of time
- the importance of place: locations and memories, the ways in which these are captured in voice(s), and their effect on individuals
- how people and their relationships are realised through point of view, attitude, specific registers, physical descriptions, speech and thought
- the presentation of events through the poet's selection of material, the use of narrative frames and other poetic techniques.

This idea is further supported by the adjectives "fizzing" and "gargling", which may have been used to show involuntary excitement and the idea of him trying to impress someone.

Throughout stanza one, there is also a semantic field of purity and innocence, such as "Vimto", "satchel" and "two-hour snog". The use of these words so early on may have been used to foreshadow a less innocent future. This is significant, as it could have been used to suggest that with the passing of life comes less happiness and trouble-free days.

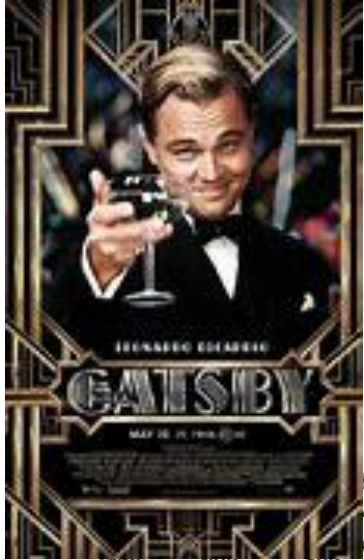
Continuing into the second stanza, we see again more positive, vivacious language, such as the verb "whooped" which perpetuates again the idea of excitement and flirtatiousness. The structure of the poem also suggests the same childlike energy as the use of the caesura "no hands, famous, learning" creates a fast, energetic pace, like the relentless and indefatigable lifestyle of a child.

Although Duffy continues this attitude in stanza three in words such as the verb "ran", suggesting a sense of joy and exuberance, a less positive tone is introduced through the single noun phrase, minor sentences "The blazer." "The badge." "The tie." which provide details from the once glowing past which, from the use of such sparse language, seems to be becoming more and more distant.

The negative atmosphere continues to grow as the phrase "my country" is used to finish off the stanza. It provides connotations of possession through the pronoun "my", and the use of its repetition both in the final line of stanza three and four suggest a sense of sour reminiscence and disappointment, wanting their old life back.



# Writing about Society- The Great Gatsby



...to Lake Superior and lowered my anchor for a small while before I  
as I sat on top deck with a beverage to cure my sickness, a young man  
to deliver a message. "It'll be stormy out later, you'd better watch it!"  
through the shallows. "Is that so, boy?" I returned,  
I had met people like that before, working  
I lifted my anchor and got ready to set forth.  
As he got closer, the water became choppy, as he had warned, and I lost my step as a wave crashed  
into the side of the boat. I don't recall what happened after that, but I woke up to the boy helping  
the water from my body. In order to thank him for his mastery, I cautiously offered him a job on  
deck, and as I had expected he accepted with great pleasure.  
As time went on, I knew the boy better and better and I experienced the change he went through  
from a no one to a someone. My confidence grew in him as he became less of a challenge and more  
of a friend. My old sport was becoming a fine young gentleman and I would dread the day that he  
would leave my life and start one of his own. Thankfully for me, we travelled for five years on that  
boat, each one bringing him more responsibility, and I couldn't help but feel proud of what he had  
become.

In this part of the course, you will explore the ways that writers:

- present people, their points of view and their relationships with others
- shape the narrative structure and present events/time/places
- reveal the speech and thought processes of the characters and narrator(s)
- use situations of conflict to express ideas about societies and their values.

You will be asked to recreate an event from the novel from a different character's perspective and then analyse and evaluate the choices you made in doing so.



# University Lectures

We have links with a number of local Universities and have attended creative and academic workshops and lectures linked to the English Language and Literature A level exam content.



# Dramatic Encounters- A Streetcar named Desire

In this part of the course, you will explore the ways that conflicts are presented, the meanings that can be inferred from the language used and the contextual reasons for these conflicts. As part of your study, you will analyse areas relevant to the study of drama and dramatic discourse, including how playwrights:

- represent natural speech features
- use language to create distinctively different characters
- show characters asserting power and positioning others via their language and behaviour
- use the idea of conflict to create dynamic narratives and address the wider themes of the play.

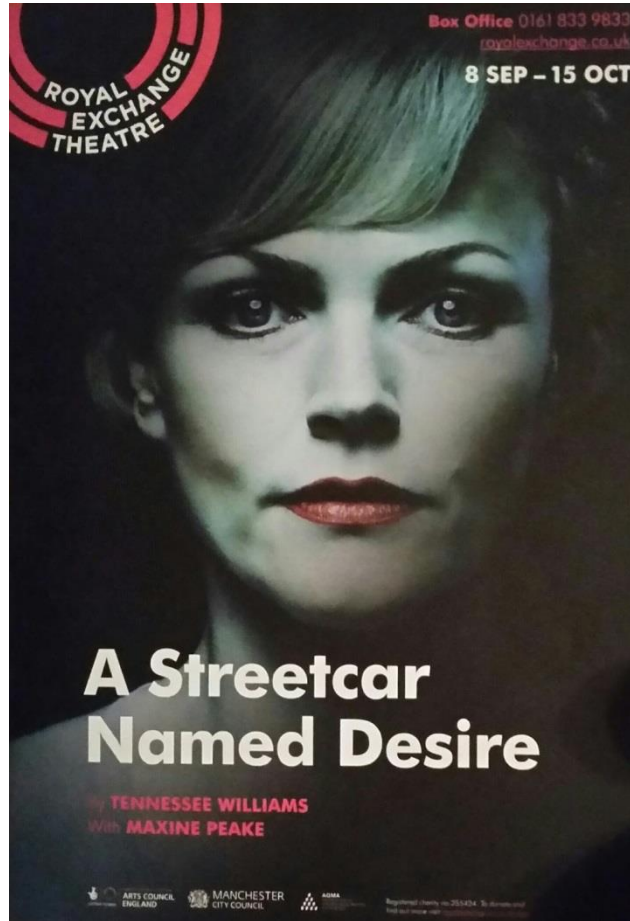


Read scene 9 from the lines Mitch: Didn't you stay at a hotel named The Flamingo to Mitch: Lies, lies, inside and out

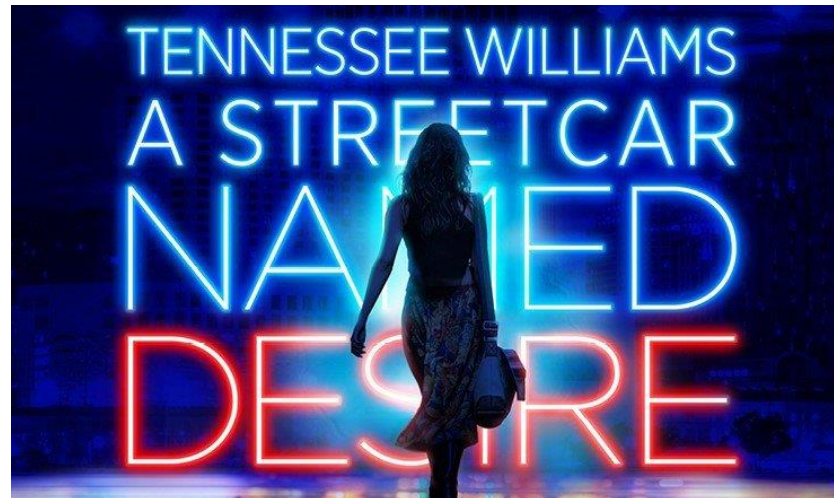
Making reference to these lines and other moments in the play, explore how and why Williams presents the uncovering of Blanche's past throughout the play.

Throughout the play, Williams ties the uncovering of Blanche's past to her state of mentality. In the extract, Mitch begins with the interrogative 'Didn't you stay at a hotel named The Flamingo?', which sets the idea that Blanche's past is well and truly catching up with her, as the audience has already heard Stanley telling Stella and revealing he has clearly spent time in a place women would not want to be associated with, especially someone like Blanche who likes to class herself as a review of Blanche at this time, but on the other hand she also is trying to leave it all behind her, but is unable to escape so the audience partly feels she should be allowed to move on from her past. Williams has also made us feel sympathy for Blanche as it's her Birthday, so the fact her past is being uncovered now seems unfortunate. She replies, however, fairly confidently with 'That's where I brought my victims'. The noun 'victims' shows she is playing up to what Mitch is saying by being ironic, hence showing her confidence, which has been very unusual for Blanche as previously Williams has used a lot of false starts and hesitations in her speech. Yet this starts again when Blanche talks about her past, as '... I think it was panic, just panic' where the ellipsis displays her thought process as if her past overtakes her mentally. By Williams doing this, it creates the image that as the people around her unravel her past, her mind also unravels so her whole mentality is based on what has happened to her before. This has been shown previously, as Blanche has been questioned on several occasions, for example in scene 5 where Stanley asks 'Say, do you happen to know somebody named Shaw?'. The adverb 'say' shows Stanley is trying to act casual so to catch

# Theatre Trip



Live versions of A Streetcar Named Desire.



Each year we endeavour to take students to watch a live production of A Streetcar Named Desire.

# Making Connections- Non Examined Assessment (NEA)

The most significant difference between the texts in their pronoun use is in the second person. In 1984, it is the more commonly used pronoun in the extracts selected. This may be because this is a one-to-one interrogation and O'Brien is trying to intimidate Winston. The declarative 'you are thinking' also suggests that the Party and O'Brien are omniscient and know Winston's thoughts. This omniscient power relates to Orwell's purpose in creating his dystopia, as it stimulates the consciousness of the audience as he reminds them of how his dystopia is relevant to political systems as the government watches over them and controls their lives, although not as far as reading thoughts. O'Brien often uses 'you' to speak for Winston, as in 'you know', 'you suffer', 'you persuade yourself'. This suggests that O'Brien (and the Party by extension) understand Winston completely by using 'you' as the subject of the sentence. O'Brien also uses them to threaten Winston, as seen when the pronoun is attached to modal verbs like 'you will be annihilated' and 'you will never' and 'you must'.



**'Making Connections' requires you to make connections between a literary text and some non-literary material.**

**The connections must be based either on a chosen theme or on the idea that particular linguistic strategies and features may occur in the different types of material.**

Some examples of possible types of exploration are given below. This list is not definitive.

- A comparison of openings in a novel and an autobiography.
- An exploration of real and fictional events.
- Representations of particular themes in literary and non-literary sources.
- An exploration of the use of non-literary genres within literary texts.
- An exploration of speech features in literature and in real-world communication.
- An exploration of new language in literature and non-literary contexts.

# Further Education and Careers

## Where can an English A level take me?

English is good for any job that involves communication, writing and / or literary knowledge. These include: advertising and marketing, writing and journalism, law, consultancy, business, teaching, performing arts, academia, government, linguistics, foreign languages, media and design.

Careers in the sciences, engineering, technology and maths also need more English than you think. Writing proposals, academic papers & articles and communicating with others is key to getting funding for projects and reaching people with your work.

## What subjects does English go with?

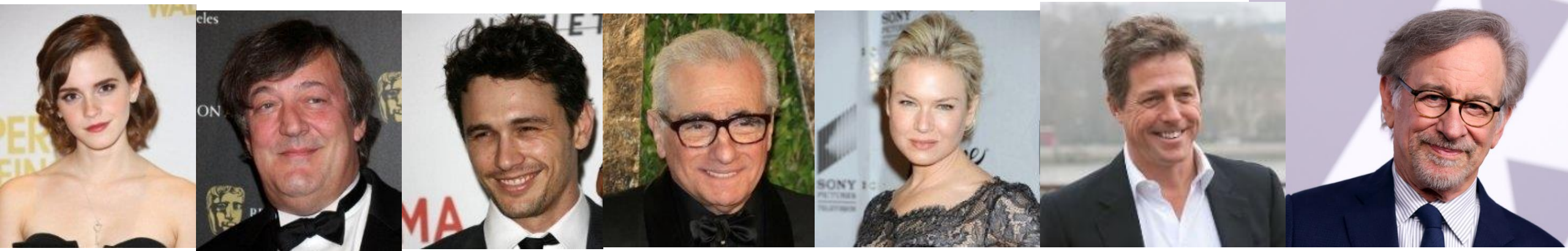
In a nutshell, English goes with everything. In fact, English was the second most popular A-level subject in 2013. It's especially helpful with essay subjects like history or politics and goes well with social science subjects that look at human behaviour, such as psychology or sociology. If you're good at and enjoy English language, you could consider studying another language, which can lead to many careers for language enthusiasts.

## What degrees do I need English for?

Of course, an English language and or literature A-level is an essential subject for an English degree.

Some drama, media studies, American studies and law degree courses will also ask for an English literature or language A-level. The Russell Group informed choices guide further recommends English for: classics, French and other modern languages, teacher training, history, history of art, politics, religious studies, speech therapy.

What do these celebrities have in common?



You guessed it! They all have an English degree.

# Why is English so important?

Language is the soul of intellect, and reading is the essential process by which that intellect is cultivated beyond the commonplace experiences of everyday life. It's a language that is adaptive to emotions, ideas and feelings.

Katherine West

Our language is the reflection of ourselves. A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.

Cesar Chavez

I admire people who dare to take the language, English, and understand it and understand the melody

Maya Angelou

Language exerts hidden power, like the moon on the tides.

Rita Brown

Words are some of the most powerful and important things I know...Language is the tool of love and the weapon of hatred. It's the bright red warning flag of danger--and the stone foundation of diplomacy and peace.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Your purpose is to make your audience see what you saw, hear what you heard, feel what you felt. Relevant detail, couched in concrete, colourful language, is the best way to recreate the incident as it happened and to picture it for the audience.

Dale Carnegie

Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation.

Angela Carter

A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language

W. H. Auden