

Wreake Valley Writers



Wreake Valley Academy

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Welcome to the very first **Wreake Valley Writers**. The purpose of this publication is to showcase the imaginative, creative, moving and interesting work written by anyone associated with Wreake Valley Academy.

Whether you're a student, a member of staff, a parent, a governor or a local resident, we'd love to include your writing. This can be fiction or non-fiction, serious or humorous, based on school, work or inspired by something utterly unusual.

In this first issue we have writing from students aged 10 to 18. We hope you have a very enjoyable read and are as impressed as we are by the engagement, talent and insight.

Published by the English and Media Department at Wreake Valley Academy.

"Gas, gas, gas!" yelled the Corporal at the top of his lungs. I struggled for my gas mask. "It will save your life," he'd said. At this moment I sure hoped it was true. It was coming right for me, straight in my direction. I ran...

The mud swam round my feet, the rain hammered down, dripping off my gas mask, blurring my vision. The rats scuttled around in front of me in their own world, completely unaware of the monster that lurked just seconds away, coming to get us, to kill us, to seep into our masks and make sure we died a slow and painful death. The mud on the sides of the trench crumbled due to the vibration of all the soldiers running. I could hear the machine guns ahead of us in No Man's Land; the ringing in my ears got louder and louder and I was in a blur. The Corporal was yelling something at me but all I could do was run. And run. And run.

By Olivia Layton 8LMY

Writing inspired by Autumn

An Autumn Scene — by Evie Lewin 9AWr

The golden, crispy leaves covering the once bold cobbles scrunched under the feet of passers-by. Nearby, a river trickled and a kaleidoscope of fish darted around, splashing as they did so. An otter glided through the shallowest water, searching for things to eat, watching the beautiful fish whilst licking its tiny lips. An old rickety wooden bridge rested across the river; the wind causing it to sway from side to side, dancing in time to the breeze. The few visitors that found the area often came with dogs of all breeds, many were used for hunting; sometimes they left small trails of blood on the strewn pebbles, it was from vermin that were once thriving. The sharp, acidic scent of coffee from a nearby cafe filled the air, the rich aroma pleased everyone, whether they enjoyed the taste of coffee or not.

Colour in Autumn – by Isabella Putnam 9AWr

A whirlpool of tangerine and crimson leaves danced in the wind as they drifted down to the forest floor. As Lucy walked, they crunched under her feet, filling the midday silence with the sounds of October. In the distance, she heard baby birds chirping for their mother, not quite yet old enough to leave the nest. She breathed in, a long deep, sigh of relief and the beautiful pumpkin spice smell filled her nostrils. Littered all around her feet were fallen branches and sticks from the unpredictable English weather. Maybe people were killing the environment and ruining the only planet we know, but, just then, these issues were erased from Lucy's mind. This place was perfect, out of touch with the world; her paradise.

As the nights began to draw in, the vibrant colours of summer faded, snatching away the happiness as they went. Instead they were replaced with the dreary, dull crimsons and olives ready for winter. Trees wilted, branches drooped and torrential rain drowned what was left of the sun. But, as it set, fuchsia, violet and apricot rays spread across the sky, blending perfectly into each other like a watercolour painting.

An Autumn Scene — by Mathilde Enoux 9TC

Miniscule, vivid birds bunched together, tweeting softly in the rough breeze. Their shiny beaks stretching out and pinching at the exotic berries, which were as red as blood. The shaking branches spat out pieces of bark, leaving them to land harshly on the immense, orange sheet of crunchy leaves. Buried below these piles, diminutive creatures crawled around with no sense of where they were heading. Under the large, towering tree sat a timeworn bench slowly breaking apart. Its unsteady legs crippled noisily sending wee pieces of wood flying onto the leaf-covered ground. Numerous trees stood one after the other until as far as the eye could see, each with a huge bush of ginger leaves whistling in the wind.

'Autumn' - by Jean-Luc Cipieres 7MRe

Hear the crunch of fallen leaves:

The crisp orange of autumn.

The pitter-patter of little paws

And violets start to blossom.

See the great, bushy tail of the squirrel

And the odd sight of a sly fox.

See young couples holding hands,

And conkers and acorns sharing knocks.



It's a chilly mid-October morning, the sort of morning where your breath appears as puffs of smoke, your windows are coated in a thin layer of moisture and your fingers turn a soft, pale, peach colour. It's the kind of morning you can lose yourself in. Sitting solemnly on a rusted swinging bench, a young girl stares over the glassy surface of a lake doing just that: losing herself.

The girl calmly watches the array of fish slipping gently in and out of the depths of the lake. She notices their gorgeous scales shimmer in the morning sun but it's a saddened silence.

Grand trees rest around the girl, using their humble branches to pry the swing bench away from the ground and letting it rest, serenely suspended in the air for anyone to rest on and think. Scattered around the mighty trees are brittle, grievous leaves gazing longingly up at their comrades that are yet to fall and wishing them a safe journey. The short-trimmed blades of grass cry out in the agony of an unidentified sorrow as they reach towards the huge, calm sky above them. It's as though they're in prayer.

By Brooke Stevenson 10TF

A softly chilling breeze caresses the crisp leaves. A hushed rustling graces the damp morning air; each orange paper-like litter flutters down towards the cool dew. The tree branches bow and torque gently, their barren branches and lacing fingers whistling like a rusted kettle. A freshly scented mist rolls over the placid, tranquil surface of the silently brooding lake.

Amongst the wizened figures, gathered in their eternal dawn, a sharply-cast chain juts out from a gnarled limb. Jagged peaks of iron and steel twist grotesquely. From the contorting limbs of the metal beast, an unnaturally buzzing whine permeates the noiseless void. Silently swaying, a solemn wooden carcass hangs from frozen chains, its crimson hide adorned with scars and deeply searing burns. Beneath its moist, bacteria-ridden underbelly, lie broken shards of glass - tinted by the blood-red leaves – and cruelly carve the flesh of the pulsing earth.

By Alex Ryves 10TF

Writing inspired by 'Private Peaceful'



I personally avoided the stench of death, but the prolific odour of its darkness still lingers in the shadows of my wrong-doings.

The men of politics and propaganda deceptively informed us that honour and righteousness came of enlisting, but not the accompanying repercussions; no sane man could fathom watching brother after brother reach their demise like each discoloured leaf departing an Autumn tree. Those that weren't present try to imagine, and fail. Those who were, try to forget, but can't. Each soothing sip of saké tries to wash away the shadow of the sad man I've become, there aren't enough bottles in the world.

The vivid image of that sickening battlefield is burned into my cranium, and we somehow "won"? - "Liberty" is nothing but an illusion. I have no liberty from my bottomless abyss of a nightmare, I relive hell when I wake up and before I go to bed, when a car backfires, and when an infant cries. So tell me how I "won"? Tell me why I gave up my sanity, my youth, and my innocence.

Was it for land, money, religion or oil?

By Rohan Naidoo 11MSH

By Ansh Shah 8FS

Trench life involves long periods of boredom mixed with brief periods of terror. The threat of death keeps me constantly on edge, while poor living conditions and a lack of sleep wear away at my health and stamina. Rats and lice torment my friends day and night. Oversized rats, urged by the food, help spread disease and are a constant irritant. Doctors identified lice as the cause of trench fever, which plague my friends with headaches, fevers, and muscle pain. The unsanitary conditions of trench life, especially the cold and persistent dampness, have resulted in my best friend suffering from trench foot, a frost-bite-like infection that's led to him getting his leg amputated. This means he's been sent home (lucky lad or not)!

Life in the trenches By Luca Freer 8GL

The smell was unbearable, the smell of a million damned souls trapped in the blood soaked soil. As you look out across no man's land you see the carnage from the German machine guns their bullets shredding through the flesh of our troops, the sound they cause a rhythm of death, as our great metal behemoths rolled on through the thick hail of bullets. Then the gas came, a thick green cloud of destruction concealing the enemy as it rolled killing everything in its path with bright red burns and sounds of chocking. After the carnage life is no better all you hear are the groans from the wounded and sick and the pater of tiny feet crawling past your head spreading disease and death with each step spreading disease. All you do is live in constant fear of being bludgeoned in your sleep by an enemy night raid or being blown to bits by a mortar but all you can do is lay there and wonder how your life came to this, as desertion will carry the toll of death and even if you get sent home life would be no better because of air raids and the constant sirens signalling the fall of your home.

The crinkled picture of a loved one. The scratch of a pencil, shakily writing what may be the last letter. There's a haunting music in the bombs and in the cacophony of screams made by helpless victims as they reach for their gas masks. Putrid smelling tentacles grasping for whatever struggling prey that they can find. Gas fills the trenches making them poisoned rivers, bodies sinking to the bottom: missing in action or dead.

By Emily Barrow 8LMY

I have been in this trench for two weeks now; I have seen the damage of the war and the damage of the cold, which creates the disease by the name of trench foot. We are crammed into the trenches, which when we are stood up it only just hides our heads. I have seen soldiers be killed by our own side for not charging the enemy so they don't get killed but by doing so they are charged with insubordination. Some soldiers try to escape the trenches by shooting themselves in the foot so they can't walk but most of them get court marshalled. Most of us struggle to walk because of us having trench foot. I rarely get any sleep because of my sentry duty and if I do fall asleep I will get court marshalled for insubordination.

By William Carver-Sansby 8CA

A December Walk

My grandparents took me on a winter's walk at Christmas. I was strolling behind them and they looked very happy because they love Christmas, and to be honest, so do I.

We were walking down a path-way and I saw a squirrel rushing up a tree; it was a willow, one of my favourite trees. The weather started getting a lot colder; it had been cold before but by now it was freezing but luckily I'd bought an extra jacket to help keep me warm.

We were coming towards the end of our walk when it started snowing; it wasn't heavy snow, it was only light which was good because by now I was starting to get a bit tired and hungry and I didn't want to be delayed by a massive snow storm. And then, then my grandparents just started holding hands! I was so amazed because they do this so rarely, so I kept quietly behind them because I didn't want to disturb them.

By George Dudley 7S Ma

Malcolm — By Lewis Rochester, age 10 (Mrs Rochester's son) —this story got through to the second round in the BBC 500 words competition

The door slammed shut, I didn't know what was happening, and I couldn't open the door. Footsteps passed the front door, I heard a car's engine start up. I ran to the front window but I couldn't see clearly because of the dirt on them, I found a small gap where I could see the car reversing off the drive. I waited for a couple of hours at the grubby window for them to come back home, feeling worried they would not return. After a while I cried realising they were not coming back.

My tummy was grumbling like an earthquake so I went to the kitchen hoping to find some food left behind. As usual, there wasn't any food there for me so I scavenged for my evening meal in the overflowing bin. The bin had a putrid smell of decay as I pulled out the fresh remains of a half-eaten take away burger, it tasted heavenly as I bit into the juicy meat. Thirsty, I needed a drink to wash my food down and I couldn't turn on the tap. I saw a glass of water on the side and starting drinking some, it quenched my thirst. I returned to the front window and cried out at passers-by but nobody took any notice.

As night fell I was freezing because it was still winter and there was no heating in the house, I snuggled on top of the uncomfortable musty cushions on the scruffy sofa and fell asleep. The next morning I spent my time looking out of the window again hoping for someone to take notice of me but they didn't. This was my routine every day for the next few weeks.

One day when I was asleep on the sofa I heard the letter box rattle which made me tremble with excitement, could someone be actually coming to visit me? I jumped off the sofa and ran to the door like a shot, crying out to get the person's attention but it was too late, they had left. Feeling saddened I returned to my sofa and my life of solitude.

On a dull winter's day I heard loud voices in the front garden, I wondered if they were my family returning. I looked out of the now even grubbier window to see three men in uniform walking towards the front door. I was scared because I didn't know who these people were or what they wanted. I couldn't open the door and needed help, once opened I breathed in the cold fresh air. The kind people put me in the car, drove to the shelter where it was warm and they gave me food that tasted delicious. The staff at the shelter made sure I had a cosy bed which I collapsed into then fell asleep instantly. I thought I was dreaming when I heard "What a beautiful grey and white cat, can we take him home mum and dad?"

Letters and Diaries inspired by ‘Macbeth’

Hello Hollie

How have you been recently?

I have the most riveting news! I couldn't believe it when I heard it! I was recently at small celebration for the new Thane of Cawdor; while snooping around (you know how much I love house decorations, I couldn't keep myself away) I couldn't help hearing Lady Macbeth exclaiming unimaginable insults! She repeatedly showered Macbeth with hurtful words such as "when you durst do it, then you were a man!" Such hurtful words, does she have no respect for her husband?

Even when I thought she could go on no more, she continued! She used the most vulgar language "dashed the brains out" - I was mortified hearing these words. Lady Macbeth, a woman who describes herself more masculine than Macbeth himself! The same man, that saved the battle between the rebel Scots!

Furthermore, she kept on interrogating Macbeth with a range of mocking questions such as "hath it slept since?", "was the hope drunk wherein you dressed yourself?" However, it gets even worse! She compares him to the old proverb "like the poor cat i'th'adage?" I was overwhelmed; I couldn't comprehend what I just heard. That woman is a disgrace to the rest us ladies.

I instantly needed to tell you this! The rest of our friends will astonished to hear this gossip!

I shall speak to you soon my darling

By Sarah Kleinmoedig 11MSH

Lady Macbeth's Diary

I just can't take it anymore! All this blood and death... for what? Just because I wanted power. Just because I forced my husband to kill King Duncan, now we have angered God! This isn't how my life was supposed to end. I was meant to grow old and rule over Scotland with my husband but no, I can't. My husband had been overtaken by greed and ambition and... and... and, it's all my fault.

This blood on my hands won't leave me; it's like a shadow looming over me until I meet my demise. All the kings who have lived before me have seen my terrible sins. I'm sorry but this guilt I'm feeling cannot be expressed in mere words.

This country has been broken because of its unfit rulers. When I try to sleep and close my bloodshot eyes all I see are daggers and the dead laughing at me, tormenting me until my hairs turns grey from stress and guilt.

By Callum Lawrence 11MSH

Lady Macbeth's Diary

King Duncan is dead, Banquo's dead and now Lady Macduff and her 'pretty chickens!' It's all my faulty. Why? Why would I tell Macbeth to start these terrible things? Ever since that fateful night I sleepwalk continuously, hallucinating the cruel, eye-blinding, relentless blood all across by wicked hands.

There are hooting owls, ravens crowing, bells ringing and doors knocking. I can't deal with these blasting noises reminding me of the disgusting things he did. "Out damn spot! Out I say" this frightening sight of blood that I beg to see no more. I feel mortified, angry and tearful. I just wish I had never said a word to my spiteful man!

By Tally Jackson 11NRo

Macbeth's Diary

Only a few months ago I was the Thane of Glamis. I was loved, respected and honoured to be known by all. Now, as the King of Scotland I'm dying, unloved, dishonoured and disrespected. I have lost my friends and everyone closest to me, including my dearest partner of greatness.

I lie here on the steps leading down to hell, being charged with regicide, murder and putting a fault line through the Divine Right of Kings. What have I done? I'll never be forgiven, no God would ever accept my apology.

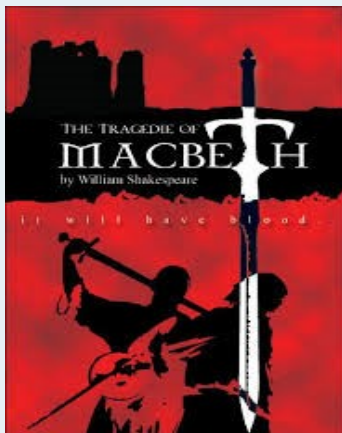
By Brandon Chapman 11KHo

Macbeth's Diary

A few months ago I was brave, ambitious and heroic. Now I am nothing. I have nothing. I was the treacherous leader who ruled Scotland but now I fear that my head will be put on a spear.

I am deeply sorry for all the killings that I had to do, especially King Duncan's who I deceived. He was a respected, loyal leader but now I'm disloyal and living without a wife, a child or anyone to please me.

King Duncan made me what I was, Thane of Cawdor, but now I'm on a constant rollercoaster of repentance, remorse, discomfort, regret and guilt.



Lady Macbeth's Diary

The tension, all the torment, all the guilt is gouging into my mind. All the horrific sleepless nights are becoming so mentally tiring and particularly painful to live with. I can hear thunder screeching, lightning stomping on Scotland and rain flooding over my sins. When I look in the mirror I see a terrorised lady with nobody to blame but myself.

King Duncan, Banquo, Lady Macduff and children; all dead because of me, I was jealous of them. How did it get to this? Blood will forever stain my hands, no matter how much I try to clean them. It reminds me 'what's done is done and cannot be undone'. Feelings of remorse scream through my body, my brain, my mind, everything!

It's true, 'all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.' This overpowering regret will be the doomful death of me!

By Lily Helps 11NRo

Macbeth's Diary

Just a couple of months ago after the horrendous battle against the Norwegians and rebel Scots I was known to the world as 'Brave Macbeth' and promoted to be 'Thane of Cawdor' with huge respect and dignity. I was courageous, loved and married. But now... now I am hated, scared, feared and lonely, all because of those gruesome 'weird sisters'. Every morning I wake to hearing those damned 'widows howl and orphans cry'. There is no peace, only war. The holy throne was stolen by the devil that is me and 'my dearest partner of greatness', whose soul had left her body leaving me damned for eternity.

But 'what's done is done', I will burn this country down to Banquo's grave which rests peacefully under all this turmoil. But maybe there is hope? Maybe 'Brave Macbeth' will rise again as the 'falcon' to hunt the 'mousing owl'. Yes! I have been chosen by God; no-one shall deny my will. Scotland is mine and mine only!

By Jayden Themudo 11NRo

Caring for this beautiful planet — Two Environmental Speeches

The world is a very precious place and should be looked after by everyone. The world's average temperatures are slowly increasing and certain areas of the Earth, for example, The Arctic, the ice is slowly melting and water levels rising by the day. Already, low-lying areas across the world are starting to be drowned in water. A main reason for this is pollution creating the greenhouse effect, which is where toxic and warm gasses are trapped in the Earth's atmosphere. A greenhouse gas is a gas that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range. The primary greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone.

People across the world are finally becoming more aware of the situation and new environmentalist groups are being formed. Big companies, such as McDonalds are doing things like removing their plastic straws and replacing them with paper ones. A problem with this is that many people do not like the paper straws and would much rather have plastic ones because of their convenience and not taking into account that they are not good for the environment.

In conclusion, people should take the Earth's health into consideration and stop being selfish and worrying too much about themselves.

By Jack Tarlton Weatherall 9KPo



We need to stop polluting the Earth because it is increasing the temperature and causing many deaths. We are also polluting the Earth by dumping plastic into the rivers and seas which the fish and turtles are eating; it is killing them because they don't know the difference between plastic or a jelly fish or some other type of living organism. Factories particularly in China are producing so much gas that it is polluting the earth which is making it a lot hotter and causing many things to die including part of the Amazon rainforest which set fire due to the lack of rain and the vast amount of heat that it is getting.

Global warming is extremely bad and dangerous because it is melting the Polar ice caps which in a few years could drown many cities around the world and could result in many deaths. The sea level will rise because the ice in the north pole is 3-6 feet deep. Older people can help younger people to help and to understand the fatalities that global warming can cause by raising awareness and teaching about it in schools so that more children/teenagers are aware of what is happening to their planet.

By Ben Waistell 9AWr

The Meaning of Life - By Isabel Anderson 16KLe

Dancing, jumping, twirling, the feet of a thousand fans worked like clockwork, clicking in time, as their adrenaline sped up to max power. So lost in the moment were they, that their bodies swerved about in time with the music, unaware of the embarrassment of appearances and pressures; like a balloon torn out of a child's grip, only to be blown out into heaven's skies, fated to dance until sundown. Hands shook like the celebrating chimes of tambourines as they clapped together, some black, some white, all playing in harmony like the ivory and black keys on a piano. Their minds filled with laughter, the worries and pains of undeserved sorrows all forgotten in that moment.

As their eyes looked on at the pink party fireworks of electronic sun-rays, the lights and cameras captured a moment of rare peace amongst mankind. Generations of races, a history of hatred and the same dream to be equal hummed in the room as if marking this unique opportunity in their memories. The audience and their hopes were joined by melodic tunes as if connecting the dots of humanity.

Wet, hot and relieving steam showered on top of the crowd, like God's pity in a desperate attempt to reunite with his creation. Men forgot the responsibilities of their forefathers and whistled above the noisy fans. Women, no longer ladies, screamed as the band waltzed onto an awaiting stage.

The lead singer slipped his fingers onto the microphone stand and flung back his shock of wild hair. Guitarists turned the stroking movements of their hands into a burst of life, a victorious right to show off their audacious talent. Music floated out of this shameless band of artists. Only a few in the crowd were absent of the blissful thought, "Wouldn't it be great if the meaning of life was as simple as this?"

The Gift—By Aijay Kanani 9DC

The box, wrapped in gold paper lay waiting on the table. The mystery present kept in its prison, secured with a violet bow. Its internal mystery beckoned to the young boy, enticing him with thoughts of what could be contained inside. From the present came an aura: a feeling of joy at the fact that the boy was going to receive the present, yet a feeling of sorrow that he couldn't open it yet.

Outside, the cold winter breeze pummelled the windows, contradicting the warm glow of the fire inside. The boy took a step closer to the present that was sat on its own, in the middle of an oak table; he had to know what was inside. He got closer and closer but then a thought popped into his head: what if he was caught? Would the gift be taken back? Would he ever know what was inside?

"No!" he shouted aloud and then quickly turned to check if he'd been heard. The anxious boy reached for the gift. "Just a peek," he whispered to himself.

He grabbed the box and carefully took off the lid. The present's secret was finally revealed. His eyes shone with awe and wonder at what he was to receive the next morning – the one thing he had been waiting for, the one thing every one of his friends had bragged about, the one thing he wanted.

The boy closed the lid and ran upstairs to bed – to wait till he could actually receive the gift.

The next morning, he ran down the stairs and ripped open his gift. Alas, all of the mystery, the magic and the expectation of the gift had already been revealed; he had nothing to be excited for. The surprise had been ruined.

The End

I waited. In nervous anticipation, I inhaled and exhaled feeling like I was making the only noise in the world. Behind me, there were a few rats scuttling and scavenging around the trench floor, looking for something to eat. My stomach grumbled; I hadn't eaten since Monday's tin of corned beef. Looking down, my eyes caught a glimpse of my reflection – I was unrecognisable. My cheek bones were red and swollen yet my face looked as if all the life had been sucked out of it. My eyes were dull and grey and my mouth was so thin it looked like it had been drawn on with a pencil. I sighed. What was becoming of me?

I turned around and ruffled my hair. Glancing around the trench, I released the wooden ladder embedded into the mud wall. I put my weight on the first step and peered over the top. I gasped. In the distance, there were tiny matchstick men treading closer to me, a faded yellow mist surrounding their ankles and terrifying masks on their faces. My heart raced and my breaths became shorter.

"Alright Jerry, come out with your hands in the air. Come on, we know you're in there." I gulped. Hesitating, I pulled my bayonet out and arranged it on the end of my rifle. I heaved myself over the edge of the trench and onto no-man's land. "Alright Jerry," their commander said, "Put your hands up and drop the rifle." I sighed and fired a shot screaming "Komm nach Deutschland."

They shot. I collapsed. It was over.

Writing that's best not read before going to bed...

The Gift — by Molly Smith 9AWr

The Hungry turned, slowly, it's eyes were tightly shut together. Boils filled with pus covered it's rotting body. The smell of death lingered in the air. A large gash in The Hungry's abdomen revealed its liquidised organs. With every step, more of the diseased body fell apart. An arm, or what was left of it was scraping against the blood covered concrete. One leg had a large hole in it which was the cause of the black, oozing blood trail. The cut grew bigger, allowing the liquid insides to slowly drip out of the corpse. Half of The Hungry's jaw was ripped off revealing a crumbling set of yellow teeth, flecks of hair and skin lingered on The Hungry's stained clothing. It moved slowly but with assurance, it had eaten earlier today and was looking for dessert.

A scrawny boy hid in the dark alleyway, he knew what was coming for him. These days, you were safest in a group but he was lost. The town was a dangerous place, the smaller villages had been evacuated and were easier to raid, you'd cross paths with one or two Hungries but they were easy to dispose of. Whereas, in the cities, the virus had spread like fire. Luke's group had been staying in a small village about an hour away from the city, every month a number of people were selected to go into the city on a supply run, it had been Luke's turn.

Suddenly, a noise startled Luke out of his thoughts. He saw it before it saw him. He tried to run but slipped over a piece of broken glass. His ankle rolled in its socket. As blinding pain filled his body, the Hungry finally noticed his next meal. Luke shuffled along the floor, looking for his knife but his ankle made him too slow. The Hungry was closing in, with one last breath of energy Luke moved further back. However, it was not far enough, after a few seconds, the Hungry had caught up with him.

The Hungry lunged towards Luke, it's good arm swinging wildly. It let out a screech and grabbed his neck. Luke looked into the Hungry's glassed eyes, he saw the boils on its grey, sunken face, saw its gnashing yellow teeth and accepted his fate. The Hungry bit down hard into his neck, tearing through flesh and muscle. Blood poured out of the open wound, he watched as more Hungries filled the alley. Each took their rotting hands and clawed at his body, a few managed to grab a handful of flesh, others were not so lucky. Luke stared up at the sky, the clouds filled with rain and smiled. The Hungries were giving him the greatest gift; the gift of death.

The Stalker — by Sienna Dayman 10ABo

Silence. The only sounds detectable are the whistling wind and the minute rustling of the fallen, vibrantly coloured leaves.

There she is. It's the same every day. Four o'clock walks crunching leaves underfoot, like a soldier marching to their death. She arrives at the Remembrance Bench and becomes lifeless. Her sadness consumes her, every inch of her body droops. Sometimes I hear her sniffles but not much else. I guess losing your parents does that to you.

I can smell her sweet, delicious fragrance from here and I can feel her sorrow. I did this. I did this to her. I did it to Kristen.

Regret isn't a word in my vocabulary. Someone was in my way and I got them out of it. I didn't murder her father, he was an honourable, respected man but her mother was my way in... until she figured me out. Kristen is beautiful. Short curled hazelnut hair, and as for her eyes – grey, gold, brown, every colour you can think of. Unique. She's so special. She has to see that. You have to see that.



Writing about Macbeth's three witches

White, weak, windswept hair as long as the weeping willow's vines flows in the bitter night's air. Wrinkles adorn the tissue paper skin and down the spine of each rigid bridge a pointed nose lies. Eyes, round and wide, their whites sparkling in the night, speaking perceptive utterances from once upon a time. Sharp, scarce and savage talons are mislaid behind the dry and dirty lips.

Shining, magical locks sit upon the cruel face where sharp brows curl above bugling eye sockets, isolating the innocent. The nose, as pointed as a pin is ready to attack, while each finger, elongated and stretched, indicates utter evil.

By Siana-Rae Galligan 11NRo

An evil, wicked serpent wrapped itself around a bamboo cane. Its proud posture, hissing tongue and dark delicate scales present its pride like a brave soldier in battle. From behind, the wind blows at the heavy cloak, dragging it with all its might. Stringy, grey and long hair blows back into the whistling wind.

Three frail faces stare into a corner, three pairs of beaming eyes are almost hypnotised. What are they looking at so seriously? Raised eyebrows, pointed noses and wrinkled smirks peer forward as if watching a spell transform. One witch grasps the bamboo stick in inspiration, another bites her long, yellow nails and the final witch points in awe, clutching a wand grasped firmly beside her withered head.

By Evie Seymour 11NRo

The sky was covered in a blanket of ash and smog, it was almost as if the sun had decided not to wake up. Ragged, patchy gowns flew through the polluted air joined by long strands of greasy, grey hair.

Three sets of beady, bloodshot, yellow eyes gleamed into the distance. Each face was wrinkled and wart-filled, oozing with treachery while a pearlescent green serpent wrapped itself around a crooked ash wand. The witches' teeth resembled the mould you might find in curdled milk that had sat alone for an eternity.

Protruding from the ragged snot-green gowns were aged wrinkled hands that looked like a battlefield edged with spindly fingers, each one tipped with razor-like nails.

By Fin Loseby 11NRo

Snippets of UCAS Personal Statements from A-level students

In History I have enjoyed studying the development of Russian social hierarchy from a feudal society under totalitarian autocracy, to a communist state, as well as looking at the triggers and catalysts for rebellion, specifically the combined economic, political and social reasons for the 1917 revolution. My coursework is based on revolutionary nationalism in Ireland, which I find extremely interesting as it allows me to explore the reasons for social disruption and how leaders influence people to rise against governmental power.

During A level English I have enjoyed learning about how different groups are represented in texts. In the bildungsroman novel 'Rebecca,' Daphne du Maurier shows women conforming to gender roles to a certain extent, but also opposing stereotypes and rebelling against the control of men; as did Du Maurier herself. My coursework is based on the impact of societal pressure on the minds of men; for which I am currently reading, 'A Clockwork Orange' and 'The Picture of Dorian Gray,' this has allowed me to explore how the pressures of a dystopian, and Victorian society respectively influence male characters and cause extreme mental instability and toxic masculinity. I have also enjoyed studying Orwell's, '1984' which gives an interesting insight into how society can be impacted by war and how government surveillance can cause loss of identity, which can be mirrored in the use of CCTV and ongoing war in the 21st century.

I am also a Holocaust Ambassador and have visited Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland with the Holocaust Educational Trust. This was a pivotal moment for me in which I realised my passion and interest for social justice and the impacts of politics on society, especially listening to Holocaust survivor Ziggi Shipper talking about his horrific experience. A phrase he repeated which resonated with me was 'Please don't hate' and this definitely altered my mind-set and created a sense of urgency within me, that I must go on to explore, and hopefully combat inequalities in society in the future. Following the trip, I gave a presentation to my year group about how we can prevent events like the Holocaust from happening in the future, and the discrimination that is still present today.

Aside from my academic achievements, I have represented England in the Wadokai Karate team at the 2016 nationals in Budapest, in which I secured a silver medal. However, my greatest achievements surround my teaching of younger members as a Sensei, and watching my Senpais reach their own personal goals, such as passing their gradings.

Having thoroughly enjoyed my A Level studies so far, the challenges and opportunities that a joint degree in History and English Literature will provide is a thrilling prospect and I eagerly look forward to my time at university.

From Lauren Pirie-Scott's Personal Statement

13KLe

Media and Sociology allow me to understand recent social changes such as gender fluidity and equal rights that honed the understanding of the diversity in society. An area in Psychology that has particularly interested me is plasticity from Biopsychology. Having looked further into studies about the effects of trauma on plasticity and the brain I found in a 2015 study, there was a link between childhood trauma and depression pathogenesis. This meant that exposure to early life stressful events, can cause a vulnerability factor for the development of psychiatric disorders. This intrigued me as it goes against the biological approach showing that brain structure is not a fixed state and is a changing structure based on our experiences.

Throughout my A-levels I have developed a greater understanding of research methods focusing on analysing and evaluating studies. Both Media and Sociology focus on which participants are sampled for a study, as this can influence variables, for example, beta bias or having a small sample size, can result in not being able to generalise the results. Realising the importance of research methods after speaking to lecturers and teachers in further education has led me to invest more time into this area, as I know it is a key subject area required at degree level. Media has many links with psychology as we learn about media influence on behaviour, with focus on Bandura. Research has suggested that modelling in the media can impact individual's behaviour. This was evident with the children imitating aggressive acts of adults in the famous Bobo doll study.

When it comes to university, I would say I am most looking forward to expanding my knowledge and understanding of psychology, which will help me in my aspirations of becoming a psychologist. I know that with hard work I have real potential to be successful and help others with my knowledge. It has been made very apparent in recent years that mental health has become just as important as physical health, with an increasing demand for psychologists to help people with disorders they may be suffering with.

From Dom Hassan's Personal Statement 13LSt