

Marking notes

Text 1: Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)

Marking Guidance
Literary form / genre / text type
Drama / Memory play
Elements of the text significant for analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbolic function of setting (e.g., the dim, nostalgic lighting and the glass unicorn) in reflecting Laura's fragility and emotional isolation. • The contrast in dialogue between Amanda and Laura – Amanda's performative optimism vs. Laura's quiet resistance. • Use of stage directions and props to convey character emotion and subtext (e.g., the unicorn scattering light). • The theme of escapism vs. reality: Amanda's nostalgic illusions vs. Laura's need for protection. • The emotional distance between mother and daughter, and how it is rendered through tone and interruption. • The generational conflict and gender expectations embedded in Amanda's vision of a traditional Southern womanhood. • The role of memory in shaping perspective – the play as a “memory play” and how that colours presentation. • The effectiveness of the extract as an introduction to character dynamics and core themes.

Text 2: Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2005)

Marking Guidance
Literary form / genre / text type
Prose non-fiction / Memoir
Elements of the text significant for analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fragmented narrative structure and use of short declarative sentences to mirror the disorientation of grief. • The tension between rational observation and emotional turmoil – grief depicted as both physical and psychological. • Use of metaphor and sensory imagery to express absence and memory (e.g., “smoke in the lungs,” “echo”). • The first-person voice as a tool for intimacy, vulnerability, and self-reflection. • Contrast between public normalcy (the boy biking, the intact world) and private collapse. • The shifting use of time – present, memory, and imagined – and its impact on narrative perspective. • The writer’s exploration of writing as a coping mechanism, a way of asserting control over the uncontrollable. • The effectiveness of the passage in initiating themes central to the memoir: loss, memory, identity, and voice.