

TOP TEN ON THE WEB

From Lorna Smith in NATE Classroom Issue 09



BOOKNOTES

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scholls/gcsebitesize/booknotes>)

Booknotes is the latest feature of BBC Bitesize. A selection of texts have been included on the site and is easily navigable in its entirety. You can access pre-written notes and also annotate and add your own using the headings available and add your own headings too. Get your class to annotate certain extracts in one lesson and share through the IWB in the next one. The one draw back is that you have to log in to access it - this means as an adult you have to lie about your age but the developers are working on changing this.

BRITISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

(<http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-literature-publications-and-resources-poetryquartetshome.htm>)

This is very useful if you are teaching Zephaniah, Shapcott or Patterson. Poems have been recorded by the poets themselves and then beautifully animated. Use them as a stimulus for your class's own work - get everyone to create an animated collage of a poem you've been studying using Power Point, embedding a recorded reading as a more interesting way of revising.

CHAUCEER ON CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY WEBSITE

(<http://aspirations.english.cam.ac.uk/converse/datamovies/chaucer.html>)

Chaucer's Postcards enables you to create phrases and then translate them from modern to Chaucerian English and vice versa. Although it has been around for some time, the infinite number of postcards that Chaucerian knights and damsels and modern lads and ladettes can exchange, means it is undated.

STARTERS AND PLENARIES

([http://classtools.net/.](http://classtools.net/))

This site was created by a teacher at an international school in France and enables you to create quickfire starters and plenaries to play on an IWB to ensure the students 'got it.' All you need to do is input key questions and answers and save the file. You can also create templates, for example the Fishbone to help structure essays. There is a screencast to help you make the activities and a random name generator.

GCSE AND A LEVEL

(<http://www.crossref-it.info>)

Cross Ref-It is aimed at A level but could be invaluable for your brighter key stage 4 students.

PLAY SHAKESPEARE

(<http://playshakespeare.com/>)

This is an easy to navigate site which houses the usual synopses and notes on the plays, but also provides reviews of stage performances.

For example, you can compare David Tennant's Hamlet to Kenneth Branagh to a student performance. In the Forum you can add your own reviews. iPhone users can download a free application and take all forty plays to school!



PODCASTING

(www.podcast.revision.co.uk)

Podcast Revision is structured around the current AQA syllabus but its value lies in showing you how you make a podcast. You can listen to some examples posted for English and Literature and it provides a step-by-step guide to making your own podcasts.

WORDLE

(<http://wordle.net/>)

This has become a very popular website and is more than just a pretty picture. Drop a poem or an excerpt from a novel into a novel or a persuasive article (or anything!) that the class has not seen before into the box, watch Wordle create a word cloud that makes the most frequent words stand out (the more frequent the word the larger the text), then get everyone to predict what the text is about, its themes, its author, its context, its mood ...

WORDSHIFT

(<http://www.wordshift.com>)

This site also creates word clouds but it takes the concept further. By clicking on a word in the cloud it takes you to examples of the word in context in the source passage (great for plotting the theme and emphasis of the text), while also providing Google images relating to the word and the word dropped into the Visual Thesaurus. It is great for vocabulary investigation and will open up texts in the most inspiring and surprising ways.

YOUTUBE

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXbrSALG684>)

A very familiar site with a lot of rubbish but also some gems like the MC Nuts Wordsworth rap! (see above link) It is a good way to reawaken interest in a 'stale' poem. Show them the rap version of Daffodils and get them to create their own rap version of one of the Anthology poems. If your school bans YouTube, don't forget that you can download individual films.

REMEMBER THESE?

Write Away (www.writeaway.org.uk) - free online children's book resources for teachers, students and librarians e.g. reading suggestions, reading groups, story starters, etc.

Powerful Images (<http://pulitzer.org/>) - past winners in feature and news photography. Excellent stimuli for discussion and creative writing.

Classical Comics (<http://classicalcomics.com/education/freedownloads.html>) - 2009 set scenes for SATs still free to download in original, plain and quick text. These could be incorporated into new schemes for KS3 or 4.

Teacher's TV (www.teachers.tv) - a wide range of programmes which could be useful across all key stages.

TES (www.tes.co.uk/section.aspx?navcode+396) - resources, up to date information, chat forums, etc. You do have to register but it is free.

The Poetry Zone (<http://poetryzone.woodshed.co.uk>) - poetry site for ages 4-18. Students can send poems to be published, there are ideas for teachers, interviews with poets and contact details for poets who visit schools.

Hard Spell (www.bbc.co.uk/hardspell/) - suitable for more able and A Level students as quite difficult. Students have to spot the word incorrectly spelled and correct it against a clock.

Film Education (www.filmeducation.org) - good selection of study guides, worksheets and a range of popular and classic films.

Make Beliefs Comix (www.makebeliefscomix.com) - make and print comic strips. Choose characters and make them speak or think.

Universal Teacher (www.universalteacher.org.uk) - Andrew Moore's useful and comprehensive revision site that offers help with a wide variety of aspects of English and Literature. Geared to the more able. Also available through teachit website.

Scribblepad (www.scribblepad.co.uk) - some good ideas for writers.

EnglishBiz (www.englishbiz.co.uk) - Tips on all aspects of the GCSE papers e.g. how to structure an essay, writing to describe, analysing poetry, etc.

