

Writing about *As You Like It*

Can you use this question as a starting point to explore your own, original ideas about the play?

Essay question

To what extent does life in the Forest of Arden offer sweet adversity to those who find themselves there?

Remember, Rosalind (in disguise as Ganymede) has promised Orlando a cure for love-sickness, but he is still in love with her and despairing because he thinks he will never meet her.

Act 5 Scene 2, lines 26–39

ROSALIND ... For your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked, no sooner looked but they loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage which they will climb incontinent, or else be incontinent before marriage: they are in the very wrath of love and they will together; clubs cannot part them.

ORLANDO They shall be married to-morrow, and I will bid the duke to the nuptial. But, O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

Plan your essay

Work with the extract above and complete the table below as you explore your ideas.

<p>What is your interpretation of this part of the play?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is happening here and how does Shakespeare make this extract dramatic and interesting? • How does this contribute to plot development? 	
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<p>What strikes you about Shakespeare's language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What vivid images or descriptions are used in this passage? • What is the effect of Rosalind's description of Oliver and Celia on your understanding of character, and the themes of love and loyalty? <p>E.G: '...they are in the very wrath of love and they will together; clubs cannot part them.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Orlando's language reveal more about his character and situation? You might like to think back to his earlier descriptions of love and his love-poetry to Rosalind 	
<p>What strikes you about Shakespeare's dramatic craft?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might this part of the script be portrayed on stage? • How does Rosalind's disguise add to the drama of the scene? • What clues do you find in the passage to suggest how Orlando might be portrayed on stage? <p>E.G: 'O, but how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness.'</p>	
<p>How does this passage compare to other parts of the play?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the relationship between Celia and Oliver compare to other relationships in the play? • How does Rosalind's disguise help her to fix up the problems of the unhappy lovers (including her own) in the final scene? 	

You will now have some concrete ideas that you can include in your essay. You might like to re-organise your ideas or add in other examples from the play to make a clearer plan. Use mind maps, bullet points or flow charts with words, images, sentences, thought bubbles and prompts that are intelligible to you.

Structure your essay

You will need to follow certain rules to give your writing a clear structure. Your essay should have:

- an introduction
- a main body with a paragraph for each point you are making
- a conclusion.

Remember to refer to the play in detail

For each paragraph use the acronym **PEA** to remind yourself of the three things that you need to include. Each paragraph needs:

- P** a main **point**
- E** **evidence** from the script (quotations and examples)
- A** to explain why the evidence helps to prove your point in an **analysis**.