

New Strategies to Increase Subject Understanding and Improve English Teaching

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A photograph of a paved road winding through a forest. The scene is misty or foggy, with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a soft, ethereal glow. The road leads towards a bright light source in the distance, suggesting a path forward. The trees on either side are lush and green, with some leaves appearing slightly out of focus due to the mist.

A sense of direction...

**Trends and Challenges for English
Language & Literature**

Subject Distinctiveness – what makes us, us?

Considering what carries meaning in our English discipline.

We must ask ourselves two questions:

- 1. What meaning does our subject make?**
- 2. How is that meaning made?**



Questioning ourselves...

- **Knowing more, remembering more and doing more** – what is the impact on pupils of our approach to teaching English through the curriculum we have designed?
- **Fluency and mastery** – what is the impact of regular practice within the English curriculum?
- **Cultural Capital** – do all pupils have the opportunities to acquire the knowledge that they need to succeed in life?
- **Shaping Pupil readiness** – all learning is preparing towards an end point and the impact of the curriculum in preparing pupils for this is an important area for consideration.

Taking care with challenging concepts in English means we must first be comfortable with identifying the troublesome concepts for ourselves and also be confident in our own knowledge of them.



Types of Knowledge

- **Substantive** knowledge is the knowledge produced by an academic subject, the facts that are uncontested.
- **Disciplinary** Knowledge refers to what pupils learning about how that knowledge was established, its degree of certainty and how it continues to be revised by scholars. There is a sense that disciplinary knowledge is continually being revised.

What prior knowledge is needed for what we are about to teach?

- If some knowledge is considered essential, how many times will pupils come across this?
- How do we keep offering challenge and what does progress look like?





Longer Poem Bookmarks

A major advantage of this new series is that it allows students to approach poems of a substantial length and see how one might engage coherently with a whole text rather than simply referring to fragmented details of it.

[Read more ▶](#)



First World War Bookmarks

To commemorate the anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 a new Bookmark series has been launched.

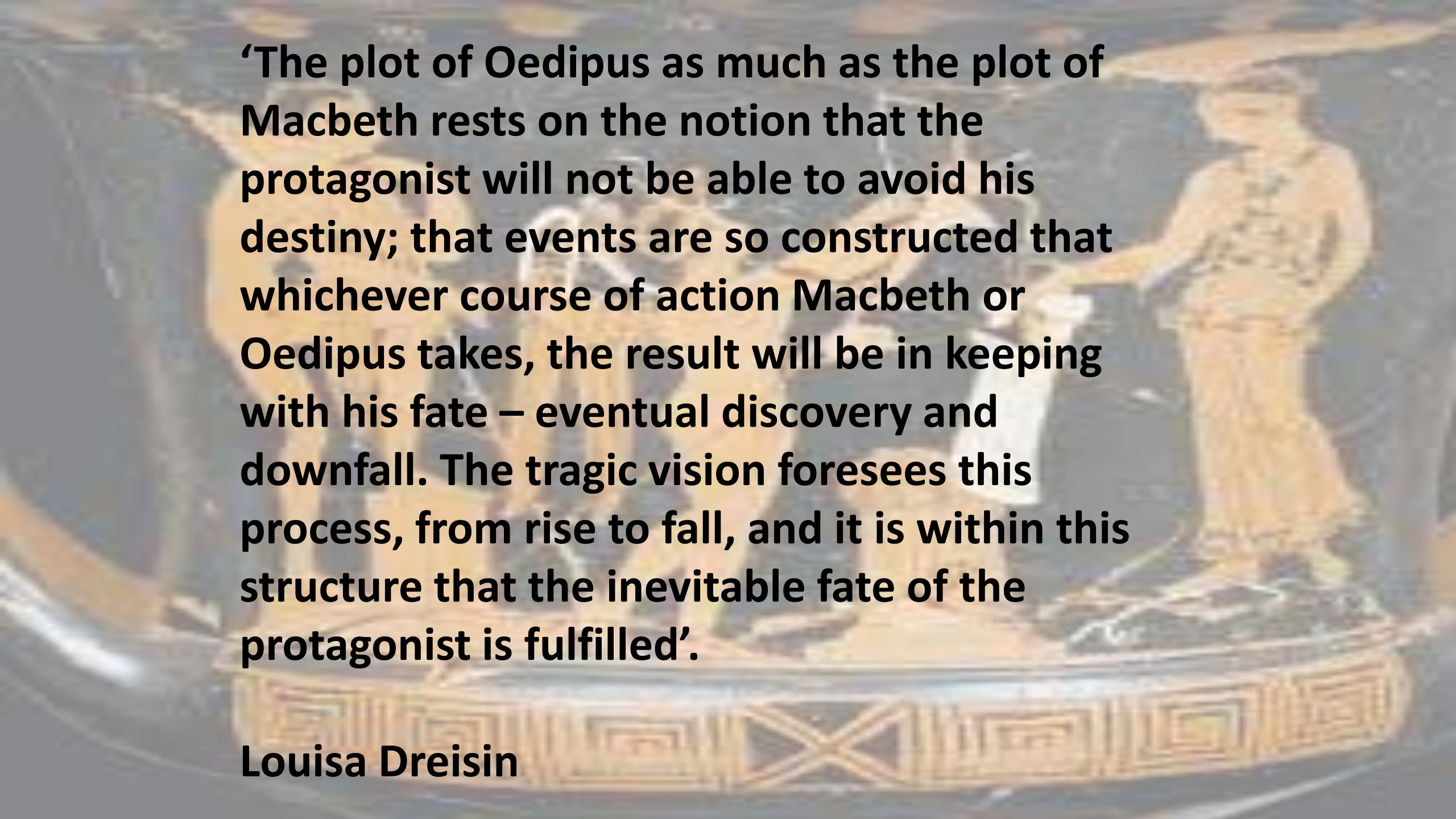
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Key Stage 3 Bookmarks

Bookmarks for ages 11 to 14 Jack Schaefer, Shane: Peter Cash
Download (PDF 230KB)

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‘The plot of Oedipus as much as the plot of Macbeth rests on the notion that the protagonist will not be able to avoid his destiny; that events are so constructed that whichever course of action Macbeth or Oedipus takes, the result will be in keeping with his fate – eventual discovery and downfall. The tragic vision foresees this process, from rise to fall, and it is within this structure that the inevitable fate of the protagonist is fulfilled’.

Louisa Dreisin

'It is impossible to read many of Hardy's novels without being aware of his tragic vision - the inevitability of the protagonist's downfall, the agonising path along which he or she travels on the "arrow straight course to perdition". The novels are constructed along the lines of a Greek drama, namely that the protagonist is 'guilty' of a miscalculated action or is caught in a web of events that end in his or her destruction. The difference between Hardy's characters and, say, Greek protagonists such as Oedipus or Shakespearean protagonists such as Lear is that they carry with them an innocence which excuses their mistakes and which makes the tragedy all the more painful.'

Louisa Dreisin

Two main strategies



Inside the Bull's eye. Secondary texts containing content necessary to support basic understanding of the primary text.

Outside the Bull's eye. Texts causing pupils to look at the primary text in a new and unexpected or more rigorous way

Knowledge is contestable

A photograph of a road with white dashed lines and arrows pointing in opposite directions, symbolizing a two-way process. The road is dark asphalt, and the lines and arrows are painted in white. The perspective is from a high angle, looking down the road. The background shows a grassy area on the left side of the road.

Key learning points from the pandemic:

**Ensuring a two-way feedback process and
boosting pupil engagement**

Inquisitive about Quizzes

The medical school quiz class is attested from 1853 'The object of the Quiz will be to take the students over the ground of the different lectures in a thorough review **by a system of close questioning, so as to make them familiar with the subject-matter of the lectures to a degree not to be obtained in any other way**' Missouri Clinical Record 1875

- **The context of the novel's setting**
- **The context of the novel's writing**
- **The context of its readership**
- **The context of relevance**
- **The literary context of fiction and readership**



Wider reading, make point before citation

Daring with reading and writing

Reading, vocal contributions, mastering academic register

Plan in more detail to respond in more depth

Academic register, link historical context, speak up in class

Familiarise exam criteria, emulate exemplars, hand in h/w

Link historical context, proactive reader, ask questions

Academic register and style, planning work carefully



“but...why

**Fostering learners’
communication skills by
embedding oracy in education,
from primary to secondary
school settings**

Listen

Summarise

Build add to statement of the previous speaker

Mark recognise the importance of a statement

Verify

Unpack

Support

Link

Defend

Challenge

Combine

Predict



Campaign in Poetry, govern in Prose