

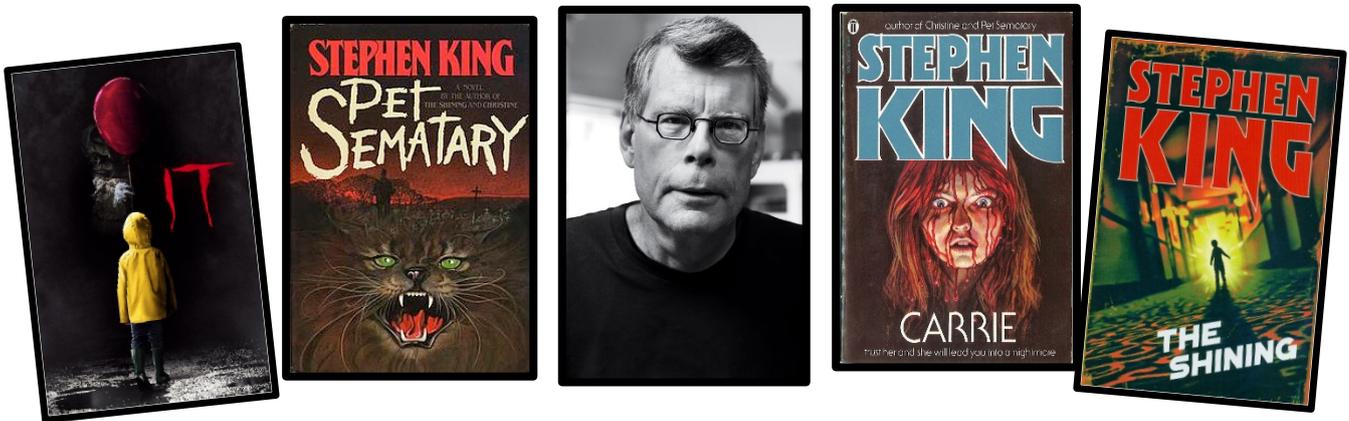
HOME LEARNING

Year 10 English – Learning Pack 10

Reading – Task One

Comprehension – Non-Fiction

Stephen King is a successful horror, suspense and fantasy writer, who has written books such as It, the Dark Tower trilogy, Carrie, The Shining and Pet Sematary.



Read the extract and answer the questions at the end

Extract from Stephen King's *On Writing*

If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot. There's no way around these two things that I'm aware of, no shortcut.

I'm a slow reader, but I usually get through seventy or eighty books a year, mostly fiction. I don't read in order to study the craft; I read because I like to read. It's what I do at night, kicked back in my blue chair. Similarly, I don't read fiction to study the art of fiction, but simply because I like stories. Yet there is a learning process going on. Every book you pick up has its own lesson or lessons, and quite often the bad books have more to teach than the good ones.

When I was in the eighth grade, I happened upon a paperback novel by Murray Leinster, a science fiction pulp writer who did most of his work during the forties and fifties, when magazines like *Amazing Stories* paid a penny a word. I had read other books by Mr. Leinster, enough to know that the quality of his writing was uneven. This particular tale, which was about mining in the asteroid belt, was one of his less successful efforts. Only that's too kind. It was terrible, actually, a story populated by paper-thin characters and driven by outlandish plot developments. Worst of all (or so it seemed to me at the time), Leinster had fallen in love with the word *zestful*.

Characters watched the approach of ore-bearing asteroids with *zestful smiles*. Characters sat down to supper aboard their mining ship with *zestful anticipation*. Near the end of the book, the hero swept the blonde heroine into a *zestful embrace*. For me, it was the literary equivalent of a smallpox vaccination: I have never, so far as I know, used the word *zestful* in a novel or a story. God willing, I never will.

Good writing, on the other hand, teaches the learning writer about style, graceful narration, plot development, the creation of believable characters, and truth-telling. A novel like *The Grapes of Wrath* may fill a new writer with feelings of despair and good old-fashioned jealousy -- "I'll never be able to write anything that good, not if I live to be a thousand" -- but such feelings can also serve as a spur, goading the writer to work harder and aim higher. Being swept away by a combination of great story and great writing -- of being flattened, in fact -- is part of every writer's necessary formation. You cannot hope to sweep someone else away by the force of your writing until it has been done to you.

1. What two things does King say you have to do to be a good writer?
2. What is the author's opinion on bad books?
3. Why has the author never used the word 'zestful' in his writing?
4. What are the five ingredients for a good story?
5. What does the author say about feeling jealous?
6. Find an example of a metaphor and explain it.
7. What does the author say is important if you want to be a good writer?
Make sure to include evidence in your answer.
8. If you could, what question would you like to ask Stephen King?

Spoken Language – Task Two

Have a discussion with someone at home or one of your friends via TEAMS or facetime.

Think about the following questions:

Do you enjoy reading?

Who is your favourite author?

What is your favourite book?

What is it that you like about the book?

Do you have a favourite character?

Why are they your favourite character?

Has your book been made into a movie or TV show?

Did you like it?

What would you have done to improve it?

Writing – Task Three

Write a review of your favourite book or film.

Things to remember:

A review can be written in a formal or informal style (try to find some examples online to help you with this)

Your review should include the following:

- An overview of the story – no spoilers!
- The type of story it is – comparisons to similar texts
- Favourite characters and why?
- Favourite scene and why?
- Recommended reader/ audience? Who would enjoy this and why?
- Summary – your rating on a scale chosen by you!