

Research
Based
Curricula



What Happens in Adaptation? The Fate of Literary Texts

Key Stage 4 English Literature
Resource 4

2019



Resource Four Overview



Topic	Cultural Contexts of Adaptation
GCSE Modules	Shakespeare, The 19th–century novel
Objectives	<p>By the end of this recourse, you will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Engaged with different interpretations of adaptation and consider how modern day culture can influence a source text.✓ Developed an understanding of how adaptation can be shaped through cultural contexts and encourage critical engagement with the reasons behind alterations to a source text.✓ Built skills of comparative analysis and evaluative interpretation. It encourages creative and independent thinking through developing arguments to extend critical comprehension.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read the data source2. Complete the activities3. Explore the further reading
Context	<p>Adaptations of classic novels are often known as 'period dramas'. This is because the action takes place in the historical time in which they were set and written. This means, for example, that the language, the costumes and the manners of the characters are often strange to the person watching today.</p> <p>Modern adaptations update the classic texts by setting them into contemporary culture and changing certain aspects to create different effects.</p>

Resource Four

Data Source



Section A Romeo and Juliet (~ 1591?) – William Shakespeare

West Side Story (1961) dirs. Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins

Set in Italy in the late sixteenth century, Shakespeare's tragic romance *Romeo & Juliet* revolves around two star-crossed young lovers and their feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets. When Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet fall in love they have to hide it from their parents and friends with tragic consequences to both families.

West Side Story is a musical set in 1950s New York amidst the tensions between two rival gangs, a group of white Americans called the Jets and a group of Puerto Ricans called the Sharks. American Tony (Richard Beymer) and Puerto Rican immigrant Maria (Natalie Wood) fall in love. Whilst trying to create peace between the two factions, the troubles escalate.

Figure 1

Cover of the first print edition 1597

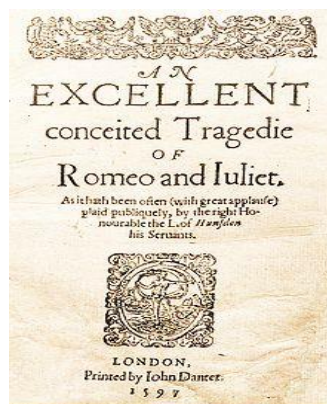
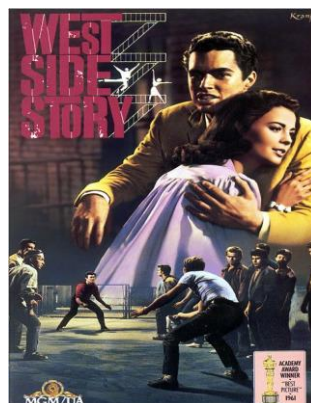


Figure 2

Film Poster 1961



Resource Four Data Source



Section B Pride and Prejudice (1813) – Jane Austen

Bride & Prejudice (2004), dir. Gurinder Chadha

Set in the late eighteenth century, Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* about class and society revolves around witty and intelligent Elizabeth Bennett and her family. Elizabeth has four sisters and the family's future happiness and security is dependent on the daughters making good marriages, which their mother is anxious to secure them. When two wealthy young bachelors, named Bingley and Darcy, arrive in their Herefordshire neighbourhood their expectations are raised. Whereas her elder sister Jane falls in love with Bingley, Elizabeth considers Darcy to be arrogant and conceited. Her impression is further confirmed by an old childhood companion of Darcy's. Yet, as events unfold, Elizabeth needs to reconsider her feelings for Darcy.

In *Bride & Prejudice*, a modern-day Bollywood musical update of Jane Austen's story, Mrs. Bakshi is eager to find suitable husbands for her four unmarried daughters. When the rich single British-Indian Balraj (Naveen Andrews) comes to visit India for a friend's wedding, Mrs. Bakshi has high hopes for her oldest daughter Jaya. Yet when smart, outspoken Lalita Bakshi (Aishwarya Rai) meets his American friend Darcy (Martin Henderson), she finds his attitude toward India and Indian culture intolerant. As they travel across India together and meet again in England and America, Lalita wonders if she hasn't misjudged Darcy after all.

Figure 3 (left)

First Edition Cover 1813

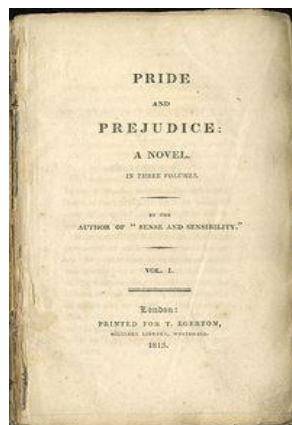


Figure 4 (right)

Film Poster 2004



Resource Four

Data Source



Section C Sherlock Holmes (1887) – Arthur Conan Doyle

Elementary (TV Series 2012–9)

Set in Victorian London, Sherlock Holmes and Dr John Watson solve a variety of cases together in stories written by Arthur Conan Doyle. Holmes is a private detective who uses logical reasoning, deduction and science to solve cases which the police cannot. He is assisted by Watson, a former army surgeon, who also acts as his biographer. Holmes' occasional drug use and Watson's disdain of this, is mentioned within some of the stories, but is not dwelt upon.

Set in modern-day New York, Sherlock Holmes (Jonny Lee Miller), who is still British, is a recovering drug addict and former police consultant living in Manhattan. He meets Joan Watson (Lucy Liu), a former doctor, who is hired by his father as his 'sober companion'. Initially their relationship is strictly professional, and somewhat frosty, but they grow to understand and work with one another, eventually forming a friendship and partnership. Together they assist Captain Gregson and Detective Bell of the NYPD, where Holmes' observational abilities and deductive talent unravel a series of complicated cases.

Figure 5

Original Illustration of Watson and Sherlock Holmes by Sidney Paget in The Strand Magazine (1891)



Figure 6

TV Series Poster 2012



Resource Four Activities



Activities Choose one example from the data source and write a brief response to the following question:

1. How does this re-interpretation change the original source? Explore what the differences are between the two and consider the possible reasons why the changes might have been made.

Consider all three examples and write a longer essay answering the following question:



2. What are the overall benefits of and drawbacks to creating modern versions of classic texts? Use examples from the data source to enhance your arguments.

In your answer you should consider and address:

- Which you would prefer and why.
- What effect or impact a modern adaptation has on the audience
- What effect or impact this has on the original text.

Resource Four

Further Reading



Explore

1. Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2007)
2. Greg M. Colón Semenza and Bob Hasenfratz, *The History of British Literature on Film* (2015)



Modern Adaptations of classic literary texts to watch:

1. *Scrooged* (1988), dir. Richard Donner, starring Bill Murray and Karen Allen
2. *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), dir. Baz Luhrmann, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes
3. *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), dir. Gil Junger, starring Heath Leger, Julia Stiles and Joseph Gordon-Levitt
4. *Hamlet* (2000), dir. Michael Almereyda, starring Ethan Hawke, Julia Stiles and Bill Murray
5. *O* (2001), dir. Tim Blake Nelson, starring Mekhi Phifer, Julia Stiles and Josh Hartnett
6. *Clueless* (1995), dir. Amy Heckerling, starring Alicia Silverstone and Paul Rudd
7. *Sherlock* (2010–2017), BBC TV-Series, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman



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