



Exploring Senior Cycle Texts 'The Grand Budapest Hotel' directed by Wes Anderson

Please note: *The Grand Budapest Hotel* directed by Wes Anderson is a film included as part of the Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2026, 2027 and 2028. It may be used as part of the Comparative Study at Ordinary Level or Higher Level.



Image courtesy of 20th Century Studios

Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons or as part of a unit of learning
- Students may wish to complete some tasks individually or in pairs/groups
- Tasks might be completed orally and/or in written format
- Students may also wish to engage in a think, pair, share activity for some tasks.

Making connections with the continuum of learning



Students should be able to:

Approach narrative texts from a variety of critical viewpoints e.g. analyse and compare texts under such categories as gender, power and class and relate texts from different periods and cultures. (Leaving Certificate Syllabus, p.12)

Develop an awareness of their own responses, affective, imaginative, and intellectual, to aesthetic texts. Explore these responses relative to the texts read, generate and justify meanings and build coherent interpretations. (Leaving Certificate Syllabus, p.13)

Evaluate and critically respond to texts, identify and analyze the form, structure and style of a text and show an understanding of how all these elements constitute its genre. (Leaving Certificate Syllabus, p.14)

Pre-reading activity:

Click [here](#) to watch a trailer for the film 'The Grand Budapest Hotel'.

Having watched the trailer, discuss Anderson's use of symmetry, color palettes, and quirky characters. Some possible discussion prompts may include:

- How do you think the film's visual style might shape the storytelling?
- Why might a director choose such a distinctive aesthetic?
- Activity: Compare the trailer with other films you've seen. Discuss how visuals can create/add to tone and mood.





Brief visual discussion

Click on the image below to access a scene from the film in which two of our main characters, Monsieur Gustave H. and Zero Moustafa are introduced for the first time. Turn and talk with your classmates following your viewing. You may use the following questions to drive your conversation:

- How does M. Gustave's character contribute to the unique atmosphere of The Grand Budapest Hotel?
- What impression do you get of the hotel as a setting in this scene? What makes it stand out?
- What do you think the relationship between M. Gustave and Zero reveals about the role of mentorship or friendship?



Possible pair/group work:

1. Examine the use of lighting and colour in the different scenes below. How does the visual style contribute to the mood and tone in the following scenes throughout the film?
2. Analyse the use of cinematography and mise-en-scène in these stills. Explore how they are successful in conveying the themes of nostalgia and decay throughout the film. You might consider elements such as character positioning, facial expressions, costume design, props, and the composition of the setting. How do these visual choices reflect the passage of time and the fading grandeur of the world depicted?





Possible activities

Paper 1

“In our fast-changing world, places often become the keepers of memories, holding stories that transcend time.”

Using *The Grand Budapest Hotel* as inspiration, write a personal essay or short story that explores the connection between a character and an unusual, once-grand place. Focus on the theme of nostalgia, the passage of time, and the enduring power of memory.

In your response, you might:

- Describe the setting in vivid and imaginative detail.
- Explore your character’s emotional connection to the setting.
- Reflect on how places change and what we lose or gain as a result.

Possible questions that may support the comparative study

- What version of reality is represented? What is the preferred reading?
- What does this text assume about me? What response from me is sought?
- Is this like life as I know it/as I have experienced it?
- Whose perspective of the world is this? What other knowledge/perspectives exist which might not be represented?
- If this representation is not a realistic one, does it matter? How could people be affected by it – positively and negatively?
- How might viewers of this text be led to believe their life should be like this representation?
- How are members of certain groups represented?
- How does the text challenge or support society’s values? (dominant or emerging values)
- What devices are employed by the text creator to construct meaning?