

Chapter Summaries [sections colour coded; key words in bold; characters in red]		24	Offred's situation changes, psychologically: still trapped, she begins to see its absurdity.
1	Old gymnasium. Whispers in the dark in a dormitory patrolled by Aunts and guarded by Angels .	25	Summer -Serena Joy's garden. Offred begins to enjoy her meetings with the Commander at night.
2	Victorian house, single room. Offred describes her red costume and her position in the household.	26	Another Ceremony.
3	Offred arrives at the Commander's house and meets his wife, Serena Joy .	27	Offred and Ofglen confess to each other their feelings of dissent. Offred discovers an underground resistance in Gilead.
4	Offred meets Nick and Ofglen . At the checkpoint Offred makes her first small gesture of defiance. First time the word 'Handmaid' is used.	28	Offred recalls Gilead's right-wing takeover (women stripped of economic, political and legal rights) and misses her husband Luke.
5	Offred and Ofglen go shopping in Gilead . Offred suffers from double vision.	29	Offred asks the Commander the meaning of the Latin inscription in her room. She learns who wrote it and how she died.
6	The Wall . Offred responds with resistance to Gilead.	30	Offred muses on a summer night. She longs for love, and she pours out her desperation in her version of the Lord's Prayer.
7	Offred 'steps sideways' into private spaces of memory. Remembers Moira , her mother and child.	31	We learn of Ofglen's underground resistance movement and Offred's pact with Serena Joy
8	Ofglen uses word ' Mayday ' and Offred's Commander breaks the rules.	32	Offred considers her relationships with the Commander, and her predecessor. She feels afraid.
9	Offred discovers her predecessor's secret message in the cupboard	33	The women's Prayvaganza : in the midst of the mass marriage celebration. Offred sees Janine .
10	In her room Offred thinks back to her college days. She looks out of the window and sees Nick.	34	Prayvaganza's celebrations are accompanied by irreverent comments from the Handmaids. Offglen reveals that Offred's visits to the Commander are known.
11	Offred visits the doctor, who offers to make her pregnant.	35	Offred feels nostalgia for the falling in love. Serena brings photograph of Offred's daughter.
12	In the bath, Offred remembers her daughter.	36	Surprise evening out with the Commander. Offred dresses up.
13	Offred slips away from the present into private spaces of her own body, into memory, and into dream and nightmare. She recalls her failed attempt to escape.	37	Jezebel's turns out to be the state brothel, Gilead's sexual underground. Offred meets Moira again.
14	The Commander's household assembles for prayers. In an act of resistance, Offred thinks of her own name, her first contact with Nick, her escape attempt.	38	Moira tells Offred her story.
15	The Commander enters. Prayers. We learn of Offred's secret dissent from Gilead's orthodoxy.	39	At Jezebel's, the Commander arranges a private sexual encounter with Offred - a dismal failure.
16	The Ceremony .	40	Offred has her first sexual encounter with Nick. She falls in love with him.
17	Offred shows her first acts of rebellion - she steals a flower and embraces Nick in the dark.	41	Offred's love affair with Nick defies Gileadean tyranny. For the first time, she wants to stay in Gilead.
18	In bed, Offred is tormented by hopes and fears for her missing husband, Luke .	42	At the Salvaging two Handmaids and one Wife are publicly hanged.
19	Offred dreams of her absent family and how times once were. The Handmaids go out in the Birthmobile to attend the birth of Ofwarren's baby.	43	At a Particicution , a man accused of rape is torn to pieces by the mob of outraged Handmaids.
20	Surrounded by other Handmaids and Wives, Offred remembers her mother, a feminist.	44	Disappearance of Ofglen. Offred is told that Ofglen hanged herself
21	Offred attends a natural childbirth. She muses on Gildeadean version of 'a woman's culture'.	45	Offred - crisis of despair. Serena Joy reveals that she knows about evening at Jezebel's.
22	Offred returns to her room. She remembers Moira's first escape attempt from the Red Centre .	46	Offred's last crisis. Twist in the plot, and her exit.
23	Offred has her first secret meeting with the Commander, they play a forbidden game of Scrabble.	Historical Notes	AD2195 at an academic conference Offred's tale is presented as historical curiosity. Her fate remains a mystery and Gilead has long since disappeared.

Key quotations: They've removed anything you could tie a rope to.' 'Freedom to and freedom from.' 'She is a spy, as I am hers.' 'I would like to believe this is a story I am telling. I need to believe it. I must believe it.' 'I'm a cloud, congealed around a central object., the shape of a pear, which is hard and more real than I am.' '.. the long parenthesis of nothing. Time as white sound.'	'Thinking can hurt your chances, and I intend to last.' 'Arousal and orgasm are no longer thought necessary.' 'Her fault, her fault, her fault.' 'This may not seem ordinary to you now, but after a time it will. It will become ordinary.' 'nolite te bastardes carborundorum' 'So, I step up, into the darkness within; or else the light.'
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Imagined Worlds

Students consider contexts of production and reception.

Students analyse language choices made by writers in order to study:

- point of view
- narrative voice
- characterisation
- presentation of time and space/place
- narrative structure

Point of View

- Students will:
- be able to identify different types of narration and their effects
- explore the effects of different kinds of modal constructions in presenting narrators’ and characters’ beliefs
- consider the impact of potentially unreliable narrators

Narrative Structure

Analepsis – a shift made by a narrator back to an earlier time frame

Prolepsis – a projection forwards that a narrator makes to a future time

Temporal adverbs (e.g. ‘in the evening’)

Prepositional phrases (e.g. ‘remember’)

AQA A Level English Language and Literature: *The Handmaid’s Tale* (Atwood, 1985)



Fantasy Genre

- outside the realms of normality and reality
- historical elements to make plot believable
- elements of an apparently 'real world' setting, almost creating a parallel universe similar to our own (e.g. Nick cleaning the car and Offred going shopping)
- intricate world-building, set in a different world
- battle between good and evil
- imagining impossible or improbable things, that have their basis in reality (e.g. mass hangings, the Ceremony, taking a child away from an 'unfit' mother)
- A well-developed setting – a vital element as the story takes place in a completely new world. Must be developed in detail to immerse readers thoroughly and thoughtfully
- A well-developed setting – all of the senses. Landscape, climate, man-made structures and people's appearances and clothing
- Society - distinct groups or classes, structure, power, control. How do characters fit into the world?
- A power structure/system of government, hierarchy

Key Themes

Gender	Story telling
Theocracy	Memory
Tyranny	Language as tool of control
Fertility	Identity
Past / Present	

Dystopian Fiction

Key features:

- Governmental control
- Technological control
- Environmental destruction
- Loss of individualism
- Survival

Historical Fiction

Atwood stated that she didn't allow any events to occur in Gilead without them happening at some point in history (e.g. mass hangings, the threat of nuclear war and the hierarchical system of Nazi Germany).

Satire

Satire employs humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticise stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues

Key context

Feminism	The Cold War
The Puritans	Fear of extremism
Religious Fundamentalism	Slavery
Pollution and fertility	The Holocaust
The American New Right	Abortion
L’ écriture Féminine	Civil Rights
	Aids

Methods of Language Analysis

- **phonetics, phonology and prosodics** – for example, the sounds of real speech and the patterns of sound symbolism (rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia) that some writers employ
- **lexis and semantics** – for example, the connotations of words and phrases, metaphor and idiomatic language
- **grammar** – for example, how the use of pronouns can shape narrative viewpoints
- **pragmatics** – for example, the assumptions made about listeners/readers by the speaker’s/writer’s language choices
- **discourse** – for example, the way different text types use particular features or routines, including aspects of visual design and layout.

