

A Streetcar Named Desire Knowledge Organiser	Plot (AO1)	Key Quotations (AO1)			Links with other texts (AO4)
1. In early May, Blanche Dubois arrives unannounced at her younger sister Stella’s apartment in Elysian Fields, New Orleans. On arrivals she discovers that her sister, her is married to Stanley Kowalski- the son of a polish immigrant, lives om a run-down and very small apartment. She is let in by Eunice (the owner of the apartment) and waits in for her sister to return. She helps herself to a glass of whiskey. When Stella arrives, Blanche is pleased to see her but cannot conceal her shock at Stella’s living conditions. Stella is happy and content in her life and relationship with Stanley. Blanche confesses to losing their family home, Belle Reve, in Mississippi due to debts and the deaths of the older generations. Stanley arrives home with two friends: Mitch (who lives with at home with his invalid mother) and Steve (who lives upstairs with his wife Eunice). Stanley accepts Blanche’s presence but is not particularly pleased about it. Blanche his unrefined character unnerving. At the very end of the scene Blanche reveals she was once married very young but her husband died.	2. The next night, Stella tells Stanley about the loss of Belle Reve, while Blanche is in the bath. Stanley suspects Blanche is keeping money from the sale from them- he considers himself to have a right to this money (stating the Napoleonic Code). He starts to rifle through her belongings looking for evidence. Blanche appears and Stanley demands to see a bill of sale for the house. He snatches a pile of papers, which turn out to be poems from her dead husband- which Blanche does not respond well to. She hands him the legal papers. He maintains his actions were justified. Stella and Blanche go out for the evening, leaving the apartment whilst Stanley hosts a poker game.	“They told me to take a street-car named Desire, and transfer to one called Cemeteries, and ride six blocks and get off at—Elysian Fields!” (Blanche Scene 1)			The Glass menagerie (Tennessee Williams 1944) <i>The play has strong autobiographical elements, featuring characters based on its author, his histrionic mother, and his mentally fragile sister Laura. In writing the play, Williams drew on an earlier short story, as well as a screenplay he had written under the title of The Gentleman Caller. Parallels can be drawn between Amanda and Blanche – she lives in a fantasy world in which she wants to be swept off her feet. She also lives in the past.</i>
		“I can't stand a naked light bulb, any more than I can a rude remark or a vulgar action.” (Blanche, Scene 3)			
		“I'm not in anything I want to get out of.” (Stella, Scene 4)			
		“But there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark - that sort of make everything else seem - unimportant.” (Stella, Scene 4)			
		“When people are soft - soft people have got to shimmer and glow - they've got to put on soft colors, the colors of butterfly wings, and put a - paper lantern over the light... It isn't enough to be soft. You've got to be soft and attractive. And I - I'm fading now! I don't know how much longer I can turn the trick.” (Blanche, Scene ?)			
		“I don't want realism. I want magic!” (Blanche, Scene 9)			
3. Stanley’s poker night has not finished when Stella and Blanche arrive home at 2.30am. Blanche is taken by Mitch’s gentle and polite nature. Stanley is drunk and becomes belligerent, throwing a radio out of the window before hitting Stella. Blanche takes Stella upstairs to Eunice’s apartment. After a cold shower, Stanley calls for Stella to come home. Stella slowly makes her way downstairs, before Stanley carries her into their flat. Blanche is horrified by their reconciliation and is comforted by Mitch.	4. The next morning, Stella tries to explain why she is with Stanley. She discusses her acceptance of the violence because of the passion they share. Blanche hopes to persuade her sister to leave Stanley, planning a future financed by an old admirer who she says is a millionaire. Stanley overhears. When he enters the room, Stella embraces him, proving how dedicated she is to him.	“Deliberate cruelty is not forgivable. It is the one unforgivable thing in my opinion and it is the one thing of which I have never, never been guilty.” (Blanche, Scene 10)			A Doll’s House (Henrik Ibsen 1879) Much like Nora, Blanche only knows how to be a female in a male dominated world. As females are given no sphere other than that of a domestic, and this is the role they play up to. Nora is driven to the edge of insanity by her struggle with this, yet never goes past this stage, while Blanche falls into the abyss.
		“We've had this date with each other from the beginning.” (Stanley, Scene 10)			
		“I couldn't believe her story and go on living with Stanley.” (Stella, Scene 11)			
		“Whoever you are—I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.” (Blanche, Scene 11)			
5. Stanley frightens Blanche, asking about a man called Shaw and a hotel called ‘The Flamingo’ in Laurel (where Blanche worked as an English teacher). Blanche checks that Stella does not know anything unpleasant about her. She awaits Mitch’s arrival to take her on a date. Whilst she waits, she flirts and kisses a young man who collects subscriptions for the newspaper.	6. Blanche and Mitch return home late. Mitch tries to kiss Blanche. She complains to Mitch of Stanley’s hostility. Blanche opens to Mitch about her short marriage, which ended when she found him (Allan) in bed with another man. After voicing her disgust, her husband shot himself. Mitch out his arm around Blanche and kisses her.	Context (AO3)			Tess of the D’Urbervilles (Thomas Hardy 1891) Stanley can be linked to Alec D’Urberville out of the novel. His master manipulation of Tess as a vulnerable woman culminates in her rape. Like Stanley, he uses his masculinity to dominate Tess. Tess, like Blanche, is considered the fallen woman by the society she lives in and is destroyed by it. Tess’s rape and subsequent baby, leave her ostracised by both Angel and society.
		Williams’ writing reflects many aspects of his own life – father an alcoholic; lived in French quarters; sister suffered from mental illness; personally suffered from depression and suffered a breakdown in 1931.			
		First staged in 1947. Film released in 1951.			
		Elysian Fields (where the play is set) is Greek for the final resting place of souls			
		Industrialisation was starting to happen more rapidly in cities after WW2. While the plantations of the old South were decaying, urban growth and capitalism were doing well. We can think of Stanley as symbolic of the new industry, and Blanche as symbolic of the decaying traditional plantations.			
		Stanley represents the American Dream that all people are born equally and can succeed equally, while Blanche represents the old world where class and race were still important issues.			
7. It’s the 15th September and Blanche’s birthday. She is in the bath. Stanley enters with evidence of Blanche’s past promiscuity, slipping out to meet soldiers at night and living like a prostitute in a hotel. She lost her teaching job after trying to seduce a seventeen-year-old boy and was driven out of Laurel. Stella tries to defend her sister, referring to her unhappy marriage and early life. Stanley reveals that he has already shared with Mitch all he knows. Blanche emerges from the bathroom happy, but this quickly turns to terror when she senses the mood in the room.	8. Mitch does not attend Blanche’s birthday meal and the atmosphere is tense. Stanley loses his temper when Stella criticises his manners. He presents Blanche with a bus ticket back to Laurel as a birthday present. Blanche rushes to be sick. Stella attempts to reprimand Stanley, but does into labour and asks Stanley to take her to the hospital, leaving Blanche alone	Race relations weren’t easy everywhere in the 1940s. This is a result of old prejudices and the way society was structured pre-Civil war.			One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Ken Kesey 1975). In this novel, set in a men’s mental hospital, the working-class protagonist , McMurphy, is locked into a battle of wills with the controlling and manipulative Nurse Ratched. In some ways this battle could be compared with the conflict between Stanley and Blanche. The rebellious McMurphy
		New Orleans was known for its ethnic diversity and tolerance. The diversity of the city is also seen in Stanley with his Polish background; Pablo, whose first language is Spanish and the Mexican street vendors.			
		As a man in a world where homosexuality was illegal, he could relate to marginalised characters			
		Domestic and sexual assault: Abuse was seen as a way to discipline wives; they were seen as possessions. Abuse was common in the 40s & 50s; divorce was unacceptable, therefore men had control over women			
		Homosexuality was illegal, and you could be punished, for the greater part of Williams’ life. However in some areas, such as New Orleans and the Key West in Florida, it was tolerated.			
9. Mitch arrives and has been drinking. He is angry and upset at Blanche for deceiving him. Blanche does not deny it but tries to explain away her behaviour as due to grief and guilt for the death of her husband. She asks Mitch for protection but he attempts to rape her. He leaves when Blanche begins shouting ‘fire!’	9. Mitch arrives and has been drinking. He is angry and upset at Blanche for deceiving him. Blanche does not deny it but tries to explain away her behaviour as due to grief and guilt for the death of her husband. She asks Mitch for protection but he attempts to rape her. He leaves when Blanche begins shouting ‘fire!’	Terminology (AO1/2)			
		Analogy	Metaphor	Parody	
		Allusion	Motif	Personification	
		Dystopia	Narrative	Postmodern	
		Epigraph	Neologism	Protagonist	
		Euphemism	Oxymoron	Satire	
Flashback	Paradox	Symbol			

10. Stanley returns from the hospital. Blanche claims to have has an invitation to a Caribbean cruise from a millionaire. Blanche lies about Mitch’s attitude to her. Blanche uses a broken bottle to attempt to ward off Stanley’s sexual advances. She fails, and Stanley carries her off to the bed to rape her.	Theatrical terminology			disrupts the controlled calm of the mental hospital; Blanche disrupts the status quo in the Kowalskis’ household. McMurphy is eventually given brain-deadening electric shock treatment; Blanche suffers a breakdown, partly at least because of being raped.
	Costume	Lighting	Realism	
	Dialogue	Motif	Stage Direction	
	Dramatic Irony	Plastic Theatre	Sound effects	
	Expressionism	Props	Tragedy	
11. It is some weeks later, Stanley is playing poker with his friends. Blanche is in the bathroom and Stella is packing her trunk. They are awaiting the arrival of a doctor and nurse from a state-run hospital for the mentally ill to take Blanche away. She is unaware of this. Stella has reluctantly agreed to this. She has chosen not to believe Blanche’s claims of rape, siding with her husband for the sake of herself and her baby. Blanche imagines she is going on a holiday with an admirer, but is frightened by the burse. She eventually leaves willingly, as Stella looks on holding her baby. Stanley attempts to comfort her, and they begin to have sex.	Key Themes (AO1)			
	Reality and fantasy	Society and Class		
	Power	Love		
	Sexuality	Family		
	Oppression and rebellion	Freedom and confinement		
	Identity and memory	Gender roles		
	Marriage	Madness		
	Central characters and motifs(AO1)			<i>The Crucible (Arthur Miller 1953)</i> is set in an early New England community and is based on witch trials that actually took place. The mental disturbance in Miller’s play lies in a group of teenage girls who imagine, or are persuaded to claim, that they have seen various local people consorting with the Devil.
	Blanche Dubois	Eunice Hubbell	Blue Piano	
	Stella Kowalski	Steve Hubbell	Drunkeness	
	Stanley Kowalski	Bathing	Paper Lantern	
	Harold "Mitch" Mitchell	Belle Reve	Varsouviana Polka	
Comparisons between THMT; ASCND; FG				
Entrapment in setting and liminal images	Power of sex		Clothing as signifier	
Setting reflecting reality	Women having no say in sex		Adultery/infidelity/sex	
Control between the sexes	Fertility and motherhood		Names of vehicles	
Mental health- being pushed to extremes	Ageing women		Homosexuality	
Nostalgia for mythical past	Names		Bathing	
‘Sisterhood’ challenged	Rules and codes		Gaps in time/ incomplete/unreliable stories	
Intertextuality	Music and the past		Cowardice and failure of central character	
Women’s voices silenced or women using language to rebel/escape	Undecideability		Changing generations	
Rape	Roles being more important than the individuals filling them		People seen from outside perspectives	
Men’s versions of things standing (women don’t get their own voices)	Some are only linked to THMT/ASCND and not FG.			

