

A New Play at the Old Vic

In April, Year 13 English students attended a performance of Mike Bartlett's new play 'The 47th', a dystopian look at the future of American politics post-Trump.

The trip was an opportunity to expose students to new writing and to bring them closer to the thriving world of live theatre that we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep. Although not designed to specifically link to any of the texts studied at A-Level, the students (and staff alike!) were surprised to find that this new play had its roots in much older forms of theatre. So it was that Donald Trump, driving onto stage in a golf cart, began addressing the audience in soliloquy, speaking perfect blank verse – an oddly eloquent vision of the man most remembered for reaching to Twitter to share his views!

The Shakespearean nods kept coming: Joe Biden wondering at night, rubbing his hands in a trance, gave us shades of Lady Macbeth, and an undercover journalist having his eyes gouged out was a not-so-subtle link to Gloucester in 'King Lear'. So by chance, then, the links to the Shakespeare element of the A-Level course were served up quite neatly!

Students came away with their knowledge of theatre cemented and their excitement for live theatre and new writing fully ignited. As they go into the world, they can take this experience with them as a great early memory of a hopefully long life of theatre-going.

Lee Pritchard, English Teacher

