**Year 8 Spring 2 Homework Tasks: Literary Villains**

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|  | ***+*** | ***++*** | | ***+++*** | | ***Date to be completed by:*** |
| **1** | ***Research:*** A famous villain from literature  Consider the following:   * How they are described * What they do in the text? | ***Research:*** Two famous villains from literature.  Consider:   * How they are described * What they do in the text   Compare:   * Which is presented as most negative? How? | | ***Research:*** Two famous villains from literature:  Consider:   * How they are presented through their appearance and actions. * The cultures in which these texts were produced.   Analyse:   * Which is the most negative presentation? What does the culture of the writer have to do with this? | |  |
|  | ***SPaG:*** present your ideas using discourse markers to guide your reader through your ideas. | | | | |
|  | ***Key Words:*** learn these words for your spelling test | | | | |
|  | Beowulf  Medieval  Imagery  Shakespeare  Monologue  Persuade | | Archetypes  Literature  Convention  Alliteration  Sibilance  Oxymoron  Manipulate | | Presentation  Perception  Conventional  Unconventional  Onomatopoeia  Shakespearean  Sympathise |
| **2** | ***Wider Reading:*** see text and tasks on the other side of this sheet. | | | | |  |
| **3** | ***Big Question:*** Why is it important for every text to include some kind of villain? | | ***Big Question: ‘***Villains are misunderstood characters, whose side of the story hasn’t been told.’ How far do you agree with this statement? | | ***Big Question:*** ‘We all like villainous characters because they present the parts of ourselves we don’t like others to see.’ How far do you agree with this statement? |  |

# *Text for Wider Reading Task:* Whatever happened to Hollywood's really evil villains?

The release of Suicide Squad confirms a cinematic trend: all of our heroes are antiheroes and all of our baddies have been humanised. It’s time for the return of some proper bogeymen.

Time was when the movie villain was stuck in second fiddle. Their primary role: to devise over-elaborate – and ultimately unsuccessful – ways to kill the hero. But then, somewhere along the line, the bad guys won. The cackling nemesis has been given full celebration in the likes of Despicable Me, Megamind and Hotel Transylvania.

Yet this funfair of badass nonetheless conceals a crisis in the villain community. With so much evil on the market, true evil has never been harder to find. The line between hero and villain is now a hair’s breadth: [Despicable Me](https://www.theguardian.com/film/despicable-me) meanie [Felonius Gru](http://despicableme.wikia.com/wiki/Felonius_Gru), not content with adopting three cute orphans, has in real life unleashed the Minions on a planet’s worth of besotted children – surely the most grotesque interpretation of world domination imaginable.. To [quote someone who knows](https://youtu.be/NY3DrA7tJFk?t=3m31s), we now live in the era of the semi-evil, the quasi-evil, the margarine of evil.

The success of Mike Myers’ Bond nemesis parody [Dr Evil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Evil) meant time was up for the old-style baddie. “I can’t tolerate the two-dimensional kind of villain,” says veteran screenwriter [Linda Woolverton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linda_Woolverton). “When I think of the kind of villain I don’t ever want to write, it’s the Jafar type [from Aladdin] – the moustache-twirling, no-reason-for-being-mean villain.” This is the modus operandi of the horned enchantress [Maleficent](https://www.theguardian.com/film/maleficent) from [Disney’s 1959 Sleeping Beauty](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8VdUOuK--8), upon whom Woolverton performed a [revisionist overhaul for Angelina Jolie in 2014](https://www.theguardian.com/film/maleficent). The job was, she says, “a tough nut to crack”, but her rationale for Maleficent’s baby-cursing wickedness was intriguing: that the dark fairy had her wings cut off by the future king Stefan. “I think we can’t systematically glorify evil. It’s not good for the world,” says Woolverton. “I try to show why villains are the way they are.”

The danger is that this humanising impulse – every newly foregrounded baddie afforded the same kind of origin story as his do-gooding opponent – robs villains of their satanic majesty.

Woolverton is adamant, though, that nuanced context produces villains who more convincingly lie on our own moral spectrum: “You can depict a villain who has a choice. We all have bad things happen to us – it’s how we deal with them that creates who we are, heroes or villains.”

The strange thing about the disappearance of hardline villains is that it doesn’t feel as if there’s any shortage of current real-life inspiration. Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar may have come right out of the “shifty-looking mastermind” file at central casting, but Isis has gone one step beyond with a brand of extreme brutality that you can’t imagine anyone ever doing a Maleficent-style sympathy-switcheroo on. From Donald Trump downwards, the 21st century seems to be specialising in flush-faced demagogues with an undercurrent of violence. Here is where, as another top screenwriter (who prefers to remain anonymous) suggests, both parties may have watched a few too many Hollywood films: “The western world’s use of otherness in service of the military-industrial complex continues to this day with the creation of bogeymen. But it’s interesting that in their own ways, Isis and Putin have taken that concept and turned it on its head: amplified and projected their own otherness in order to intimidate and terrify the west.”

Are we reluctant because examining evil means delving into ourselves?

**Answer the following questions in full sentences using evidence:**

1. Why does the writer of this article criticize recent films for ‘humanising’ villains?

**Answer these questions in full, detailed sentences, with examples:**

1. What dystopian features can you find in this extract. Underline and label them.
2. Which feature do you find most disturbing? Why?
3. You’ve studied several dystopian texts in your lessons. Which one does this extract remind you of the most? Why?
4. What kinds of Villains does Linda Woolverton hate and why?
5. What kind of Villain did she try to create in Maleficent?