

SHAKESPEARE'S **TWELFTH NIGHT**

with CSEC® Study Guide and Modern English Translation



SAMPLE

Study Guide by **Sherice Blair**

 **HODDER**
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SHAKESPEARE'S
TWELFTH NIGHT

with CSEC® Study Guide and
Selected Modern English Translation

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Sherice Blair



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Twelfth Night

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Introduction

Context of the play

Historical context

Without a doubt, William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is one of the world's most prolific playwrights with his plays arguably being the cornerstone of English literature for the last 400 plus years.

Every writer is influenced by the historical or social context of their era; Shakespeare is no different. The reign of Queen Elizabeth I, also known as the Elizabethan era (1558–1603), saw a surge in the arts (poetry, music and literature) which resulted in this period being known as the English Renaissance. The common belief is that Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night* during this period, somewhere around 1600. In fact, this English Renaissance was the environment in which Shakespeare wrote approximately twenty-five (25) out of his thirty-eight (38) plays (which include collaborations with other writers), starting with *Henry VI Part 1* between 1589 and 1590 and *All's Well That Ends Well* written between 1602 and 1605. It, therefore, goes without question that Shakespeare's plays during this era would have features of the social norms and customs of Elizabethan society; *Twelfth Night* is no exception.

In this play, Shakespeare highlights social hierarchy, courtship, betrothal and marriage practices as well as the treatment of mental health conditions. It is important to remember that several modern societies have dismissed the social conventions that existed during the Elizabethan era. Nevertheless, as you explore the issues below, keep in mind that you might find it difficult to understand these issues if you use modern lenses to frame your understanding.

Social status

One's social class was very significant in Elizabethan society. As such, there existed a rigid social hierarchy that saw the aristocrats (noble men and women) being wealthy and powerful, while their Stewards ran their households and took care of their land. During this time, social mobility was almost unheard of, which often meant that one had to remain in the class in which he or she was born.

Courtship/Betrothal/Marriage

During the Elizabethan era, it was the norm for marriages to be arranged with people mainly marrying within their social class. It was the father's duty to choose a husband for his daughter. Girls were considered property, which meant they often had no say in who they would marry. Once courtship commenced, the suitor would use a go-between to woo (deliver messages and gifts) his bride-to-be. Courtship was followed by betrothal (the promise of marriage), which then resulted in marriage.

Treatment of mental health conditions

Mental health conditions were not recognised during the Elizabethan era, instead it was believed that the body was made up of humours. This resulted in the belief that people with mental health conditions were possessed by the devil. These people were often imprisoned and exorcised by a priest.

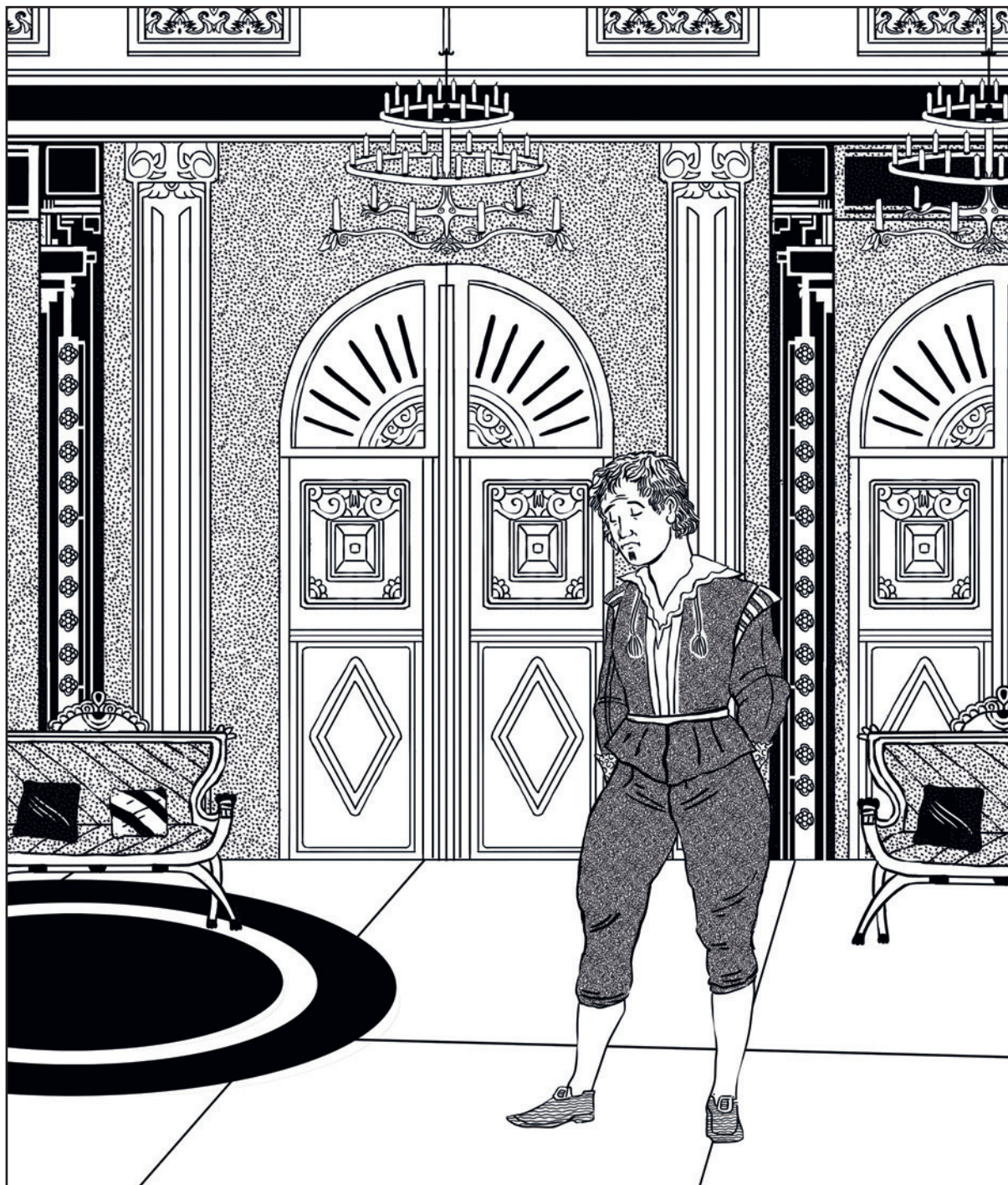
Think about it

- Having reviewed the issues above, make at least three (3) predictions of possible ways Shakespeare might present them in the play.



Act 1 Scene 1

Orsino, Duke of Illyria, loves Olivia; however, she rejects his advances.



An Apartment in the Duke's Palace.

Enter Orsino, Duke of Illyria, Curio, and other Lords; Musicians attending.

Original playscript

ORSINO: If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it; that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
That strain again, it had a dying fall;
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour. Enough; no more;
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,
That notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soever,
But falls into abatement and low price
Even in a minute! So full of shapes is fancy,
That it alone is high fantastical.

CURIO: Will you go hunt, my lord?

ORSINO: What, Curio?

CURIO: The hart.

ORSINO: Why so I do, the noblest that I have.
O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence;
That instant was I turn'd into a hart,
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me. How now? What news
from her?

hart an adult male deer

Modern English Translation

ORSINO: If music really makes people feel
more in love, then keep playing. Play so much
that I will grow weary of it and love no more.
Play that part again, it was sad. Oh, it sounded
like a gentle breeze over a bank of violets,
stealing their fragrance. No more music. Stop.
It is not as pleasing as it was. Oh, love is like
a restless sea. Nothing is safe from you. Once
something falls in, it sinks and loses value
immediately! Love is a fantastical illusion.

CURIO: Do you want to go hunting, my lord?

ORSINO: Hunting what, Curio?

CURIO: The hart.

ORSINO: I am already hunting a hart—only it's
my heart that's being hunted. Oh, when I first
saw Olivia, her very presence purified the air. In
that moment I was transformed into a hart, and
my desire for her has hunted me like a pack of
savage dogs. What's going on? Have you heard
from her?

Enter Valentine

VALENTINE: So please my lord, I might not
be admitted,
But from her handmaid do return this answer:
The element itself, till seven years' heat,
Shall not behold her face at ample view;
But like a cloistress she will veiled walk,
And water once a day her chamber round
With eye-offending brine: all this to season
A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh
And lasting in her sad remembrance.

ORSINO: O, she that hath a heart of that
fine frame
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied and fill'd
Her sweet perfections with one self king!
Away before me to sweet beds of flowers,
Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with
bowers.

[Exeunt.]

VALENTINE: I'm sorry, my lord, they wouldn't
invite me in, but I got an answer from her
handmaid. No one will see Olivia's face for the
next seven years—not even the sky. Instead,
she'll be veiled like a nun, and once a day will
shed tears in her room. She's doing this because
she loves her dead brother and wants to keep
him fresh in her memory forever.

ORSINO: Oh, if her heart is capable of such
love for her brother imagine how much she'll
love me when Cupid's arrow has killed all her
emotions but love! Her mind and heart will be
ruled by one man alone—me! Take me to the
garden. Thoughts of love will be richer in a
beautiful setting.

[They exit.]

Summary

The scene begins with Orsino and his lords entering to the playing of music. Orsino, the lovesick duke, refuses to go hunting but instead yearns for Olivia, his love interest.

Valentine then enters and informs Orsino that Olivia is in mourning. He explains that she has made the decision to be in mourning for seven years during which she has chosen to wear a veil covering her face like a nun. Valentine also shares that Olivia has taken the decision not to marry during her period of mourning.

After hearing this news, Orsino is even more determined to win Olivia's affections. He thinks that her act of mourning is a sign that she is capable of loving him devotedly. The scene ends with Orsino seeking a beautiful place to sit and reflect won love.

Guided reading and skills building questions

- 1 Where does this scene occur?
- 2 What is the significance of the use of music at the beginning of the scene?
- 3 **a** What are Orsino's views on love?
b Do you think these views are realistic? Explain.
- 4 **a** What are Orsino views of Olivia at this point in the play?
b Do you think his feelings for her are genuine? Explain.
- 5 **a** Why is Olivia in mourning?
b How does she choose to mourn?
c Is this a traditional way to mourn during the Elizabethan era?
d What does her choice say about her personality?
- 6 Identify **one** literary device Shakespeare uses in this scene.
- 7 What message is Shakespeare trying to convey with the use of this device?

Act 1 Scene 2

Viola is rescued by the Captain, fearing her brother has perished at sea; she disguises herself and goes to work for Orsino.

The sea-coast.

Enter Viola, a Captain and Sailors.

VIOLA: What country, friends, is this?

CAPTAIN: This is Illyria, lady.

VIOLA: And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother he is in **Elysium**.

Perchance he is not drown'd. What think you, sailors?

CAPTAIN: It is perchance that you yourself were sav'd.

VIOLA: O my poor brother! And so perchance may he be.

CAPTAIN: True, madam; and to comfort you with chance,
Assure yourself, after our ship did split,
When you, and those poor number sav'd with you,
Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,
Most provident in peril, bind himself,
(*Courage and hope both teaching him the practice*)
To a strong mast that liv'd upon the sea;
Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
So long as I could see.

VIOLA: For saying so, there's gold!
Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,
Whereto thy speech serves for authority,
The like of him. Know'st thou this country?

Elysium according to Greek mythology, this paradise where dead heroes are immortalised

Check it out

- Use a search engine to find a story about Arion and the Dolphin. How does it help to create a better image of the Captain's description of what could have happened to Viola's brother?

Summary

Viola and the members of the crew are shipwrecked in Illyria. She believes that her brother has drowned; however, the Captain provides her with hope by saying he saw her brother floating on the ship's mast.

After enquiring about her location, she learns that she is in Illyria governed by the Duke, Orsino, a bachelor who is in love with Olivia. The Captain continues to provide information about Olivia, following which Viola expresses her wish to work for Olivia as a way to hide. The Captain, however, tells Viola that it might be impossible to work for Olivia because she had decided to be a recluse during her period of mourning.

After learning this, Olivia asks the Captain to help her disguise herself as a eunuch so that she can seek employment with the Duke, Orsino. The scene ends with the Captain taking her to see Orsino.

Guided reading and skills building questions

- 1 Why is Viola in Illyria?
- 2 What is meant when Viola says her brother is in 'Elysium'?
- 3 What role does the Captain play in this scene?
- 4 Who governs Illyria?
- 5 What information do we learn about Olivia in this scene?
- 6 **a** How does Viola disguise herself?
b Why do you think she disguises herself like this?

Plot matrix

PLOT	Orsino attempts to woo Olivia	Olivia falls in love and woos Cesario (Viola)	Viola disguised
Act 1 Scene 1	Orsino is lovesick over a grieving Olivia who refuses to take any suitors.		
Act 1 Scene 2			After being rescued; Viola disguises herself as Cesario and goes to work for Orsino.
Act 1 Scene 3			
Act 1 Scene 4	Orsino sends Cesario (Viola) as a go-between in an attempt to woo Olivia.		As Cesario, Viola becomes a confidant as well as a go-between for Orsino's attempts to woo Olivia. Olivia falls in love with Cesario.
Act 1 Scene 5		Olivia meets Cesario (Viola) who is sent by Orsino to woo her. Even though Cesario (Viola) attempts to convince Olivia of Orsino's love for her; she is instead captivated by Cesario (Viola).	As Cesario, Viola attempts to convince Olivia of Orsino's affection for her.
Act 2 Scene 1			
Act 2 Scene 2		Olivia sends Malvolio to 'return' a ring. In this scene, Malvolio is acting as a go-between as Olivia attempts to woo Cesario (Viola).	Viola realises that Olivia is in love with Cesario when Malvolio attempts to 'return' a ring Olivia claims to have received from Cesario.

Malvolio attempts to climb the social ladder	Sir Toby's manipulations	Feste at the centre	Sebastian's luck
	Sir Toby invites Sir Andrew to court Olivia with the intention of Sir Andrew marrying Olivia.		
Malvolio fulfils his responsibilities as Olivia's Steward.		Feste returns to Olivia's palace after an unexplained absence.	
			After being rescued by Antonio, Sebastian heads to Illyria.
Malvolio acts as a go-between for Olivia's attempts to woo Cesario (Viola).			

Character analysis

Major characters

Orsino

The lover

Orsino is a powerful nobleman who controls the city of Illyria. We meet Orsino at the beginning of the play as a lovesick romantic whose driving desire is to win the love of Olivia, the object of his affection. Throughout the play, one must consider if Orsino's affection for Olivia is genuine, or is he attracted to her because she ignores his advances?

The trusting duke

Shortly after Cesario (Viola) joins Orsino's employ, Orsino tasks him as go-between in his efforts to woo Olivia. Because of Orsino's obsession for Olivia, he is blinded to the fact that Cesario is a woman in disguise, Viola. Also, in his conversations with Cesario about love, Orsino is totally oblivious to the fact that Viola is declaring her feelings for him.

Jilted lover

When it is revealed that Olivia has married Cesario (actually Sebastian), Orsino takes on the role of the jilted lover vowing to take revenge on the newly married couple. At this point, the audience sees a different side to the otherwise virtuous Orsino. It is evident that Orsino would go to any lengths to gain Olivia's affection. With the revelation that Cesario is Viola and Olivia has married Sebastian, not Cesario, Orsino accepts the marriage and vows to marry Viola for her loyalty to him as he holds loyalty in high regard.

Olivia

Mourning maiden

The audience learns about Olivia in Act 1, Scene 1 from the conversation between Orsino and his lords, namely Valentine. We learn that Olivia is mourning the loss of her brother and has taken the decision to wear a veil throughout her seven-year mourning period during which she refuses to marry. We can surmise from her reported actions that she is devastated by the loss of her brother. We can also theorise that this is due to the fact that she loved him deeply.

Dramatic techniques

Dramatic techniques are devices the playwright employs to convey his overall message. Therefore, these devices are designed to have an impact on the audience.

Pun

The playwright uses puns to play on words. This means he uses words with similar sounds to communicate different meanings.

Act 1, Scene 1

CURIO: Will you go hunt, my lord?

DUKE: What, Curio?

CURIO: The hart.

In Act 1, Scene 1, there is a duality in the use of the word *hart*. A *hart* is a male deer that was hunted during the Elizabethan era, but in this scene *hart* can also signify *heart*. As such, it can be argued that when Curio asks Orsino if he will hunt the hart, he is alluding to Orsino's hunt for Olivia's heart.

Level up

- 1 List the other puns in the play.
- 2 Comment on the effectiveness of the puns identified.
- 3 Which character uses the most puns? Why?

Malapropism

Malapropism is a technique used to create humour through the use of nonsensical expressions created by using an incorrect word in place of a similar-sounding word.

Act 1, Scene 3

SIR TOBY: By this hand, they are scoundrels and substractors that say so of him. Who are they?

In this scene, Sir Toby uses the words *substractors* to refer to the people speaking negatively about Sir Andrew Aguecheek; instead, he should have used the word *detractors*. This creates multiple effects. The audience sees physical comedy with the misuse of words which further emphasises Sir Toby's drunken state. Also, this calls into question Sir Toby's judgement. The audience can surmise that he is a fool and as such his judgement about who is a suitable suitor for Olivia can be called into question.

Essay writing tool kit

Sample essay questions

Many candidates find it a challenge to structure an essay which adequately answers the question asked. This can be for several reasons:

- not thoroughly knowing the sequence of events or the characters.
- not understanding the features of the genre or the specifics of the playwright's craft.
- not being able to distinguish between the playwright's voice and that of characters.
- not taking the time to appreciate the literary work for what it is and forming a personal response based on evidence and context.

This writer's tool kit provides support to improve essay-writing skills specifically for CSEC-level literary criticism and includes the following:

- Writing self-check table
- Extended essay critique activity using rubric in Appendix 1
- Essay-writing guide

Essay critique

The self-check table should provide a clear understanding of the skills already mastered and the ones that need to be improved. The essay critique activity will use your strengths to improve your weak areas. There are three tasks provided; you can select one or do all three if needed. After selecting a task, read the essay question and the faulty essay that follows.

TASKS

- 1 In your literature circles you will critique an essay paying close attention to
 - a essay structure.
 - b essay response to the question asked.
 - c the use of unnecessary/inaccurate details or storytelling in the essay.
 - d in **one** (1) paragraph, reflect on what you learnt from this activity.

OR

- 2 In your literature circles you will critique an essay by
 - a commenting on **three** (3) strengths of the essay.
 - b commenting on **two** (2) weaknesses of the essay.
 - c making **one** (1) recommendation to the writer of the essay.
 - d Individually, in **one** paragraph, reflect on what you learnt from this activity.

OR

- 3 Use the sample rubric in Appendix 1 to grade the essay below.
 - a Justify the grades assigned using specific examples from the essay.
 - b Make at least **three** (3) recommendations and provide at least **three** (3) unique tips on how this essay can be improved.
 - c In **one** paragraph, reflect on what you learnt from this activity.

In the play, *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio says, 'Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon 'em'.

Write an essay in which you describe **two** instances in which Malvolio aspires for greatness. You must also discuss the impact **one** character has on Malvolio in one of these instances and examine **one** dramatic technique Shakespeare uses to portray ambition in the play.

[35 marks]

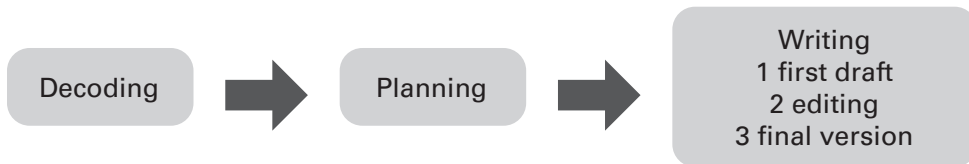
Essay writing guide – improving the essay

There is only one task in this section; to do it well, you will need to break it into several parts.

Task

In your literature circle or individually, write an essay based on the same question.

Parts



Decoding the essay question

In the play, *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio says, ‘Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon ’em’.

Write an essay in which you describe **two** instances in which Malvolio aspires for greatness. You must also discuss the impact **one** character has on Malvolio in one of these instances and examine **one** dramatic technique Shakespeare uses to portray ambition in the play.

[35 marks]

1 Introductory statement

It is typical practice to start the CSEC English B essay question with an introductory statement, usually from the play. Use this statement to gauge what the question is about, what theme is being queried. That way you can decide your stance in the introduction as well as the arguments/points that will build your essay.

In the play, *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio says, ‘Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon ’em’.

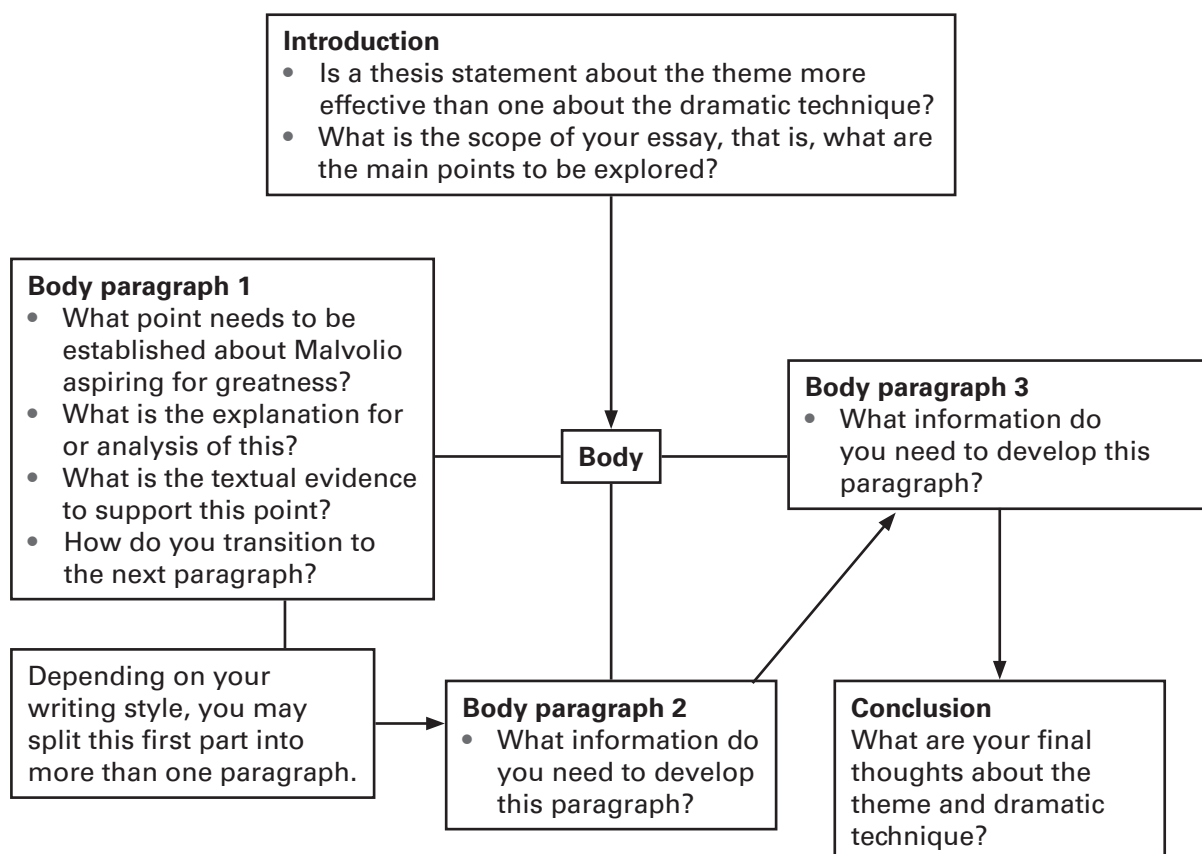
For this question, the introductory statement is from Act 2, Scene 5. As part of decoding the question, you need to consider the circumstances, why and to whom Malvolio utters these words. This will help you to analyse the relevance of the words to the overall play, and the theme and characters to which they are linked.

Use the customisable chart below to organise your thoughts for the essay.

In the play, *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio says, 'Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon 'em'.

Write an essay in which you describe **two** instances in which Malvolio aspires for greatness. You must also discuss the impact **one** character has on Malvolio in one of these instances and examine **one** dramatic technique Shakespeare uses to portray ambition in the play.

[35 marks]



Appendix 1

Content – 25 marks		
Scores	Performance descriptor	Criteria
23–25	Superior	<p>Demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert knowledge of the play./Complete familiarity with Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night/the play. • Superior competence in decoding questions and understanding the individual and integrated elements of the play. • Superiority in analysis and synthesis of information from and about the play. • Superior familiarity with Shakespeare’s craft. • Superior ability to incorporate personal response with analysis of all aspects of the play. • Superior and appropriate application of textual evidence to support points. • Appropriate assessment of values and attitudes, and prudent application to the significant themes and issues.
19–22	Excellent	<p>Demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplary recall of details and ability to make inferences about the play. • Proficiency in decoding questions and understanding the elements of the play. • Proficiency in analysis and synthesis of information from and about the play. • Familiarity with Shakespeare’s craft. • Proficient combination of personal response with analysis of all aspects of the play. • Appropriate application of textual evidence to support points. • Appropriate assessment of values and attitudes and prudent application to the significant themes and issues.

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HODDER EDUCATION

e: education@hachette.co.uk

w: hoddereducation.com

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