



Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Poet Laureate

Resident at Farringford House, Freshwater

Tennyson was born in Lincolnshire in 1809 and attended Trinity College, Cambridge in 1827 where he received The Chancellor's Gold Medal (a prestigious award given for poetry) in 1829.

His first solo collection of poems were published soon after. Poetry writing was important to Victorians as there was no recorded music at this time.

When Tennyson's poem 'Maud' (written in 1854-55) became a firm favourite with British Society, Alfred Lord Tennyson was able to buy Farringford House (now a hotel), on the Isle of Wight, which he initially rented with his wife from 1853.

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Before your visit...

1. Look at a couple of poems by Tennyson e.g. *Crossing the Bar* and *Break, Break, Break*. There are online analysis notes for both poems. Do a comparison with a poem from the GCSE Syllabus.
2. Can you identify which phrases in Tennyson's poems can be linked to the place he lived - e.g. the sea on a stormy day, the downs in summer?
3. Investigate the frustrations of being in the public eye. Compare Tennyson with JK Rowling, both driven to move house as a result of media attention. Use the table on page 2 to help you.
4. Write a diary entry as a celebrity expressing their concerns for their families etc. or write a magazine article. How has the intrusion into privacy changed over time? What is being done to protect victims? Research the Leveson Enquiry.
5. Look at the history of the Pop Festival from Woodstock to the Isle of Wight, to the present day. Who were the major artists at the largest Isle of Wight Festival in 1970? Investigate the influence of musicians such as Joni Mitchell and Jimi Hendrix on modern day music.
6. In 1970, nearly 600,000 people descended on an Island with a resident population of less than 100,000. Consider the implications of this and the reason for the subsequent act of Parliament: "Isle of Wight Act" preventing gatherings of more than 5,000 people on the island without a special licence. Write a letter from a resident to the Council complaining about how they have been affected.





Invading Privacy - how has this changed over time?

Complete the table, identifying ways fans and journalists spy/spied on celebrities.

Remember in Tennyson's day, there were no photographs as we know them today, no telephone tapping etc.

Tennyson	Modern Celebrity

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Other ideas for activities:

- ▶ You may want to research the negatives of fame from the perspective of a modern-day pop star/actor in order to understand that success also takes away a sense of freedom. Redraft your diary entry so that it reflects the darker side of being a 'celebrity'.
- ▶ Research what celebrities have to do in our current society to protect themselves. Perhaps you can find examples of the lengths that famous people have to go to in order to protect their families. This could be a mini-project which outlines that 'all that glitters is not gold'.
- ▶ Identify and consider things celebrities and their children cannot do, e.g. go shopping or to the cinema without their bodyguards, etc.



TENNYSON'S POETRY

Nature, views, landscapes and settings were important to Tennyson and he would often walk for long periods of time, using his appreciation of nature as an inspiration for his poems.

Here are a couple of examples of his poems, based on nature:

The Eagle by Alfred Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;

His wings are spread wide
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

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Live thy Life,
Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
Living gold;

Summer-rich
Then; and then
Autumn-changed
Soberer-hued
Gold again.

All his leaves
Fall'n at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough
Naked strength.

ENGLISH LITERATURE ACTIVITY:

- ▶ Read the poems.
- ▶ Choose one to analyse in pairs or a group - look at the effect of language, form, structure, and poetic devices such as rhyme, rhythm, metaphor, simile, and personification.



Tennyson Monument & Freshwater Bay

You might like to:

- Sit by the monument. You could sketch the monument itself, or focus on parts of it. You could also sit on one of the benches and sketch the views which you see from this point. Why did this area inspire Tennyson? When by the monument, why is it easy to think like Tennyson? How much do you think it has changed?
- Have a go at drafting some poetry using the monument or Freshwater Bay as a stimulus.
- Drive past Afton Down where the first major Pop Festivals in the UK took place in 1968, '69 & 70.



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Near to Farringford is Dimbola Lodge which was the residence of the Victorian photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron. She hosted many famous people here, including Tennyson, Lewis Carroll and Charles Darwin.

After being given a camera as a present by her daughter, she became interested in photography and she was known for making her subjects sit for hours whilst she photographed them. Indeed Tennyson would often refer to her subjects as her 'victims' due to the length of time that they would have to pose.

Dimbola Lodge is now a museum which has a permanent exhibition of Cameron's work, alongside exhibitions from global artists. Your teacher may take you to visit the museum to discover more about Cameron and her pioneering work.

Activities you may enjoy:

- ▶ If you visit Dimbola Lodge, write a review for a tourism website. You'll need to research the features of this style of writing prior to embarking upon this task. You may want to use quotations from visitors (look on review websites such as 'TripAdvisor' for this type of content).
- ▶ Some of Cameron's works represented oil paintings from the same period. Find a painting of a famous artist of choice and stage a photograph so that it reflects the painting as closely as possible.
- ▶ Take two pictures of the face of someone with you, to create different messages - low level happy /sad, high level interested/bored, etc.
- ▶ Look at the Victorian photographs at Dimbola lodge. Take some pictures of the area that could be used to promote Freshwater Bay, making links to its heritage.
- ▶ Experiment with different methods of editing the photographs taken.
- ▶ Use the photographs in a package of promotional material that makes links with the heritage of Freshwater Bay.