

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.

When Tennyson's poem 'Maud' (written in 1854-55) became a favourite with British Society, Alfred Lord Tennyson was able to buy Farringford House, on the Isle of Wight, which he

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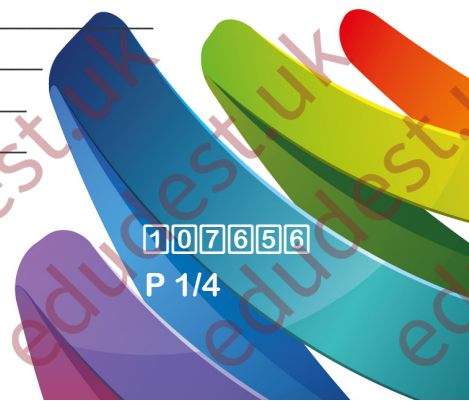
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the age of 83, in 1892. The monument which stands at the top of Tennyson Down (renamed in his honour) was put up after his death.

Before you visit...

1. Find out about Alfred Lord Tennyson and his link with the Isle of Wight.
2. Create a timeline showing important events and where he lived.
3. Your teacher may introduce you to one of Tennyson's most famous poems, such as *The Eagle*; *Break, Break, Break*; or *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.
4. Poets and writers in the Victorian era experienced a similar type of fame to that of pop stars today. As Tennyson became more popular with the public, he was often pursued by admirers of his work. They would wait at the door to his house and Tennyson found this kind of attention annoying. He built a bridge from his property to the downs so that he could escape the attention.
 - Imagine that you are Tennyson, plagued by admirers of your work. Consider the negatives of this situation and consider your feelings (e.g. frustration, being crowded, being constantly pestered etc). Jot them down. Draft a diary entry from Tennyson's perspective, expressing the negative side of being a famous individual.







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

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.

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- ▶ Redraft your diary entry so that it reflects how you think 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.

- ▶ Identify and consider things celebrities and their children cannot do, e.g. go shopping or to the cinema without their bodyguards, etc.

Negatives of Fame



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.

An example of one of his nature poems is below:

The Oak
by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Live thy Life,
Young and old,

Like you oak,

First your Spring

Living bold;

Then, and then

Autumn changes

Soberer-hued

Gold again.

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

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ENGLISH LITERATURE ACTIVITY:

1. How does Tennyson describe the oak?
2. How can we tell he is talking about one tree but many seasons?
3. Pick out a few words you like and explain why they are effective:



Tennyson Monument & the Bay

Activities: 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.

You could sit on the beach at Freshwater Bay and compose a few lines of poetry inspired by the sea and the sound of the water moving the pebbles.

Art opportunities: There are a number of other places suitable for sketching: on or above Freshwater Bay, St Agnes thatched church, etc.



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Near to Farringford is Dimbola Lodge which was the home of a 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.

You may visit the museum to discover more about Cameron and her pioneering work.



Activity: On your trail, use photography to capture the landscape and literary heritage of the Island.

Back at school...

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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).