

(sujet 37)

Prequels, Sequels and Spin-offs

What happens before chapter one?

What happens after the ending?

What has led this character to behave this way?

What would happen if...?

1995: Gregory Maguire publishes *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*. This prequel to *The Wizard of Oz* explores the childhood of the green-skinned antagonist. A decade later, the text is adapted into a Tony-award winning musical.

1999: Michael Cunningham wins the Pulitzer Prize for *The Hours*, a tribute to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Cunningham's novel weaves together the stories of three characters from different time periods, all related to Woolf's protagonist.

2006: Geraldine Brooks is awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her novel *March*, a spin-off of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. *March* tells the story of the daughters' father, largely absent in Alcott's novel, whose military duties bring him to the border of the Union and the Confederacy in the American Civil War.

Brilliant writing usually leaves readers wondering. The writers cited in the above examples turned their queries into inspiration for new stories, which now hold places of their own in the literary canon.

This research paper involves the writing of a prequel/sequel to or a spin-off of a classic piece of English literature. The process will begin by selecting the source text, which must be approved by the TM supervisor and then studied in detail. After selecting an area of focus, the student will conduct research and select a minimum of three secondary sources (i.e. journal articles) upon which the prequel/sequel/spin-off will be based. The TM will include a rationale, explaining the precise links between the creative writing and the secondary sources.

This subject requires good mastery of both written and spoken English.