Why use digital adaptations to teach classic texts?

+ Digital adaptations can help engage students by creating a bridge between today and the past.

+ Interactive adaptations like videogames can take students into the world of the text and allow them to be actors in it.

+ There are many kinds of literacy. ‘Multimodal’ digital adaptations can help cultivate visual, auditory, digital, and textual literacy.

+ Digital adaptations that draw on popular forms like social media or soap operas can help students deconstruct texts that might at first seem inaccessible and elite.

+ Digital adaptations can help students explore the relationship between online and in-person life, contributing to their social awareness and personal resilience.

What are some of the challenges?

+ Teachers have limited time and must cover the requirements of their curriculum. It can be difficult to find time for innovation through digital adaptations.

+ There is a persistent prejudice against digital adaptations as overly simplistic and dumbed down.

+ The digital divide is especially significant in education. Digital adaptations that require low bandwidth, that are free, and that are easy-to-use are the most helpful.

+ Digital adaptations can create safeguarding issues. Projects using bounded, bespoke platforms or that direct audiences to specific links, rather than a whole social media platform, tend to be safer.

+ Digital adaptations can make older or more distant texts feel more familiar, but teachers also want students to experience and learn about difference.

+ Challenges with attention spans and cognitive load mean that shorter or episodic adaptations are typically more classroom-friendly than long-form ones.

Top tips:

+ Teachers often use adaptations to introduce a classic text’s plot and characters. In this context, having digital adaptations that remain close to the original story is helpful.

+ Digital adaptations that deviate from the text can be useful springboards for student creativity or for examining multiple interpretations, though these objectives may not be core to the curriculum.

+ Giving students the chance to create their own digital adaptations can empower them to see themselves as authors with things to say.

+ Great digital adaptations and tools already exist. Teachers involved in our project recommend [Edisodes](https://edisodes.com/), [Storyboard That](%28https%3A/www.storyboardthat.com/), [Cambridge School Classics Project](https://www.cambridgescp.com/), [Twine](https://twinery.org/), [Digital Theatre+](https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/), and a variety of digital escape rooms.