

*Lorca gave a reading of his latest work *La casa de Bernarda Alba* to some friends on July 15th. The next day he returned to Granada intuiting that his country was on the cusp of war.*

There he stayed with his friend and fellow poet Luis Rosales whose brother Pepe was the leader of the local Falange faction. One month later Lorca was arrested and taken to Vázquez.

Bienvenid@ de nuevo,

In this week's newsletter:

1. Edition 106 of Boletín (grammar search and tier 2/3 vocabulary).
2. The *La casa de Bernarda Alba* Facebook discussion group.
3. Teacher tips to candidates (this will be updated periodically).
4. A teachmeet (in person!) in London in the near future.
5. Lorca takeaways from previous Boletín editions.
6. Resources to teach *La casa de Bernarda Alba*.



A beautiful azulejo on the side of Lorca's childhood home.

Edition 106.

As is customary now, this is my annual Lorca edition. I hope it ties in well with the other Lorca editions (44 and [74](#)).

A lot of Lorca has already been covered in Boletín (see below for the takeaways). In this edition the texts will be about the days leading up to Lorca's death, his childhood home and what makes Lorca somebody that young people today can look up to (this last text was written by Blanca and is recycled from a [resource](#) I've had on TES for years).

I would have loved to have included extracts from a newspaper which covered all the finer details of Lorca's return to Granada from Madrid and his subsequent arrest and murder from

the Virtual Spanish Civil War Museum but I didn't get round to it so I'll leave the link [here](#) to come back to at a later date.

Grammar to find this week:

1. An example of "leísmo" (using the indirect object pronoun "le" instead of the direct object pronoun "lo" is known as *leísmo*. This is extremely common.
2. The past perfect tense (había + past participle).
3. The present perfect (he + past participle).
4. The present tense.
5. The imperfect tense (aba/ía)
6. The preterite tense.
7. The imperfect and preterite used together where the preterite interrupts an ongoing action in the past.
8. The passive voice (ser in any tense + past participle).

Tier 2/3 vocabulary this week:

- *Las injusticias sociales* - social injustices.
 - *La derecha* - the political right.
 - *Temas* - themes/topics.
 - *Estar al borde de* - to be on the verge/cusp of.
 - *Dar un paseo* - to go for a stroll or euphemistic of murthering/killing somebody.
 - *El alcalde* - the mayor.
 - *Poner en marcha* - to launch, implement or start up.
 - *Asequible* - accessible.
 - *Denunciar* - to denounce.
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Teacher tips to candidates.

I recently asked the *La casa de Bernarda Alba* discussion group three questions which I will share below along with some of the answers I got back.

1. What do you consider essential socio-historical context to be aware of in relation to *La casa de Bernarda Alba*?

i. Lorca's childhood, the influence women had on him and where he grew up. A generic knowledge of what Spain was like just before the civil war and the causes of the war. (Diana)

ii. The Spaniards' obsession with 'el qué dirán' it's quintessentially Hispanic. Mantener la fachada a como de lugar! Perhaps the equivalent of British stoicism depicted in films and series. The role of women of the time as well as the social conventions. And Lorca. What motivated him, why the recurrent themes in his obras. (Sol)

2. What's the most niche *La casa de Bernarda Alba* insight you have which you consider overlooked?

i. *The hints of possible sexual abuse, that go unsaid: the late husband with the maid and with his stepdaughter Angustias, the victim blaming of Paca la Roseta who may have been gang raped. (Tim)*

ii. *That Librada's daughter (La hija de la Librada) was victim-blamed for a stillbirth/ neonatal birth from having concealed her pregnancy, received no medical care, before giving birth unattended. I think that one of Poncia's functions is to make us look critically at our own engagement with gossip: when we accept the stories about Paca, and Librada's daughter, we're being no better than the village gossips themselves. It's to stop us looking smugly at the Casa, I think...*

The biggest clue to Poncia's embellishment/ spin on stories is Paca. Once we've read it, I always ask my students to consider how many women would consensually have sex, in a public place, with more than one man at a time. Oh, and be carried, naked, through the village by them. (Anna)

iii. *I find Bernarda's call to put carbón ardiente "en el lugar de su pecado" especially revealing, not just of her sadism, but also of the fact that she considers the real sin to be the sex, not the abandonment of the baby. (Tim)*

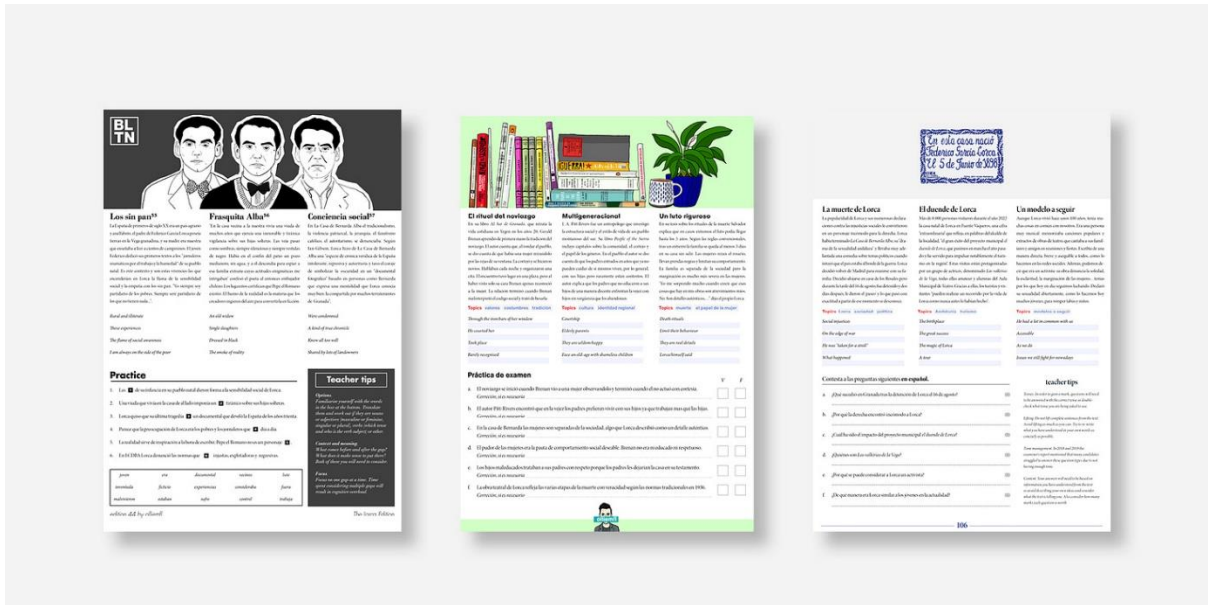
iv. *The character of Bernarda was based on one of Lorca's neighbours growing up called Frasquita Alba "una viuda de muchos años que ejercía un inexorable y tiránica vigilancia sobre sus hijas solteras". There was a well (with no water) on the patio which Lorca would go down to in order to spy on them. (Ollie)*

3. What's your main advice to candidates when it comes to the essay?

i. *Answer the question!! Underline key words, make sure you refer back to the question and link every point you are making to it. As you are writing your essay keep asking yourself: am I answering the title/question of the essay? (Diana)*

ii. *Choose your question carefully, write a plan, even if only brief, to help keep you on track, don't write a long introduction where you are just repeating the question as it's a waste of words, answer the question with clear, well referenced points and don't introduce new material in the conclusion. Quotes are not required and if not used properly, can detract from the answer. (Sam)*

iii. *Plan your essay to make sure that everything you write is relevant to the title. If you don't plan, you might waffle, then panic. Remember to link back to the title. (Rosie)*



Three Boletín editions on Lorca (editions 44, 74 and 106).

The poor. Federico García Lorca grew up in an agrarian and illiterate Spain, where his father owned land and his mother taught hundreds of peasants how to read; his early writings were dedicated to the suffering of laborers, which ignited his empathy for the poor and his social sensitivity.

Frasquita Alba. The poet confessed to the then Chilean ambassador that growing up he would spy on a mysterious family, including an elderly widow who tyrannically monitored her unmarried daughters.

Social awareness. In *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* Lorca criticized traditionalism, patriarchal violence, hierarchy, Catholic fanaticism, and authoritarianism in a "documentary-style photographic" depiction of the intolerant and repressive mentality shared by many landowners in Granada.

Multi-generational households. The anthropologist J.A. Pitt-Rivers studied the social structure and way of life of pueblo in the Alpujarras in his book *People of the Sierra*, which examines topics such as community, courtship, and gender roles. In the village he observed that elderly parents who can no longer care for themselves usually live with their daughters but are seldom happy. The author explains that parents who did not raise their children properly face old age with shameless children who often abandon them.

Andalusian death rituals. In his thesis on Andalusian death rituals, Salvador explained that the mourning period could last up to five years in extreme cases, with conventional rules dictating that the family remain at home for at least three days after a funeral, with women praying the rosary, wearing black clothing, and limiting their behaviour. Lorca claimed that what people claimed in his work were his own inventions were in fact authentic details he had observed.