Lesson focus:
- To examine the feminist content of the novel.

Opening exercise:
- Copy the critical theory summaries on the page
- Critical approaches to The Handmaid's Tale > Recent critical interpretations of The Handmaid's Tale
- Put them on separate cards, and distribute amongst the students.
  - Give them a short time to find aspects of the novel which fit the theory on their card.
  - Discuss these, and explore how useful such theories are in making sense of a text.

Textual examination:
- Divide the class into five groups:
  - The Marthas
  - The Aunts
  - The Handmaids
  - Women at Jezebel's
  - The Commanders' Wives.
- Each group presents a poster/display about themselves on a large sheet of paper. This should show:
  - Key quotations
  - Atwood's purposes in creating the grouping
  - Specific individuals
  - Perhaps pictures.
- (Characterisation in The Handmaid's Tale)

Discussion ideas:
- Each group holds up and explains their poster. Discussion should ensue.
  - Fasten all the posters on a wall and look for links and contrasts across the groups.
- (Religious / philosophical context of The Handmaid's Tale > Feminism and The Handmaid's Tale)
- Lengths of coloured wool or string could be used to connect these points.
- (Themes and significant ideas in The Handmaid's Tale > Doubling in The Handmaid's Tale)

Recreative task:
- Each student chooses any of the female characters (except Offred) and writes down five questions they would like to ask that character.
  - Set up a hot-seating exercise.
  - Alternatively, swap your questions with another student, and write the character's answers.
- (Characterisation in The Handmaid's Tale)

Critical task:
- 'A male reader will find the novel's view of men unacceptably negative.'
  - Discuss this comment in the light of Atwood's purpose in the novel.
- (Themes and significant ideas in The Handmaid's Tale > Gender significance and feminism in The Handmaid's Tale)

Extension task:
- How do Offred’s mother and child fit into the novel’s portrayal of women?
  - Create another poster for them.