Anne Carson wins Nobel Prize in Literature

LEVEL B2


Photo: Thought Catalog / Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. What kinds of books do you enjoy most? Why?
2. Have you read any retellings of ancient stories? Which ones?
3. Do big prizes change what you choose to read? Why or why not?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

inventive
able to create new and original ideas or methods

committee
a group of people chosen to make decisions for an organisation

prestigious
having high status and respect

citizenship
legal status of being a member of a country

genre
a type or category of art or writing

collaborate
to work together with others to create something

translation
a version of a text changed into another language

classical
related to ancient Greek or Roman culture and works

III. READING

Canadian poet, essayist and translator Anne Carson has won the 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature. The Swedish Academy's committee praised her inventive writing, which engages with the classical tradition and reshapes it for today.

The prize, one of the most prestigious in world letters, is worth 12 million Swedish kronor (£900,000, $1.2m). Carson, 76, was born in Toronto and lives in Michigan. She also holds Icelandic citizenship, and the Academy said she was in Iceland "listening to the wind" when she received the call.

Her work crosses genres and artforms, moving between poetry, fiction and scholarship, and often between translation and original writing. She has collaborated with visual artists and theatre directors, bringing ancient stories to new audiences.

Notable titles include The Glass Essay, Autobiography of Red, Nox, Float and The Beauty of the Husband. Recent projects include Norma Jeane Baker of Troy, which linked Helen of Troy with Marilyn Monroe; The Trojan Women: A Comic; and a translation of Sophocles' Elektra staged in London starring Brie Larson.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "'Bold and inventive' Canadian poet Anne Carson...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What major award did Anne Carson win in 2026?
2. How much money comes with the Nobel Prize in Literature?
3. Where was Carson when the Academy phoned her?
4. What kinds of writing does her work move between?
5. Name one recent project or title mentioned in the text.

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should literature prizes reward style, impact, or both? Why?
2. Do translations help or hide an author's voice? Explain.
3. Is mixing genres a good way to reach new readers? Why?
4. Which ancient story would you like retold today, and how?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Mixed conditionals

Mixed conditionals link an unreal time to a different result time. If + had + past participle → would + base (past cause, present result). If + past simple → would have + past participle (present cause, past result).

> *"If Carson had not translated Sophocles, she* **would be** *less known today."*
>
> *"If the Academy were less bold, it* **would have missed** *her work."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence using the correct mixed conditional form of "would".

1. If she hadn't published Nox, fewer readers (know) ___ her now. _____
2. If I liked poetry more, I (discover) ___ her books years ago. _____
3. If her work had stayed niche, fewer people (read) ___ her now. _____
4. If she were less inventive, she (cross) ___ fewer genres by now. _____
5. If Elektra had not been staged in London, fewer theatres (invite) ___ her now. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Thought Catalog / Unsplash

I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading, 10 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check pronunciation and meaning for inventive, prestigious, genre, translation, collaborate, classical, committee, citizenship. Note kronor as Swedish currency.
- Reading and discussion: First set a skim task (who, what, where, money). Then a detail task (works, collaborators, places). Pair-check answers before whole-class feedback. No sensitive content is expected, and students may give opinions without knowing Carson's books.
- Differentiation: Stronger students summarise one paragraph in two sentences; others highlight evidence for each comprehension answer. Early finishers list two benefits and two risks of mixing genres, using examples from the text.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick show of hands, then ask pairs to list one example for style and one for impact.
2. Elicit one example of a great translation students know, then ask for one risk and one benefit.
3. Have students brainstorm two mixed-genre books or films, then swap partners to compare.
4. Give 60 seconds to choose a myth, then explain why it fits today and what form it could take.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: Write a 90-word prize citation for Carson that explains why the Academy chose her.

Presentation: In trios, prepare a 2-minute mini-talk introducing one listed work to new readers.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Mixed conditionals

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

TEACHERS ONLY

These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Thought Catalog / Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What major award did Anne Carson win in 2026?
   The Nobel Prize in Literature.
2. How much money comes with the Nobel Prize in Literature?
   12 million Swedish kronor (£900,000, $1.2m).
3. Where was Carson when the Academy phoned her?
   In Iceland.
4. What kinds of writing does her work move between?
   Poetry, fiction and scholarship, and often translation and original writing.
5. Name one recent project or title mentioned in the text.
   Examples include Autobiography of Red, Nox, The Trojan Women: A Comic, or Elektra.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence using the correct mixed conditional form of "would".

1. If she hadn't published Nox, fewer readers ___ her now. **would know**
2. If I liked poetry more, I ___ her books years ago. **would have discovered**
3. If her work had stayed niche, fewer people ___ her now. **would read / would be reading**
4. If she were less inventive, she ___ fewer genres by now. **would have crossed**
5. If Elektra had not been staged in London, fewer theatres ___ her now. **would invite / would be inviting**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Mixed conditionals link an unreal time to a different result time. If + had + past participle → would + base (past cause, present result). If + past simple → would have + past participle (present cause, past result). (Examples constructed.)

> *"If Carson had not translated Sophocles, she* **would be** *less known today."*
>
> *"If the Academy were less bold, it* **would have missed** *her work."*