

A Level English Literature

Bridging the Gap

Summer 2023



Key Date: Year 12 English Literature Induction Assessment

At the end of your first six weeks of the course, you will sit an induction assessment based on your learning for the first 6 weeks.

Course Breakdown

Edexcel English Literature

Paper 1 – Drama – 30%

- William Shakespeare, Othello and Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire.
- Written examination of 2 hours fifteen minutes.

Paper 2 – Prose – 20%

- Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale and Mary Shelley, Frankenstein.
- Written examination of one hour fifteen minutes.

Paper 3 – Poetry – 30%

- Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002–2011.
- English Romantic Verse

Non-examination assessment – 20%

- One extended essay on two texts of your choice

Recommended Reading

Recommended reading around Othello

Shakespeare: The Biography, Peter Ackroyd

The Connell Guide to Othello, Graham Bradshaw

Hamlet, King Lear and Much Ado About Nothing, William Shakespeare

Recommended reading around A Streetcar Named Desire

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and The Glass Menagerie, Tennessee Williams

The Connell Guide to A Streetcar Named Desire, Kirsten Shepherd-Barr

Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh, John Lahr

Recommended reading around The Handmaid's Tale

The Blind Assassin, Cat's Eye and Oryx and Crake, Margaret Atwood

Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury 1984, George Orwell

Recommended reading around Frankenstein

'Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner', Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Connell Guide to Frankenstein, Josie Billington

Recommended reading around Poetry

Blake, Peter Ackroyd *The Making of Poetry*,

Adam Nicolson *52 Ways of Looking at a Poem: or How Reading Modern Poetry Can Change Your Life*,

Ruth Padel *Lyrical Ballads*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth

General recommended reading

A Short History of Literature, John Sutherland

How to Read Literature Like a Professor, Thomas C Foster

A Level English Literature Visual Media

The Romantics and Us with Simon Schama – BBC iPlayer

A Streetcar Named Desire – Film directed by Elia Kazan

A version of *Othello*.

TASK 1 Pre-reading for the course

In order to maximise your time on the course, texts will need to be read in advance of our teaching of them. We will begin in year 12 with *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Teaching at the beginning of year 12 will assume that you have read both. They are both exciting and fun reads. You can supplement your reading of *A Streetcar* by watching the film version directed by Elia Kazan. If possible, it would be ideal if you also read *Othello* and *Frankenstein*, both of which you will need to have read by the second half of the first term.

TASK 2 Write a detailed review of your favourite book.

- At least 2 A4 sides long.
- In your introduction, explain the main premise of the book and why it is your 'favourite' book.
- Write 3-4 main paragraphs, focusing on a main feature or aspect of the book in each paragraph (e.g. key themes, characters, main events, writer's purpose and wider messages).
- In your conclusion, highlight why students and teachers should/must read this book!

TASK 3 Poetry analysis

Write an analysis of William Blake's poem 'The Garden of Love', using appropriate literary terminology and referencing critical writing(s) about Blake.

The Garden of Love, William Blake

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this chapel were shut,
And 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be,
And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

TASK 4 Sign up for an online study course

There are a wide variety of courses designed to help you to develop as a critical reader. Sign up for at least two of the following:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/a-level-study-unseen-poetry>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/country-house->

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/shakespeare>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-shakespeare>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/start-writing-fiction>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/robert-burns>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/jane-austen>

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/literature/approaching-prose-fiction/content-section-0?activetab=description-tab>

TASK 5 Understanding the literary heritage

A Level English Literature requires you to engage critically with a wide range of texts from across the literary canon and from time periods from the 16th to 21st Centuries.

Research 'the English Literary canon' and produce a timeline from c800 – 2020 on which you indicate:

- a) at least 20 key texts which are emblematic of particular literary movements or are otherwise seminally important;
- b) phases of the development of the English language and / or of literary movements (Old English, Middle English, Early Modern, Jacobean, Romantic, Modern, Post-modern, Post-Colonial, etc).

N.B. John Sutherland's *A Short History of Literature* will be of huge benefit here.

TASK 6 Wider reading

One of the wonderful opportunities you have studying English Literature is that reading for pleasure will help you immeasurably in your studies. You should always have a book on the go and studying English Literature will help you enjoy books that you may not have enjoyed previously. Try to read as many books as possible over the summer and throughout the duration of the course. If you are unsure what you should be reading, here is a list of our favourite books:

- *Catch 22*, Joseph Heller
- *Circe*, Madeline Miller
- *The Silence of the Girls*, Pat Barker
- *The Regeneration Trilogy*, Pat Barker
- *The Wolf Hall Trilogy*, Hilary Mantel
- *Emma*, Jane Austen
- *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen
- *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad
- *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker
- *The Underground Railroad*, Colson Whitehead
- *Tom Jones*, Henry Fielding
- *A Month in the Country*, JL Carr
- *Underland*, Robert MacFarlane
- *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, Louis de Bernieres
- *The Power*, Naomi Alderman
- *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, Patricia Highsmith
- *1984*, George Orwell
- *War of the Worlds*, HG Wells