

# A Level English Literature and Language

Name:

Class Teacher:

Set Texts:



## **English Literature and Language at A Level**

This pack contains a varied programme of activities and resources to help you prepare to start an A Level in Language and Literature in September. It is aimed to be used after you complete your GCSE and throughout the Summer Holidays to ensure you are ready to start the course, fully prepared, in September.

A Level will require you to gain a deeper understanding of the texts that you study. There is a lot more independent work required like reading about the author's life and how this may have influenced the text; reading texts that are not on the examination syllabus in order to gain a deeper understanding of the context or writer's that may have influenced the writing of the novel that you are studying. Professor Ben Knights, ex-Director HE English Subject Centre claims English A Level students must be:

- Sensitive to complexity
- Open to new ideas
- Able to move light-footedly between the specific and the general
- Verbally creative and playful
- Willing to tolerate ambiguity
- Wide and determined readers of a variety of kinds of texts
- Confident in taking intellectual risks.

Over the holidays you must:

- Complete this home learning pack
- Read a couple of the set texts over the summer (contact [elimperato@highdown.reading.sch.uk](mailto:elimperato@highdown.reading.sch.uk) if you are not sure what texts you will be studying)

Where appropriate the tasks are linked to the course's Assessment Objectives, which are listed below:

- A01** Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression
- A02** Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts
- A03** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received
- A04** Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods
- A05** Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways

## Tips

- Twitter - follow writers and academics who blog about literature (see useful websites on Page 6)
- Keep a blog on your reading and what you have found – far easier than carrying around a big file
- Read a couple of the set texts over the summer – remember to be successful you will need to read the texts a few times before the exams in order to have a really good understanding – If you have not been given this information ask someone in your English department.
- Download electronic copies of your set texts on your device or purchase a copy of the set texts and make notes on it which you can then print/use in the future
- Download the audio book of the text – Listen and read at the same time
- Get an understanding of what Marxism, feminism, gender performativity, politeness theory, Freudian theory etc. are and how they help our understanding of literature
- Historical reading of specific periods in history – Victorian period, Renaissance, Romantic period etc. Make notes on what you learn about these specific periods of history.
- Create a profile of an author you will be studying
- Challenge the teacher with something that you have read
- Library – Google books, school library, university libraries, local libraries
- Download an app called Pocket (available on Android and Apple devices) – keeps all your reading saved in one place
- Write a weekly reflection of what you have learnt each week – These notes can build up to some great revision notes.
- Listen to TED talks on literature and grammar to widen your understand of the subject. This enables you to see what other people's perspectives are. You can listen to them online or download the app. Follow these links to get you started:  
<https://www.ted.com/topics/literature>  
<http://blog.ed.ted.com/2014/05/29/be-a-better-writer-in-15-minutes-4-ted-edlessons-on-grammar-and-word-choice/>

***Document everything you have done over the summer as on your first lesson you must prove to your teacher that you have followed this advice.***

## **New Terminology Bank**

Below there is terminology that you will be exposed to throughout the English Literature and Language course. <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Books/documents/2009/01/09/TheYellowWallpaper.pdf>

Follow the link to the PDF of 'The Yellow Wallpaper' print and annotate the text to show your understanding of this new terminology.

Lexis and Semantics:

- Denotative and connotational meanings: the literal (denotative) and associated (connotational) meanings of words and phrases.
- Figurative language: language used in a non-literal way to describe something in another's terms (e.g. simile or metaphor).
- Semantic fields: groups of words connected by a common meaning.
- Synonyms: words that have equivalent meanings.
- Antonyms: words that have contrasting meanings.
- Levels of formality: vocabulary styles including slang, colloquial, taboo and formal.
- Jargon: a technical vocabulary associated with a particular occupation or activity.
- Sociolect: a language style associated with a particular social group.
- Dialect: a language style associated with a particular geographical region.

**Grammar:**

- Active voice: a clause where the agent (doer) of an action is the subject.
- Passive voice: a clause where the patient (the entity affected by an action) is in the subject position, and the agent either follows or is left out.
- Tense: how the time of an event is marked (usually through verb inflection): past, present and future.
- Sentence: a larger unit of meaning, which may be formed of a single clause (simple sentence) or several clauses (compound or complex sentences).
- Sentence function: the purpose a sentence fulfils in communication: as a statement, question, command or exclamation. These are also referred to in many grammar books as (respectively): declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives and exclamatives.
- Word class: the grammatical category into which words can be placed

**New Terminology:**

- Audience: the receivers or intended receivers of a text (written, spoken, multimodal). The concept of an ideal audience/reader is often found in critical discourse. Texts might also have multiple audiences.

- Discourses: used in many different (and sometime contradictory) ways in language study. Can be used to refer to a mode of language (e.g. spoken or written discourse), a register (e.g. medical or legal discourse), a way of thinking about and presenting something (e.g. representing language using a discourse of decay).
- Foregrounding: the way in which texts emphasise key events or ideas through the use of attention-seeking devices (in terms of lexis, semantics, phonology or grammar) that either repeat content (parallelism) or break established patterns (deviation). Deviation may be: - external: breaking from the normal conventions of language use, for example in the use of nonsense words or ungrammatical constructions - internal: breaking from a pattern that has previously been set up in the text for a striking effect.
- Genre: the way of categorising and classifying different types of texts according to their features or expected shared conventions. Genres come into being as the result of people agreeing about perceived similar characteristics in terms of content or style. Genres are fluid and dynamic and new genres continually evolve as a result of new technologies and cultural practices.
- Mode: the way in which language is communicated between text producer and text receiver and the physical channel through which this is carried out. At its simplest, this could be spoken or written (visual or auditory channel). Mode also encompasses ideas around planning and spontaneity, distance between text producer and receiver, how transitory or long-lasting a text is. Mode is more than a binary opposition, is sometimes visualised as a continuum and is constantly changing as new communication technologies blur the lines between older forms.
- Narrative: a type of text or discourse that functions to tell a series of events. A narrative is the organisation of experience told by a narrator to any number of narratees. A narrative has two distinctive parts: - the story: the events, places, characters, and time of action that act as the building blocks of the narrative - the narrative discourse: the shaping of those building blocks into something worth telling through specific choices in language and structure.

## Useful Websites

[www.universalteacher.org.uk](http://www.universalteacher.org.uk) This website contains comprehensive and interesting guidance about how best to read and discuss a wide range of texts, both individual and paired. A brief but helpful history of English literature, from Middle English to the late 20th Century, is also included.

[www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com) This site has basic, but very useful notes on a huge range of commonly studied texts, with chapter synopses, character analyses, themes and motifs, essay ideas, and suggestions for further reading. It is a very useful site indeed.

[www.bibliomania.com](http://www.bibliomania.com) Study notes on a very wide range of texts, with notes, suggested essay titles, and guidance on further reading (you need to register to access the material, but at the time of access there appeared to be no charge).

[www.novelguide.com](http://www.novelguide.com) The site contains detailed discussion of a wide range of novels old and new, with relevant background material.

[www.s-cool.co.uk/topic\\_index.asp?subject\\_id=4&d=0](http://www.s-cool.co.uk/topic_index.asp?subject_id=4&d=0) Some quite basic, but very helpful and reassuring advice on how best to approach the study of literature, notes on how to study poetry, and on a few individual texts.

[www.englishbiz.co.uk](http://www.englishbiz.co.uk) A site geared towards pre-A-Level learners, but it does contain good and practical advice on planning, organising and writing critical and other sorts of essays.

<http://www.litcharts.com/> Comprehensive guide on lots of texts with detailed study notes.

[www.palgrave.com/skills4study/html/index.asp](http://www.palgrave.com/skills4study/html/index.asp) This site is designed for university learners, but also helpful at A Level. Discusses a range of study skills, including how to structure and write good literature essays. [www.literaryhistory.com](http://www.literaryhistory.com) The material here is advanced, but useful and thought-provoking. A wealth of resource material is offered on a huge range of writers, old and modern.

[www.victorianweb.org](http://www.victorianweb.org) This site contains very detailed and advanced material – mostly resource-based – on writers from the 19th and very early 20th centuries. Well worth a visit if you are studying a text from this period.

<https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/> They publish a great magazine called e-magazine