

A Level English Literature

Name:

Class Teacher:

Set Texts:



English Literature A Level

This pack contains a varied programme of activities and resources to help you prepare to start an A Level in 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 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** Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- A02** Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts
- A03** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received
- A04** Explore connections across texts
- A05** Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

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/purchase a copy of the set texts and make notes on it which you can then print/use
- Download the audio book of the text – Listen and read at the same time
- Get an understanding of what Marxism, feminism, gender performativity, New Historicism, Psychoanalytical, Postcolonialism, Deconstruction, 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 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 terminology.

Essential Terminology

General

- 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.
- Audience/Reader: 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.
- Genre: the way of categorising and classifying different types of texts according to their features or expected shared conventions.
- Theme: an idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature.
- Symbolism: Symbolism is a literary device that uses symbols, be they words, people, marks, locations, or abstract ideas to represent something beyond the literal meaning.
- Motif: A dominant or recurring idea in an artistic work.
- Allusion: An implied or indirect reference to something.
- Foil: A character that contrasts to a second character.

Dystopian

- Dystopia: the opposite of utopia, a place or world in total disharmony, in which there is the conditions and quality of life only perpetuate suffering. As a literary genre, it describes a subset of speculative fiction, setting a vision of a future of the worst kind.
- Speculative fiction: currently used as an umbrella term for genres of literature that offer engagement with a speculative vision of the world or possible worlds.
- Authoritarian: demanding complete obedience, refusing to allow freedom. This is a term generally applied to governments or rulers to describe their approach to control.
- Fascism: a political system based on extreme pride in a country and race, where a singular leader has far reaching state control and in which political opposition is not tolerated.
- Dehumanisation: the process of removing human qualities from a person, e.g. denying capacity for individual thought, consideration for others, reducing people to the status of things.
- Anarchy: a situation in which there is no centralised organisation or control and no effective or practising government.
- Dissent: the voicing of a strong difference of opinion, but especially in response to popular beliefs or official policy.

- Surveillance: the close observation of people and places. Initially used in the context of policy and crime, surveillance can be undertaken by the police, the state or the general public depending on the context.

Poetry

- Blank verse. Unrhymed iambic pentameter.
- Caesura. A deliberate rhetorical, grammatical, or rhythmic pause, break, cut, turn, division, or pivot in poetry.
- Couplet. Stanza of 2 lines; often, a pair of rhymed lines.
- Enjambment. Continuation of sense and rhythmic movement from one line to the next; also called a "run-on" line.
- Foot. Unit of measure in a metrical line of poetry
- Line. Basic unit of a poem; measured in feet if metrical.
- Pentameter. Line consisting of 5 metrical feet. For instance, iambic pentameter equals 10 syllables (5 unstressed, 5 stressed).
- Quatrain. Stanza of 4 lines.
- Quintain. Stanza of 5 lines
- Stanza. Group of lines making up a single unit; like a paragraph in prose.
- Tercet. Stanza or poem of 3 lines.

Shakespeare

- Iambic Pentameter - Iambic pentameter is the name given to the rhythm that Shakespeare uses in his plays. The rhythm of iambic pentameter is like a heartbeat, with one soft beat and one strong beat repeated five times.
- Prose and Verse - Prose is a conversational way of speaking which doesn't have a set rhythm or structure. Verse always has a set rhythm and structure.
- Rhyming Couplets - Rhyming couplets are two lines written in iambic pentameter that end in the same sound, or a rhyme. They are often used to sum up the end of a character's speech.
- Antithesis - Antithesis happens when two opposites are put together. For example, hot and cold or light and dark.
- Sonnet - A sonnet is a poem of 14 lines, written in iambic pentameter. It has three stanzas of four lines, with an ABAB rhyme scheme, and ends with a rhyming couplet. They are traditionally love poems.

Useful Websites

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 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 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 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 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.shakespearehelp.com A very detailed listing of resource material on Shakespeare, his life, times and plays, particularly useful for advanced learners.

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 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 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 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