



WELCOME TO ENGLISH LITERATURE A LEVEL



(1) RESEARCH

Over the course of the next 2 years, you will be developing your ability to read and interpret and wide range of texts. The current choices that you will be exploring in and out of class are as follows:

- King Lear – William Shakespeare
- A Streetcar Named Desire – Tennessee Williams
- Frankenstein – Mary Shelley
- The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood
- Poems of the Decade (a collection of modern poetry) - Various
- The poetry of Christina Rossetti – Christina Rossetti

With that in mind, do not rush out and buy any of these texts, but instead:

- a) Do some research into the first two authors. Become familiar with their work, read about their lives and interests. See how events in their lives influenced their ideas.
- b) Read one of their other texts so that you are familiar with their style of writing, e.g. Shakespeare – Hamlet; Williams – Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (there are filmed versions available as well).

(2) READING

As well as studying the named texts, you will also be required to write a 2500 - 3000 word essay in which you will have to compare two different texts and how they explore a specific theme. The choices here are, within reason, entirely up to you.

With this in mind, your final transition task is to start working out which texts you may want to use for this – we will be looking to have your choices and

essay title approved by the start of 2025. This activity should also help to foster/instil/build upon your passion for reading – *you really need to have one to do this course!!!*

Below is a list of approved texts from the exam board. Start reading...

A Clockwork Orange, Anthony Burgess

A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf

A Separate Peace, John Knowles

A Taste of Honey, Sheila Delaney

A Thousand Splendid Suns, Khaled

Hosseini

Ada or Ardour: A Family Chronicle,

Vladimir Nabokov

Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

An Ideal Husband, Oscar Wilde

Armada, Wilkie Collins

Behind the Scenes at the Museum, Kate

Atkinson

Birdsong, Sebastian Faulks

Brick Lane, Monica Ali

Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Louis de

Bernières

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Tennessee

Williams

Catch 22, Joseph Heller

Cloud Atlas, David Mitchell

Cold Comfort Farm, Stella Gibson

Collected works of Rochester, John

Wilmot

Death of a Naturalist, Seamus Heaney

Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller

Digging to America, Anne Tyler

Disgrace, J.M. Coetzee

Dispatches, Michael Kerr

Dracula, Bram Stoker

Emma, Jane Austen

Empire of the Sun, J G Ballard

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, Tom

Stoppard

Feminine Gospels, Carol Ann Duffy

For Whom the Bell Tolls, Ernest

Hemingway

Foster, Claire Keegan

Hamlet, William Shakespeare

Hard Times, Charles Dickens

Hawksmoor, Peter Ackroyd

Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad

High Rise, JG Ballard

Hold Your Own, Kate Tempest

Homage to Catalonia, George Orwell

How to be a Woman, Caitlin Moran

Into The Wild, Jon Krakauer

Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer

Jerusalem, Jez Butterworth

King Charles III, Mike Bartlett

King Lear, William Shakespeare

Life of Pi, Yann Martel

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Caryl

Churchill

Lolita, Vladimir Nabokov

London: The Biography, Peter Ackroyd

Mansfield Park, Jane Austen

Mean Time, Carol Ann Duffy

Mister Pip, Lloyd Jones

Narrative of the Life of Frederick

Douglass, Frederick Douglass

Netherland, Joseph O'Neill

Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro

Jude the Obscure, Thomas Hardy

Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen

On The Road, Jack Kerouac

Once in a House on Fire, Andrea

Ashworth

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Ken

Kesey

Oranges are Not the Only Fruit, Jeanette

Winterson

Othello, William Shakespeare

Poetry of the First World War, Tim

Kendall (published anthology)

Rabbit, Run, John Updike

Rebecca, Daphne du Maurier

Red Dust Road, Jackie Kay

Regeneration, Pat Barker

Room, Emma Donoghue

Roxana, Daniel Defoe

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood

Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry

and Verse of the First World War, Ed.

Catherine Reilly

Selected Poems, Sylvia Plath

Small Island, Andrea Levy

Songs of Innocence and of Experience,

William Blake

Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy

Texts written in English by Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Nii Ayikwei Parkes
 The Adoption Papers, Jackie Kay
The Autobiography of Malcom X, Malcolm X
 The Awakening, Kate Chopin
The Bloody Chamber, Angela Carter
 The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison
 The Bone Clocks, David Mitchell
 The Castle of Otranto, Horace Walpole
 The Collector, John Fowles
The Color Purple, Alice Walker
The Crucible, Arthur Miller
 The Danish Girl, David Ebershoff
 The Dark Room, Rachel Seiffert
 The Duchess of Malfi, John Webster
 The Fixer, Bernard Malamud
The Glass Menagerie, Tennessee William
 The Go-Between, L P Hartley
The Great Gatsby, F Scott Fitzgerald
The History Boys, Alan Bennett
 The House Gun, Nadine Gordimer
The Importance of Being Earnest, Oscar Wilde
 The Killer Angels, Michael Shara
 The Little Stranger, Sarah Waters
 The Madness of King George, Alan Bennett
 The Monk, Matthew Gregory Lewis
The Murders in the Rue Morgue and

Other Tales, Edgar Allen Poe
 The Mysteries of Udolpho, Ann Radcliffe
 The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde
 The Price of Salt, Patricia Highsmith
 The Remains of the Day, Kazuo Ishiguro
The Road, Cormac McCarthy
 The Stars My Destination, Alfred Bester
 The Stories of Edgar Allen Poe (published collection)
 The Township Plays, Athol Fugard
 The Virgin Suicides, Jeffrey Eugenides
 The Vortex, Noel Coward
The Wasp Factory, Iain Banks
 The Waste Land, T S Elliott
 The World's Wife, Carol Ann Duffy
 This Side of Paradise, F Scott Fitzgerald
 Titus Andronicus, William Shakespeare
 Titus Groan, Mervyn Peak
 To The Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf
Trainspotting, Irvine Welsh
 True History of the Kelly Gang, Peter Carey
 Union Street, Pat Barker
 Vernon God Little, DBC Pierre
 Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett
 We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves, Karen Joy Fowler
 White Teeth, Zadie Smith
 Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Rhys
 Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

It seems like a great deal, and, of course, you are not expected to read them all!!! Just choose maybe two or three and give them a go – I have highlighted some 'classic' A level texts to help get you started if you need. There really is something for everybody here, but you need to make the final decisions yourself.

Finally, here are some little bits of advice from the exam board in terms of dos and don'ts:

Allowed

- Any text from the specification that has not been studied for another component in the specification.
- Texts of similar 'quality' to those in the specification.

- Texts by the same authors as those who have set texts in the specification.
- 2 texts by the same writer.

Not allowed

- Texts in translation (e.g. A Doll's House).
- Screenplays
- Graphic novels.

Avoid

- Established GCSE and International GCSE texts* (e.g. To Kill a Mockingbird, The Strange

Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Macbeth, or Romeo and Juliet), regardless of whether your

students have studied them at GCSE.

- Children's literature** (e.g. Alice in Wonderland).
- 'Youth literature' (e.g. The Hunger Games).
- 'Populist texts' for which there is unlikely to be suitable critical material (e.g. The Da Vinci Code).

GOOD LUCK – SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!!!

