

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Sixth Form

English Literature A-Level Handbook 22/23



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Course content AQA A Level English Literature A

Love Through the Ages

- A Shakespeare play – Othello
- Unseen poetry comparison
- One prose text – The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- Love through the Ages poetry anthology – pre 1900

Modern Literature

- Skirrid Hill, by Owen Sheers
- Unseen prose extract
- The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret Atwood
- A Streetcar Named Desire, by Tennessee Williams

Texts Across Time

- An extended comparative critical essay of 2500 words based on two texts of your own choice.

The Love Through the Ages unit will begin in year 12 and the Modern Times unit will be taught during Year 13. The Texts Across time essay will be introduced at the end of Year 12 and produced in the first term of Year 13.

Course texts

A copy of the AQA Love Through the Ages poetry anthology will be provided. Students at A level are expected to purchase their own copies of the other set texts for use in class and annotation. Clean copies will be supplied by the school for examinations.

It is recommended that you buy the Cambridge AQA English Literature A Student Book to support your study.

A/AS Level English Literature A for AQA Student Book

ISBN:9781107467927

Author(s):Marcello Giovanelli, Russell Carey, Anne Fairhall, Tom Rank

Critical Reading

Stephen Fry, The Ode Less Travelled (2005)

Francine Prose, Reading Like a Writer (2006)

Peter Barry, Beginning Theory (1995)

Jeremy Hawthorn, Studying the Novel (2005)

Neil Bowen & Michael Meally, The Art of Writing Literature Essays (2015)

The Art of Fiction, by David Lodge (1992) also provides a really good foundation for the study of Literature.

How the course is assessed

This is a linear qualification with all assessment in Year 13

'Love through the Ages' – A 3 hour exam with 3 questions covering the set texts and two unseen poems (40% of A Level)

Question 1: An extract to whole text based question on Othello (closed book)

Question 2: A comparison of two unseen poems

Question 3: A comparison of The Great Gatsby/The Awakening and pre/post love poetry from the Anthology (open book)

'Texts in Shared Contexts' – A 2 hour and 30 minutes exam covering the set texts and an unseen prose extract (40% of A Level)

Question 1: A question based on Skirrid Hill (open book)

Question 2: An analysis of an unseen prose extract

Question 3: A comparative question based on The Handmaid's Tale and A Streetcar Named Desire (open book)

'Texts across Time' - One Independent Critical Study (20% of A level)

AQA Literature A Specification: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-literature-a-7711-7712>

How the course is delivered and expectations

At A level, you will be taught through paired teaching with each teacher delivering one of the examined units, and one of them also supervising the independent critical essay.

This course encourages you to develop an interest in and enjoyment of English Literature, through reading widely, critically and independently, across centuries, genre and gender, and through experience of an extensive range of views about texts and how to read them.

It is an accessible and stimulating course in which you will engage with a variety of texts and it is essential that you engage with all aspects of your study to maximise your understanding and your progress.

Any absences will require you to obtain work missed and be fully prepared for the following lessons. You must homework complete on time, as many lessons will require this as a prerequisite to contributing during the next lesson.

Study requires an independent approach to analysing texts, to provide a firm foundation for study in Higher Education. It requires you to respond creatively to texts, both in coursework and examined units, whilst in addition, providing a high level of commitment to both work and reading beyond the classroom and an ability to meet strict deadlines.

Your success on this course will depend upon your willingness to engage in group discussions, to be involved in debates and to be enthusiastic about fulfilling your potential. You will need to be prepared to undertake presentations to your group and to be willing to contribute significantly to the learning environment.

The A level learning environment is very different to the one you have experienced at GCSE, and as such, your own approaches will need to be different. Achieving well at an advanced level involves taking responsibility for your own learning, working independently and meeting all deadlines.

Above all, enjoy the course, enjoy reading new texts, and learning about literature from a historicist approach.

Progress Record

Why did you choose to study English Literature?

What are your expectations of the course?

What do you hope to do after A-Level study?

GCSE grade:

Summer task band:

Target grade:

What are your strengths in English Literature?

What do you regard as your weaknesses?

What actions can you take to work effectively towards your target grade?

Summer holiday key skills tasks

Task 1

Write around 500 words (no more than two sides of lined A4) discussing a novel, play or collection of poetry that you have read for enjoyment. This must not be a book you have studied at GCSE.

Take a critical analysis approach - avoid plot summaries. Think about what the themes of the text are and what messages the writer might be trying to convey. Other areas you may want to consider include the writer's use of language, their chosen form (e.g. novel, play or poem), structural features and any contextual influences (authorial, historical or literary) that may be important.

The aim of this exercise is to promote a commitment to working at an advanced level through independent study and exploration of wider reading.

Task 2

Research different literary periods and movements from 1600 to Modern Day. Create a timeline to present your research.

The aim of this task is to provide you with a basis for the historicist approach to studying literature that this AQA Specification requires.

Wider Reading

You should prepare for the three units of the A Level course by reading widely in the topic areas, engaging with texts from a range of authors and times.

The following reading list is made up of texts that the teachers delivering your course have enjoyed, and which will give you a good foundation for the texts you will encounter as part of the Literature A Level.

Some of these texts will be challenging in terms of meaning and/or content. If the thought of reading something challenging, that will potentially change your world view and make you think about ideas you have not considered before excites you, then you are on the right course!

A Level Literature Reading List

Prose

- Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte
- Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen
- Cold Comfort Farm, Stella Gibbons
- Gulliver's Travels, Jonathon Swift
- Lady Chatterley's, Lover D H Lawrence
- A Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde
- Silas Marner, George Eliot
- Frankenstein, Mary Shelley
- A Sicilian Romance, Ann Radcliffe
- 1984, George Orwell
- A Clockwork Orange, Anthony Burgess
- Revolutionary Road, Richard Yates
- Grapes of Wrath, John Steinbeck
- The Outsider, Albert Camus
- Brideshead Revisited, Evelyn Waugh
- The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini
- The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy
- The Book Thief, Marcus Zusak
- Norwegian Wood, Haruki Murakami
- Catcher in the Rye, J D Sallinger
- Surfacing, Margaret Atwood
- Brighton Rock, Graham Greene
- Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro
- Falling Man, Don DeLillo
- The Line of Beauty, Alan Hollinghurst
- Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Louis de Bernieres
- Breakfast at Tiffany's, Truman Capote
- The End of the Affair, Graham Green
- Oranges are not the Only Fruit, Jeanette Winterson
- Love in the Time of Cholera, Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- The Wasp Factory, Iain Banks
- Regeneration, Pat Barker
- Brave New World, Aldous Huxley
- Enduring Love, Ian McEwan
- The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath
- Birdsong, Sebastian Faulks
- Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte

- Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Rhys
- Beloved, Tony Morrison
- The Colour Purple, Alice Walker
- The Go Between, L P Hartley
- Trainspotting, Irvine Welsh
- The Collector, John Fowles
- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou
- The Wasp Factory, Iain Banks
- The Beach, Alex Garland
- The Time Traveller's Wife, Audrey Niffenegger
- Vernon God Little, DBC Pierre
- Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy
- Tender is the Night, F Scott Fitzgerald

Drama

- The Country Wife, William Wycherley
- Translations, Brian Friel
- All My Sons, Arthur Miller
- Long Day's Journey Into Night, Eugene O'Neill
- The Caretaker, Harold Pinter
- Arcadia, Tom Stoppard
- I Have Been Here Before, J.B. Priestley
- Our Country's Good, Timberlake Wertenbaker
- Top Girls, Carol Churchill
- The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde
- Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett
- Hedda Gabler, Henrik Ibsen
- The Cherry Orchard, Anton Chekhov
- Equus, Peter Shaffer
- Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?, Edward Albee
- Medea, Euripides
- King Lear
- Hamlet
- Measure for Measure
- The Taming of the Shrew
- The Merchant of Venice

Poetry

- Tony Harrison, Selected Poems, 2013 Edition
- New Selected Poems, Seamus Heaney
- Birthday Letters, Ted Hughes
- Ariel, Sylvia Plath
- Residence on Earth, Pablo Neruda
- Leaves of Grass, Walt Whitman
- Complete Poems, Emily Dickinson
- The Waste Land, T S Elliot
- Feminine Gospels, Carol Ann Duffy
- The World's Wife, Carol Ann Duffy
- The Canterbury Tales, Chaucer
- The Dream of a Common Language, Adrienne Rich
- Selected Poems and Letters, Keats
- Shakespeare's Sonnets