

2020

**English Literature
A Level**

Summer Tasks

Reading List

**Suggestions of Contextual and Critical
Readings**

Why are you being given summer tasks?

There is a wealth of evidence which shows that students who are widely read, achieve higher grades than those who do not. Certainly, past experience here at Samuel Whitbread has proved that, in English at A Level, there is a clear correlation between the breadth of reading a student has undertaken and ultimate grades. Shockingly, every year, there are students who opt to study English at A Level who claim *not to read at all* . Without fail, these students struggle to accomplish the written tasks to the same standard as their peers who are keen readers of a variety of texts.

The benefits of reading are huge: not only does it increase your fluency in spelling, punctuation and grammar (since you unconsciously pick up correct English usage) but also you are exposed to a wide range of writing forms and styles. For example, you will find it extremely difficult to analyse the similarities and differences in different texts if you have no experience of different styles and genres. Similarly, you need to read historical articles and critical theory to enhance your argument and achieve the higher bands in your coursework.

You will be given a list of set texts to answer for your coursework question and the exam. However, the more confident you are with the different writing techniques and narrative structures, the easier you will find comparing, analysing and re-creating texts.

If you intend to go on to University, whatever your course, then you will be expected to read widely in order to increase your subject knowledge. It really is foolish to embark upon an English course with the attitude that “I’m not really a reader” – NOW is the time to change that and *become* one.

The tasks you are expected to undertake are designed so that you will encounter a range of genres and build a portfolio fiction *beyond* the range you have encountered so far; furthermore, you will be expected to research and collate contextual and critical readings of texts.

Your teachers WILL check you have undertaken the tasks and this will highlight your commitment to the course. If you do not complete the tasks, you may not be accepted onto the course. Enjoy your reading and have a happy summer break!

Summer Tasks

Complete the tasks below in as much detail as you can. They will help you with your understanding of the course from September, meaning you will hit the ground running! These tasks are compulsory, so please don't forget to complete them before you come back to school!

1. The Gothic Genre

Conduct an extensive research project into the Gothic genre within Literature. You will want to consider: the origins of the Gothic; Gothic conventions; the evolution of the Gothic genre, especially during the Victorian era; famous Gothic texts and their features; how the Gothic genre continues to be relevant today.

2. Modern Poetry

Source and print a collection of poetry written in the 21st century. You may want to find poems written in a variety of styles and forms, written by a variety of poets. Then create a glossary of poetic terms, with accompanying definitions and examples (your examples can be taken from your sourced poems if applicable).

Compulsory and Suggested Reading List

A Level English Literature (Pearson-Edexcel) Set texts

Dracula, Bram Stoker, Penguin Classics (978-0141439846)

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde, Wordsworth Classics, (978-1853260155)
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A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams Penguin Modern Classics, 2009 (ISBN 9780141190273)

Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002-2011, Faber & Faber (ISBN 978-0571325405)

Othello, William Shakespeare, Wordsworth Classics Edition (ISBN 978-1853260186)

Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, Cambridge University Press; Updated edition (ISBN-10: 131661560X)

Suggested English and American Literature

POETRY

18th/19th centuries. Some poets worth getting to know:

Alexander Pope, P.B. Shelley, G.M.Hopkins, Lord Byron, John Keats, Elizabeth Browning, William Blake, Lord Tennyson, Christina Rossetti, W.Wordsworth, Robert Browning, Walt Whitman

20th century:

Wilfred Owen, Dylan Thomas, Robert Frost, Seamus Heaney, T.S. Elliot, R.S. Thomas, Sylvia Plath, W.B. Yeats, Philip Larkin, Douglas Dunn, W.H. Auden, Ted Hughes, Tony Harrison, Louis MacNeice, Stevie Smith, Simon Armitage, Stephen Spender, Derek Walcott, Liz Lochhead, Thomas Hardy, Ezra Pound, e e cummings, Langston Hughes, Carol Ann Duffy, Allen Ginsberg

DRAMA

Shakespeare's time: Shakespeare! Marlowe, Jonson, Webster

19th century: Wilde, G B Shaw (spans both centuries)

20th century: Brian Friel, Harold Pinter, Caryl Churchill, Sean O'Casey, Arnold Wesker, Alan Bennett, John Osborne, John Arden, Alan Ayckbourn, Samuel Beckett, Arthur Miller, Tom Stoppard, Sam Shepherd, Tennessee Williams

CLASSIC PROSE

Thomas Hardy – *Jude The Obscure*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

W.M. Thackeray - *Vanity Fair*
Charles Dickens – *Great Expectation, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby*
Charlotte Bronte - *Jane Eyre*
Emily Bronte - *Wuthering Heights*
George Elliot – *Middlemarch, Silas Marner*
Henry Fielding - *Tom Jones*
Elizabeth Gaskell - *Mary Barton* etc.
Jane Austen – *Emma, Pride and Prejudice*
Mark Twain - *Huckleberry Finn*
Mary Shelley – *Frankenstein*
Bram Stoker – *Dracula*
Robert Louis Stevenson – *Treasure Island, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
Daniel Defoe – *Robison Crusoe*
Anthony Trollope – *The Way We Live Now*
Arthur Conan Doyle – *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* etc.

20th CENTURY LITERATURE

Arnold Bennett - *The Old Wives' Tale*
Joseph Conrad - *Heart of Darkness*
E.M. Forster - *Where Angels Fear to Tread, Howards End*
D.H. Lawrence - *Sons & Lovers*
James Joyce - *Portrait of the Artist*
Scott Fitzgerald - *The Great Gatsby*
Virginia Woolf - *Moments of Being*
Edith Wharton - *The Age of Innocence*
Graham Greene - *Power & the Glory, Brighton Rock*
George Orwell – *1984, Animal Farm*
John Steinbeck - *The Grapes of Wrath*
Ernest Hemingway - *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
Evelyn Waugh - *Brideshead Revisited, The Sword of Honour Trilogy*
William Golding – *The Lord of the Flies*
Jack Kerouac – *On the Road*
John Le Carre – *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*
Kingsley Amis - *Lucky Jim*
Ian McEwan - *Atonement*
Alice Walker - *The Colour Purple*
Paul Scott - *Staying On*
Joseph Heller - *Catch 22*
Margaret Drabble - *The Millstone*
Fay Weldon - *Life & Loves of a She-Devil*
John Fowles - *The French Lieutenant's Woman*
Margaret Atwood - *The Handmaid's Tale*
Nick Hornby – *High Fidelity, Fever Pitch, About A Boy, Juliet, Naked*
Tony Parsons – *Man and Boy*
J R Tolkien – *The Lord of the Rings*
C S Lewis – *The Screwtape Letters*
John Boyne – *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*
Aldous Huxley – *Brave New World*
Russell Hoban – *Riddley Walker*
Jonathan Franzen – *The Corrections*

Paul Auster – *The New York Trilogy, Leviathan, The Book of Illusions*
Truman Capote – *In Cold Blood*
Ken Kesey – *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*
William Burroughs – *Naked Lunch*

LITERATURE FROM ANOTHER CULTURE: *INDICATES PRE-1914 TEXTS

Khalid Hosseini - *A Thousand Splendid Suns, The Kite Runner* (Afghanistan)
Chinua Achebe - *Things Fall Apart* (Africa)
H Rider Haggard – *She* (Africa)
Homer - *The Iliad**, *the Odyssey** (Ancient Greek)
Doris Pilkington - *The Rabbit Proof Fence* (Australia)
Jung Chang - *Wild Swans* (China)
Victor Hugo - *Les Miserables** (French)
Gustave Flaubert - *Madame Bovary** (French)
Alexandre Dumas – *The Three Musketeers, The Count of Monte Cristo* (French)
Yann Martel - *Life of Pi* (India)
Arundhati Roy - *The God of Small Things* (India)
Salman Rushdie - *Midnight's Children* (India)
Roddy Doyle - *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* (Ireland)
Arthur Golden - *Memoirs of a Geisha* (Japan)
Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie - *Purple Hibiscus, Half of a Yellow Sun* (Nigeria)
Feodor Dostoevsky - *Crime & Punishment**, *The Brothers Karamazov** (Russia)
Leo Tolstoy - *War & Peace** (Russia)
J.M. Coetzee – *Disgrace* (South Africa)
Carlos Ruiz Zafon – *Shadow of the Wind* (Spain)
Gabriel Garcia Marquez - *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (Spain)
Stieg Larsson - *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo* (Sweden)
Alex Garland - *The Beach* (Thailand)

GRAPHIC NOVELS

Alan Moore – *Watchmen, V for Vendetta, The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, Batman: The Killing Joke, From Hell*
Frank Miller – *300, The Dark Knight Returns, Batman: Year One*
Harvey Pekar – *The American Splendour Series*
Daniel Clowes – *Ghost World*

PHILOSOPHY

Plato – *The Republic, The Death of Socrates*
Aristotle – *Poetics, The Nichomachean Ethics*,
David Hume – *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*
Thomas More – *Utopia*
J.S. Mill – *Utilitarianism*
Michel de Montaigne – *Collected Essays*
Friedrich Nietzsche – *Beyond Good and Evil, The Birth of Tragedy, Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
Søren Kierkegaard – *Fear and Trembling*
Albert Camus – *The Myth of Sisyphus, The Rebel, The Fall*
Jean-Paul Sartre – *Being and Nothingness, What is Literature?*

LITERARY CRITICISM AND REFERENCE

Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction by Culler, Jonathan

Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory 3rd Edition (Beginnings) by Barry, Peter

Classical Literary Criticism (Oxford World's Classics) by D. A. Russell and Michael Winterbottom

Literary Terms and Criticism (Palgrave Key Concepts) by Dr John Peck and Martin Coyle

The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (Oxford Paperback Reference) by Chris Baldick

The Art of Fiction by Lodge, David

Doing English (Doing... Series) by Robert Eaglestone

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY CRITICISM – these tasks are entirely optional

1. Read 'The Literary Merits of Potter' by Ryan Britt. Highlight and summarise the main elements of both sides of the argument presented. Furthermore, post a comment at the bottom of the webpage explaining your opinion of whether 'Harry Potter' should be considered as English Literature.

<http://www.tor.com/blogs/2011/06/genre-in-the-mainstream-the-literary-merits-of-potter>

2. Research and collate two separate pieces of literary criticism on your favourite novel.
3. Find at least one piece of literary criticism for each of the set texts for the course.