



St Joseph's College English Department

Preparation work for AQA A Level English Literature
Specification A, Paper 2 Option B: Modern Times (post 1945)

At A Level there is an expectation (and need!) that you read around and beyond the set texts on the curriculum, therefore your summer tasks are designed to develop your wider understanding of literature across time. This wider reading will also continue throughout your whole A level study.

Choose one or more tasks from the list below.

- 1) Read a Shakespearean tragedy (excluding Othello)
- 2) 19th century fiction (excluding Wuthering Heights) – likely to be available on Project Gutenberg online
Read a 19th century novel by an author you have not studied before. Make notes on characters, plot, settings and themes. Are there any links or similarities to other novels you have read?
- 3) The sonnet
Research the origins and history of the sonnet. Read 10 sonnets from across the last 5 centuries, and choose 3 which you feel best illustrate the genre. Produce a guide for other A level students including a commentary on your chosen 3 sonnets.
- 4) Drama and theatre
Watch a 'live' theatre performance and write a review of the play and of the production. Many theatre companies, including the Royal Shakespeare Company, The National Theatre, Hampstead Theatre and the Royal Court are streaming productions from their archives.
- 5) Literary Terms
Research the following key terms for considering literature and learn them.
 - Characterisation
 - Establishment
 - Ideology
 - Canon
 - Narrative, and narrative perspective
- 6) Wider Research
Spend a couple of hours exploring the British Library and its online collections of texts, films, articles and other resources at www.bl.uk – see where you end up when you go down the rabbit hole!
- 7) Poetry
Read a poem a week between now and September.



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Texts to purchase

ISBN numbers given are for editions of texts used for examinations. We recommend purchasing the same edition for your own study for ease of navigating texts in the exam.

Victorian novels

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte (set text) ISBN 9 780141 439556

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte (any edition)

Dracula by Bram Stoker (any edition)

Shakespeare

Othello by William Shakespeare (set text) ISBN 9 781107 615595

Texts in modern contexts

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood (set text) ISBN 9780099 740919

All My Sons by Arthur Miller (set text) ISBN 9 780141 189970

The Feminine Gospels by Carol Ann Duffy (set text) ISBN 9 780330 486446

Recommended study guides

York Notes – available for *Othello*, *Wuthering Heights*, *All My Sons*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Feminine Gospels*

Study and Revise for AS/A-level: AQA Anthology: love poetry through the ages by Luke McBratney, ISBN 978-1471853838

The Art of Poetry: AQA Love Poems Through the Ages, Post 1900 poems: Volume 5 by Neil Bowen et al, ISBN 0995467102

A Level guides (suggested)

The Art of Drama Vol 6 (Othello) – ISBN 1913577872

AQA AS and A Level English Literature A Student Book (2104) by McBratney and Onyatt – ISBN 0198336004

The Art of Writing English Literature Essays for A Level by Meally and Bowen – ISBN 099307782X

Mr Bruff's Guide to A Level English Literature by Andrew Bruff – ISBN 1520865317

Please note that set texts will be read in class with teachers in September and there is no requirement to read these in advance of the commencement of the course. Students who wish to prepare are advised that the wider reading tasks overleaf are more useful preparation for the course than becoming familiar with set texts at this point.