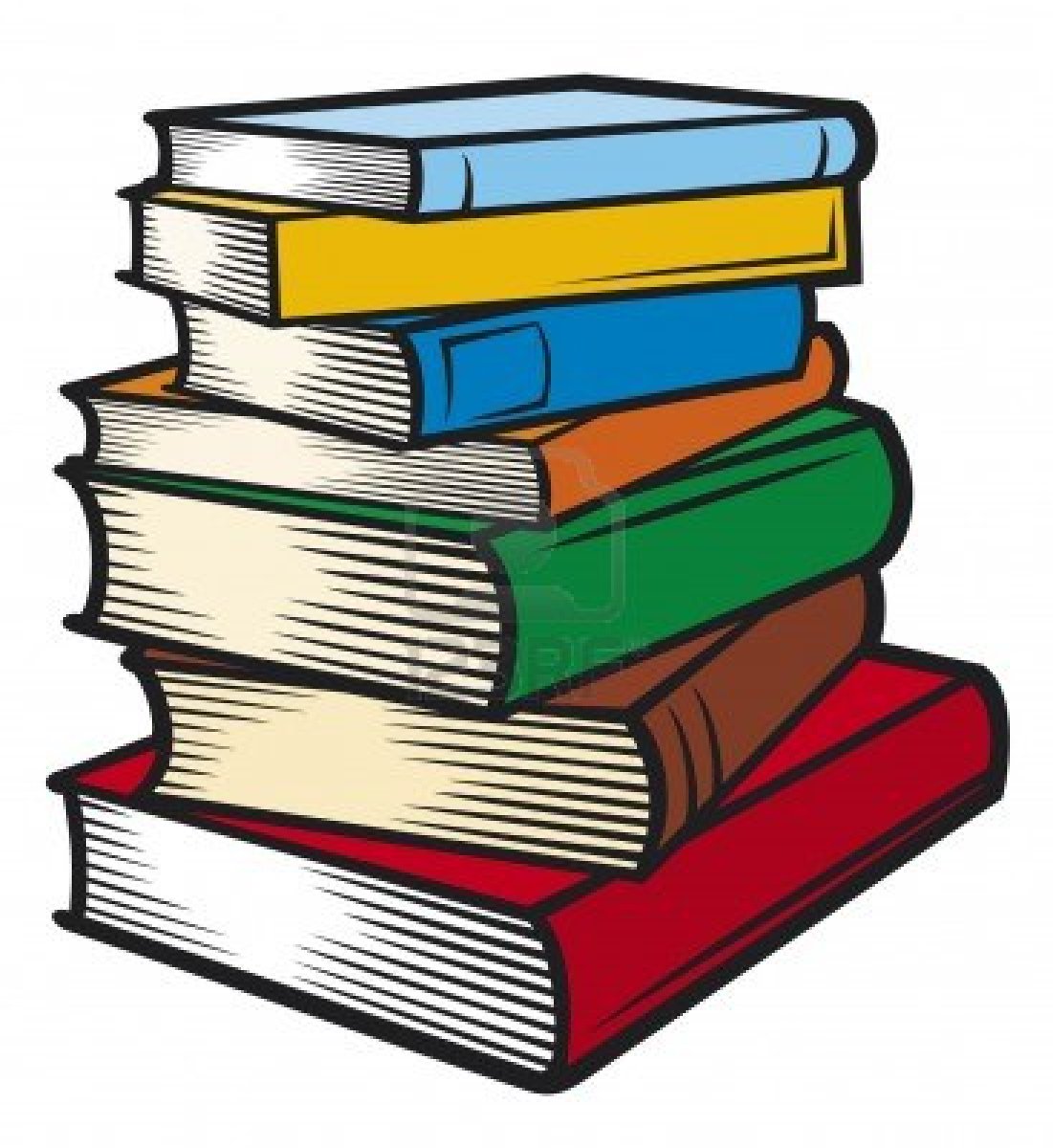
**A Level English Literature**

*Get ready for Literature…*

**

**Welcome to A Level Literature - you have chosen an excellent A Level!**

Why is there such a gap between GCSEs and A-levels? Well, A-levels are – as their name suggests – advanced qualifications, and so require much more of you as the student. They 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.

Dr Ellerby, head of history at Dorset's Parkstone grammar, says: *"GCSE is often highly structured with very specific requirements for homework, whereas at A- level there is a greater expectation for taking the initiative in going beyond the set reading and utilising the library to read around and consolidate."* Roughly speaking, for GCSE exams you can just learn the content. At A-level you actually need to **understand** it.

The internet is a great source for reading other people’s interpretations of text – use these to formulate your own response – Remember the beauty of Literature is that there is never a right or wrong answer as long as you can justify your point of view!

Get into the habit of using your time effectively, and organise yourself so you know when you have deadlines and when you're going to do your work, then A-levels will seem much easier and less of a jump than expected. Particularly during the pressure points when you have non-examined assessment or exams, being organised and motivated from the start will ensure that you're really prepared, and not too stressed.

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Description automatically generatedAt any point during A-levels, if you're finding it hard, or are struggling with the workload, then it's always worth seeking advice and support. Your form tutor, subject teachers, and head of sixth form are a good place to start, and the earlier you talk to someone about any difficulties that you're having, the sooner they can be resolved.

This pack is designed to get you thinking as an A level student – the activities will enable you to think as a critical reader and share your thoughts with others in your class. Well done for making a great choice of A level!

**The 2 The specification overview**

**2a. Overview of A Level in English Literature (H472)**

Learners must complete all components (01, 02 and 03) to be awarded the A Level in English Literature.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Overview** | **Assessment Overview** | **Assessment Overview** |
| Component 01  \* Shakespeare  \* Drama and poetry pre-1900 | Drama and poetry pre-1900  (01)\*  Written paper  60 marks  closed text  2 hours 30 minutes | 40%  of total A level |
| Component 02  \* Close reading in chosen topic area  \* Comparative and contextual study from chosen topic area | Comparative and  contextual study  (02)\*  Written paper  60 marks  closed text  2 hours 30 minutes | 40%  of total A level |
| Component 03  \* close reading OR re-creative writing piece with commentary  \* Comparative essay\* | Literature post-1900  (03)\*  40 marks  non examined assessment | 20%  of total A level |

\* indicates synoptic assessment.

Learners who are retaking the qualifications may carry forward their result for the non exam assessment component.

**2c. Content of Drama and poetry pre-1900 (component 01)**

Shakespeare which will be assessed in Section 1 of this component. In addition, learners are required to study **one** pre-1900 drama text and **one** pre-1900 poetry text which will both be assessed in Section 2. For Section 1, the Shakespeare plays have been chosen carefully to ensure a varied selection for both teachers and learners. This section requires learners to demonstrate their detailed knowledge and understanding of their chosen play. For Section 2, the texts have been chosen carefully so that they illuminate one another and so that learners are able to establish connections between their chosen texts from the genres of drama and poetry. Learners are expected to demonstrate their appreciation of the significance of cultural and contextual influences on the writers, readers and/or audiences and be able to explore relationships between their chosen texts. This section requires learners to read texts in a variety of ways and respond critically and creatively.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Drama and poetry pre-1900** | | |
| **Section 1 set texts:**  **Shakespeare** | **Knowledge, skills and understanding** | **Learners should be able to:** |
| |  | | --- | | Learners study **one** Shakespeare play:  *\* Coriolanus*  ***\* Hamlet***  *\* Measure for Measure*  *\* Richard III*  *\* The Tempest*  *\* Twelfth Night* | | Learners are required to analyse the text in close detail, exploring Shakespeare’s use of language and dramatic effects.  Learners are required to consider issues raised in a specific extract in relation to their understanding of the play as a whole.  Learners are required to explore ways in which the chosen play is/has been interpreted by different audiences, including over time. | \* analyse ways in which Shakespeare shapes meanings in the chosen play including the function and effects of structure, form and language  \* articulate informed, personal and creative responses to the chosen Shakespeare play, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression  \* explore the play informed by different interpretations    \* consider different interpretations across time. |

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| **Section 2 set texts:**  **Drama and poetry pre-1900** | **Knowledge, skills and understanding** | **Learners should be able to:** |
| Learners study **one** pre-1900 drama text:  \*Christopher Marlowe: *Edward II*  \*John Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*  \*Oliver Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*  \*Henrik Ibsen: *A Doll’s House*  **\*Oscar Wilde: *An Ideal Husband***  Learners study **one** pre-1900 poetry text:  \*Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Merchant’s Prologue and Tale*  \*John Milton: *Paradise Lost Books 9 & 10*  \*Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *Selected Poems\**  \*Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *Maud*  **\*Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems\**** | Learners are required to explore contrasts, connections and comparisons between their chosen literary texts.  Learners are required to explore ways in which texts relate to each other and to literary traditions, movements and genres.  Learners are required to understand the significance of cultural and contextual influences on readers and writers.  Learners are required to identify and consider how attitudes and values are expressed in their chosen texts. | \*demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of contexts in which the chosen texts were written and received  \*explore connections across the texts  \*articulate informed, personal and creative responses to the chosen texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression  \*explore the texts informed by different interpretations. |

**2c. Content of Comparative and contextual study (component 02)**

There is a choice of five topics as follows:

\* American Literature 1880–1940

**\* The Gothic**

\* Dystopia

\* Women in Literature

\* The Immigrant Experience.

Learners choose **one** topic and study at least **two whole texts** in their chosen topic area, at least **one** of which must be from the core set text list. For the second text, learners may choose to study the other core set text (listed in the table below) **or** they may choose another text, from the same topic area, from the list of suggested set texts. Please see Appendix 5e for the complete list of core and suggested set texts for this component. Centres should design a balanced course for learners, avoiding overlap between topics chosen for Comparative and contextual study and for the non examined assessment component.

|  |  |  |
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| **Comparative and contextual study** | | |
| **Topics:**  **Close Reading** | **Knowledge, skills and understanding** | **Learners should be able to:** |
| |  | | --- | | Learners choose one topic:  \* American Literature 1880–1940  **\* The Gothic**  \* Dystopia  \* Women in Literature  \* The Immigrant Experience | | Learners are required to read widely and independently in their chosen topic of study.  Learners are required to demonstrate close reading skills in analysing unseen prose extracts.  Learners are required to identify and consider how attitudes and values are expressed in unseen extracts.  Learners are required to communicate fluently, accurately and effectively their knowledge, understanding and judgement of unseen extracts. | \* analyse ways in which writers shape meanings  \* demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of contexts in which literary texts are written and received  \* articulate informed, personal and creative responses using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression. |

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| **Topics and set texts:**  **Comparative essay** | **Knowledge, skills and understanding** | **Learners should be able to:** |
| Learners study **two whole texts**, at least one must be from the list below:  American Literature 1880–1940  \* F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*  \* John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*  **The Gothic**  **\* Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories***  **\* Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein***  Dystopia  \* Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid’s Tale*  \*George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*  Women in Literature  \*Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*  \*Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*  The Immigrant Experience  \*Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*  \*Henry Roth: *Call It Sleep* | Learners are required to explore contrasts, connections and comparisons between different literary texts within the context of a specific topic area.  Learners are required to explore ways in which texts relate to one another and to literary traditions, movements and genres.  Learners are required to explore ways in which texts are interpreted by different readers, including over time.  Learners are required to use literary critical concepts and terminology with understanding and discrimination. | \* demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of contexts in which the chosen texts were written and received  \* explore connections across the texts  \*articulate informed, personal and creative responses to the chosen texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression  \* explore the texts informed by different interpretations. |

**2d. Content of Comparative and contextual study (component 03)**

**Content of Literature post-1900**

The aim of this internally assessed component is to encourage individual study, interest and enjoyment of modern literature and for learners to develop:

\* an appreciation of how writers shape meanings in texts through use of language, imagery, form and structure

\* an understanding of texts informed by an appreciation of different interpretations

\* an ability to explore connections across texts, such as stylistic, thematic or contextual.

The texts and task titles for component 03, Literature post-1900, should be chosen by the learner in discussion with their teacher but all texts and task titles must be checked by OCR. Centres **must** use the *Text(s) and Task(s) Proposal Form* to submit all chosen texts and task titles to OCR for approval. You can access the *Text(s) and Task(s) Proposal Form* through the OCR website (see also Appendix 5g). Centres must submit their *Text(s) and Task(s) Proposal Form* every series even if the texts and/ or task titles have been approved previously. There is no restriction on the number of learners choosing the same texts and/or task title. However, this non examined assessment component should be seen as an opportunity for learners to develop their independent skills of reading and research. It is therefore advisable to create opportunities for learners to exercise some choice of texts and/or task titles for study.

OCR will approve that the texts chosen meet the criteria for this component which state that:

\* learners are required to study three literary texts (one text for Task 1 and two texts for Task 2)

\* the three texts must include one prose text, one poetry text and one drama text

\* the texts must have been first published or performed in 1900 or later

\* at least one of these texts must have been first published or performed in 2000 or later.

In addition, OCR will confirm to the centres that appropriate task titles have been chosen for Tasks 1 and 2. It is the centre’s responsibility to ensure that the texts and task title combinations **for all learners** are acknowledged in the *Text(s) and Task(s) Proposal Form*. OCR consultants may contact centres requesting further information in order to be able to confirm the appropriateness of the text(s) and/or task title(s). Centres are advised to wait until they have received confirmation from OCR that the chosen texts and/or task titles are suitable before learners begin working on the tasks. More information about the deadlines for submitting the form and expected turnaround times can be found in the OCR *Admin Guide and Entry Codes: 14–19 Qualifications*, which can be downloaded from the OCR website: [**www.ocr.org.uk**](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

Currently, we have chosen *The Mermaid of Black Conch* by Monique Roffey and the National Theatre production of *Small Island* based on the novel by Andrea Levy as texts for the comparative essay, and *The World’s Wife* by Carol Ann Duffy for the close reading text.

There will also be an opportunity to choose your own texts for this unit, with teacher advice.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Literature post-1900 requirements** | | |
| **Task** | **Knowledge, skills and understanding** | **Learners should be able to:** |
| |  | | --- | | Close reading **OR** Re-creative writing with commentary.  Both of these tasks must be based on **one** literary text. | | Learners are required to demonstrate close reading skills.  Learners are required to identify and consider how attitudes and values are expressed in the chosen text.  Learners are required to communicate fluently, accurately and effectively their knowledge, understanding and judgement of the chosen text. | \* analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in the chosen literary text  \* articulate informed, personal and creative responses to the chosen literary text, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent accurate written expression. |
| Comparative essay  This task must be based on **two** literary texts. | Learners are required to explore the contexts of the texts they are reading and others’ interpretations of them.  Learners are required to explore connections across the texts.  Learners are required to identify and consider how values are expressed in texts.  Learners are required to draw on their understanding of different interpretations in responding to and evaluating the chosen texts.  Learners are required to communicate fluently, accurately and effectively their knowledge, understanding and judgement of texts. | \* articulate informed, personal and creative responses to the chosen literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression  \* analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in the chosen literary texts  \* demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which the chosen literary texts are written and received  \* explore connections across the chosen literary texts  \* explore the chosen literary texts informed by different interpretations. |

**Tips**

* Twitter - follow writers and academics who blog about literature
* 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 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 and make notes on it which you can then print
* Download the audio book of the text – Listen and read at the same time
* Get an understanding of what Marxism, feminism etc. are and how they help our understanding of literature
* Historical reading of specific periods in history – Victorian period, Renaissance, Romantic period etc.
* 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-ed-lessons-on-grammar-and-word-choice/>

|  |
| --- |
| “There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them.” - *Ray Bradbury* |

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**You’re off to great places!**

**Today is your day!**

**Your mountain  
is waiting,**

**So… get on   
your way!** *Dr Seuss*

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A visit to the British Library is a great experience – you can tour the beautiful grounds and architecture or explore the extensive range of resources. It is the second largest library in the world. The British Library home to the Sir John Ritblat Gallery: Treasures of the British Library, where some of the most significant world treasures can be seen for free, including: Magna Carta, Shakespeare’s First Folio, Lewis Carroll’s manuscripts of Alice’s Adventures Under Ground, Beatles lyrics handwritten by John Lennon, and drawings on pages from Leonardo’s Da Vinci’s Notebook. The best part is that is free!

<http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/quickinfo/facts/> <http://www.bl.uk/whats-on>

**Watching your favourite texts come alive in front of   
your eyes beats no other experience. The characters,   
the interpretations…**

**The Globe Theatre – London**

This replica of the Shakespeare's 16th century theatre, reconstructed just 200 yards from its original site, is the brainchild of American actor and director Sam Wanamaker. Built in wood and thatch, using techniques from 400 years ago, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre opened in 1996. Although it is not an exact replica, it is close, and plays are performed in the open-air, rain or shine. The thrust stage, and the fact that cheap standing tickets are available for every performance, create a raucous relationship between actor and audience that makes it unlike any other London Theatre. Visitors can also tour the theatre and spend time at the adjacent Shakespeare's Globe Exhibition and in January 2013 the Globe expanded to include an indoor candlelit Jacobean theatre, the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, next door.

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/theatre/whats-on>

**Royal Shakespeare Company**

Stratford-upon-Avon is a beautiful town and is full of a rich history and is the 16th century birthplace of Shakespeare. You can explore the history behind Shakespeare’s writing then go and watch a performance of one of his plays.

Definitely worth a visit and would really enhance your study and appreciation of the Great Bard!

<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/home.html> <https://www.rsc.org.uk/whats-on/?from=mdd>

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**Useful Websites**

[www.universalteacher.org.uk](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.victorianweb.org)

This site contains very detailed and advanced material – mostly resource-based – on writers from the 19thand 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 – Ask your teacher for the username and password as we have a subscription!

**English Literature Summer Preparatory work**

**Component 1 – Drama and poetry pre-1900**

Preparatory work:

**Section A: William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet***

**Must:**

* **Buy and read** the Heinemann Advanced Shakespeare: Hamlet. ISBN: **9780435193102**
* **Buy** the Norton Critical edition 1818 edition of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
* **Buy** the Vintage edition of *The Bloody Chamber* by Angela Carter
* **Complete the summer task on the next page.**

**Should:**

\* Watch a film version of ‘Hamlet’. Either the David Tennant Royal Shakespeare Company or the Laurence Olivier film would be great introductions to this play.

\*Read *Frankenstein* and write summaries for each chapter.

**Challenge:**

\* Read *The Bloody Chamber* by Angela Carter and any of the other texts on the suggested reading list. Make sure that you keep notes of these.

\* Buy and read Ben Crystal’s Springboard Shakespeare: Hamlet.

**Section B: Oscar Wilde and Christina Rossetti**

**Must:**

* **Buy and read** the Oxford World Classics edition of *An Ideal Husband* by Oscar Wilde.

**Should:**

\* Watch the 1999 film version of ‘An Ideal Husband’ starring Cate Blanchett and Rupert Everett

**Challenge:**

\* Read the Selected Poems of Christina Rossetti

**Summer Tasks**

**Section A: *Hamlet***

* Read the play and write a summary paragraph for each act. (This must be in your own words: it cannot be from Sparknotes!)
* Read the openings to the 4 tragedies below and then write a response to the following question:

**To what extent do you agree that the opening of Hamlet is typical of Shakespearean tragedies?**

This should be:

* 1 side of A4
* Typed
* Size 12 Arial or Calibri
* Double-spaced
* You must type your name in the top left hand corner

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**Suggested reading list for *Hamlet*:**

Read the articles and make notes and refer to these in class discussions. Try to make connections between ideas expressed in the articles and the scenes that you are studying.

**Activity 1:** *‘Hamlet* and Revenge’ by Kiernan Ryan

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/hamlet-and-revenge>

Read the article, write a summary of the key ideas.

**Activity 2:** *‘Hamlet:* the play within the play’by Gillian Woods

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/hamlet-the-play-within-the-play>

Read the article, write a summary of the key ideas.

**Activity 3:** ‘*Hamlet:* Looking Backwards’ by Emma Smith

[*https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/hamlet-looking-backwards*](https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/hamlet-looking-backwards)

Read the article, write a summary of the key ideas.

**Activity 4:** *‘*Ophelia, gender and madness’ by Elaine Showalter

[*https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/ophelia-gender-and-madness*](https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/ophelia-gender-and-madness)

Read the article, write a summary of the key ideas.

**Activity 5: ‘**Ghosts in Shakespeare’by John Mullan

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/ghosts-in-shakespeare>

Read the article, write a summary of the key ideas.

**Activity 6: ‘**Women playing Shakespeare: The first female Desdemona and beyond’ by Hannah Manktelow

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/women-playing-shakespeare-the-first-female-desdemona-and-beyond>

Read the article, write a summary of the key ideas.

**Activity 7:** ‘Shakespeare and gender: ‘the woman’s part’ by Clare McManus

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/shakespeare-and-gender-the-womans-part>

Read the article, write a summary of the key ideas.

**Suggested Reading list: for Oscar Wilde and Christina Rossetti**

The poetry of Christina Rossetti and An Ideal Husband by Oscar Wilde - wider reading for AO3 and AO5

**Christina Rossetti**

**Core text: Selected Poems of Rossetti (Wordsworth Poetry)**

Prepare each poem before the lesson. Read, annotate and research critical responses to the poems:

1. From the Antique (‘It’s a weary life, it is, she said’)
2. Goblin Market
3. Song: When I am dead, my dearest
4. Remember
5. Echo
6. Shut Out
7. In the Round Tower at Jhansi (Indian Mutiny)
8. A Birthday
9. Soeur Louise de la Miséricorde
10. Maude Clare
11. Up-Hill
12. No, Thank You, John
13. Good Friday (Am I a stone and not a sheep?)
14. Twice
15. Winter: My Secret

**Rossetti wider reading: emag and British Library articles**

1. Introduction to the ‘Selected Poems of Christina Rossetti’ (Wordsworth edition)
2. Christina Rossetti’s ‘Winter: My Secret’ Online Magazine Article - emag
3. Suzanne Williams asks whether 'Winter: My Secret' is the key to Rossetti's poetic vocation
4. In The Round Tower at Jhansi - a Postcolonial Reading
5. Aestheticism – A Rough Guide
6. Female voices in Christina Rossetti’s narrative poems
7. Forbidden fruits - sex and religion in ‘Goblin Market’
8. An important voice - reading Christina Rossetti
9. Desperate Romantics: modernising the classic mini-series (this is a fun read!)
10. Victorian poetry - a whistle stop tour: "If you’re studying a well known Victorian poet, it’s useful to pay attention to the other things that were going on in poetry at the time. John Sutherland gives an overview of the literary trends and tastes of the period.... "
11. Christina Rossetti - Proto feminist poet?
12. Christina Rossetti - Painting in Words (influence of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood)
13. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jun/25/poem-week-goblin-market-rossetti>
14. Christina Rossetti: Gender and Power by Simon Avery (British Library)
15. Christina Rossetti: Religious poetry by Simon Avery (British Library)
16. Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the Woman Question by Simon Avery (British Library)

**Oscar Wilde:**

**Core text: The Importance of being Earnest and other plays (Oxford World Classics) - An Ideal Husband**

**Students are advised to read at least one other play by Wilde**

**Wilde wider reading: emag and British Library articles**

#### Introduction to ‘The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays’ by Oscar Wilde (Oxford English Drama edition)

#### Wilde - A Woman of No Importance - emag

#### How Subversive is The Importance of Being Earnest? - emag

#### Class Divisions - Victorian Fiction From Dickens to Wilde - emag

#### The Pre-Raphaelites by Dinah Roe (British Library)

# Daughters of decadence: the New Woman in the Victorian fin de siècle by [Greg Buzwell](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/daughters-of-decadence-the-new-woman-in-the-victorian-fin-de-siecle#authorBlock1) *(British Library)*

# Theatre in the 19th century by  [Jacky Bratton](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/19th-century-theatre#authorBlock1) *(British Library)*

# Aestheticism and decadence by [Carolyn Burdett](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/aestheticism-and-decadence#authorBlock1) *(British Library)*

# Victorian sexualities by [Holly Furneaux](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/victorian-sexualities#authorBlock1) *(British Library)*

# Further Reading

# The Angel in the House by Coventry Patmore

# The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination by Gilbert and Gubar

# Oscar Wilde by John Sloan (biography)

# Wilde's Women: How Oscar Wilde was shaped by the women he knew by Eleanor Fitzsimmons

# Podcast episodes: In Our Time (Christina Rossetti; Oscar Wilde); The Rest Is History (The Trials of Oscar Wilde – Two episodes)

# Recommended viewing

# The Importance of Being Earnest - film version 1999

# An Ideal Husband - film version 2003

**These lists are NOT exhaustive nor are they prescriptive; your research will uncover other interesting books and articles addressing contexts (AO3) and interpretations (AO5) of the texts.**

**Suggested reading list for Gothic Literature:**

1. **Social and historical background to Gothic Literature:**

* ​Gothic Literature- Sue Chaplin (texts, contexts, connections, York Notes)- an excellent starting point for an overview of Gothic Literature.
* **Challenge:** Gothic- Fred Botting ( The New Critical Idiom)- a more detailed and  conceptual overview of Gothic Literature.

**2. Try reading some of the other set texts:**

* William Beckford: Vathek
* Ann Radcliffe: The Italian
* Bram Stoker: Dracula
* Oscar Wilde: The Picture of Dorian Gray
* William Faulkner: Light in August
* Cormac McCarthy: Outer Dark
* Iain Banks: The Wasp Factory
* Toni Morrison: Beloved

**Or try some shorter gothic fiction:**

* Edgar Allen Poe: Short Stories ( American Gothic short stories)
* Henry James -Short Stories.( Try The Turn of the Screw.)
* Jane Austen: Northanger Abbey ( a parody of Gothic)
* M.R James -Short stories
* Arthur Conan Doyle: The Adventure of the Speckled Band
* Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Yellow Wallpaper
* ​H.P Lovecraft: The Outsider

**Films: Immerse yourself in gothic film:**

* Frankenstein (1922 James Whale version)
* Dracula (Bella Lugosi version)
* Rebecca (Alfred Hitchcock)
* Interview with a Vampire
* Night of the Hunter ( Charles Laughton)
* Wuthering Heights ( Lawrence Olivier)
* Great Expectations

**A/A\* Research Activities**

**Thinking Conceptually**

**Activities 1 to 5**

The following activities will require you to access the British Library’s ‘*Romantics and Victorians’* website which can be found at:

http:/www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles

Read the articles and make notes and refer to these in class discussions. Try to make connections between ideas expressed in the articles and the set texts you are studying.

Following the link above, you will find (amongst others) the following articles:

**Activity 1:** *‘Gothic Motifs’* by Professor John Bowen

Read the article, watch video clips, make notes.

**Activity 2:** *‘Mary Shelley, Frankenstein and the Villa Diadoti’* by Greg Buzwell

Read the article, watch video clips, make notes.

**Activity 3:** *‘The Picture of Dorian Gray: art, aesthetics and the artist’* by Greg Buzwell

Read the article, watch video clips, make notes.

**Activity 4:** *‘Dracula: vampires, perversity and Victorian anxieties’* by Greg Buzwell

Read the article, watch video clips, make notes.

**Activity 5: ‘***Aestheticism and decadence’* by Carolyn Burdett

Read the article, watch video clips, make notes.

**A/A\* Research – the intellectual and philosophical contexts of Gothic**

The period in the history of western thought and culture that stretches roughly from the mid-seventeenth to the eighteenth century is known as the Enlightenment. This period is characterised by revolution in science, philosophy, society and politics; these revolutions replaced the medieval world-view based on religion and superstition with modern systems based on ‘reason’.

**Research the Enlightenment**

In what ways are ‘Enlightenment’ ways of thinking relevant to the texts you are studying?

1. Find out about Edmund Burke’s *‘Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful’* (1756). You should be able to find a summary of the ideas that Burke presents in this essay on the internet.

**In what ways is the idea of the sublime, and the responses it generates, related to the Gothic?**

1. The 20th century psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud developed the concept of the unconscious mind. Freud’s research and writing revolutionised the ways in which we have come to regard human nature, dreams, anxiety and sexuality. Research Freud and make notes.

**How might Freud’s ideas about hysteria and repression relate to the interpretation of Gothic texts?**

1. The Gothic has been adopted by feminists as a means of generating discussion about gender and the ways in which women are often represented in literature as creatures who are confined, imprisoned and trapped. Dramatisations of imprisonment pervade Gothic narratives. Research the Feminist Gothic.

**What insights does this school of criticism provide into the texts you are studying?**

1. The Gothic at its inception might have been thought of as a conservative genre in that, even though its narratives involved the demonisation of particular aristocratic villains, it did not criticise the social systems that legitimised the existence of an aristocracy. Think about the texts set for this topic.

**What would you say that the Gothic, as it develops through time, retains its early political conservatism?**