



AQA A-Level English Literature

PREPARATION BOOKLET

STUDENT NAME:

Section 1: What you can do between now and September

Welcome

Studying English Literature at A Level is challenging – but immensely rewarding:

- It broadens exponentially your imaginative and sympathetic horizons
- It builds your resilience by equipping you to grapple with the complexity of the real world
- It marks you out to employers as diligent, broad-minded and resourceful
- It trains you to analyse in depth, seeing far past mere surface meaning
- It provides core training for the study of any arts or science subject at university.

This booklet will help you use the time available to you between now and September to prepare fully for the course.

What's in the booklet

In Section 2 there is an overview of the course. This includes the names of the set texts we study, which you could read if you want to.

In Section 3 there is a list of tasks to keep you sharp! Tackling these tasks with gusto will enable you to prepare for the rigours of the course.

Push yourself

By far the best preparation for the course is to read and write as often and for as long as possible.

The more you read, the faster you will develop as a thinker and as a student of literature.

The more you write, the more you will surprise yourself at what you can accomplish with words. Remember, writing is not merely a way of transmitting information: it is an art.

If you have never tackled a work by a great author, why not do so now? The reading list in Appendix 2 might help you choose one – but in truth this is only a fraction of what is out there.

There is so much awaiting your discovery.

Good luck.

The English Department
Bourne Grammar School

Section 2: A Level English Literature Course Outline

Paper 1: Love through the ages

Study of three texts: one poetry and one prose text, of which one must be written pre-1900, and one Shakespeare play. Examination will include two unseen poems

Assessed

written exam: 3 hours
open book in Section C only
75 marks
40% of A-level

Questions

Section A: Shakespeare: one passage-based question on *The Winter's Tale* with linked essay (25 marks)
Section B: Unseen poetry: compulsory essay question on two unseen poems (25 marks)
Section C: Comparing texts: one essay question linking *The Great Gatsby* with two poems from the pre-1900 anthology (25 marks)

Paper 2: Texts in shared contexts

Study of three texts: one prose (*A Long Long Way* by Sebastian Barry), one poetry anthology (*Up the Line to Death*, ed Brian Gardner), and one drama (*Journey's End*, by R.C. Sherriff).

The examination will include an unseen prose extract.

Assessed

written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
open book
75 marks
40% of A-level

Questions

Section A: Set texts. One essay question on set text (25 marks)
Section B: Contextual linking
one compulsory question on an unseen extract (25 marks)
one essay question linking two texts (25 marks)

Non-exam assessment: Independent critical study: texts across time

Comparative critical study of two texts, at least one of which must have been written pre-1900
One extended essay (2500 words) and a bibliography

Assessed

50 marks
20% of A-level
assessed by teachers
moderated by AQA

Section 3: Tasks to keep you sharp

1	<p>Task: Practise your non-fiction analysis</p> <p>Resource: https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/373395-unseen-20th-and-21st-century-literary-texts.pdf</p> <p>What to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read and enjoy these fiction extracts.2. Pick one that captures your imagination.3. Create a short piece of analytical writing exploring how and why the writer has, in your view, successfully addressed the theme under which they have been categorised. (E.g. 'How does Julie Myerson explore the theme of memory in <i>Home</i>?)4. Alongside this, read <i>Literary Ninja Guide to Structure in Prose Fiction</i> (in Open Drive / English / YEAR 12 LITERATURE / How to Be A Literary Ninja). See how many of the features identified in this document appear in the extract you have chosen and incorporate the names of those features into your writing.5. Repeat.
2	<p>Task: Compare Shakespeare's verse with modern poetry inspired by him.</p> <p>Resource: Appendix 1: Poems inspired by Shakespeare's sonnets</p> <p>What to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have a look at these pairs of poems. In each pair there is a sonnet by Shakespeare and another by a modern poet who has been inspired by it.2. Pick the pair that best captures your imagination.3. Create a short piece of analytical writing exploring the similarities and differences between the two poems, suggesting possible reasons why these differences might exist.4. Alongside this, read the 'Literary Ninja Poetry Analysis Guide' (in Open Drive / English / YEAR 12 LITERATURE / How to Be A Literary Ninja). See how many of the features identified in this document appear in the poems you have chosen and incorporate the names of those features into your writing.
3	<p>Task: Read!</p> <p>Resource: Appendix 2: Prose Fiction Reading List or... whatever you can find!</p> <p>What to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Track down a hard copy or digital copy of any of the texts on the Prose Fiction Reading List. (If you are unable to do this, see if you can find other works by the authors listed there, or any other <i>literary</i> fiction you can access.)2. Read and enjoy!

3. Keep a log of what you read and record what you like, don't like, and what you have learnt as a result of reading the book (about the author, the world of the novel, the subject matter... even about your own self).

Appendix 1: Poems inspired by Shakespeare's sonnets

<p>Sonnet 22 By William Shakespeare</p>	<p>Inspired by Sonnet 22 By Wendy Cope</p>
<p><i>My glass shall not persuade me I am old, So long as youth and thou are of one date; But when in thee time's furrows I behold, Then look I death my days should expiate. For all that beauty that doth cover thee, Is but the seemly raiment of my heart, Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me: How can I then be elder than thou art? O! therefore, love, be of thyself so wary As I, not for myself, but for thee will; Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary As tender nurse her babe from faring ill. Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain, Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.</i></p>	<p>My glass can't quite persuade me I am old – In that respect my ageing eyes are kind – But when I see a photograph, I'm told The dismal truth: I've left my youth behind. And when I try to get up from a chair My knees remind me they are past their best. The burden they have carried everywhere Is heavier now. No wonder they protest. Arthritic fingers, problematic neck, Sometimes causing mild to moderate pain, Could well persuade me I'm an ancient wreck But here's what helps me to feel young again: My love, who fell for me so long ago, Still loves me just as much, and tells me so.</p>
<p>Sonnet 38 By William Shakespeare</p>	<p>After Sonnet 38 By Nick Laird</p>
<p><i>How can my muse want subject to invent, While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse Thine own sweet argument, too excellent For every vulgar paper to rehearse? O! give thy self the thanks, if aught in me Worthy perusal stand against thy sight; For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee, When thou thy self dost give invention light? Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth Than those old nine which rhymers invoke;</i></p>	<p>Love, if I call them in from the darkness, the sonneteers, our fabulous liars, and get them to sit at these rows of desks, distribute goose quills, rolls of papyrus or vellum sheets, or slates, or MacBook Airs, disable the wifi and monitor lighting, the background sounds and temperatures, divert the Polish cleaner and offer bottomless coffee or a few wee nips, then set each brother at the other's throat</p>

<p><i>And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth Eternal numbers to outlive long date. If my slight muse do please these curious days, The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.</i></p>	<p>with talk of posterity, the odd gift of hard cash, and stand at the back to wait – for as long as they want – for years and years – they could not start to get down half your ways.</p>
<p>Sonnet 43 By William Shakespeare</p>	<p>The Trick (inspired by Sonnet 43) By Imtiaz Dharker</p>
<p><i>When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see, For all the day they view things unrespected; But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee, And darkly bright, are bright in dark directed. Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright, How would thy shadow's form form happy show To the clear day with thy much clearer light, When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so! How would, I say, mine eyes be blessed made By looking on thee in the living day, When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay! All days are nights to see till I see thee, And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.</i></p>	<p>In a wasted time, it's only when I sleep that all my senses come awake. In the wake of you, let day not break. Let me keep the scent, the weight, the bright of you, take the countless hours and count them all night through till that time comes when you come to the door of dreams, carrying oranges that cast a glow up into your face. Greedy for more than the gift of seeing you, I lean in to taste the colour, kiss it off your offered mouth. For this, for this, I fall asleep in haste, willing to fall for the trick that tells the truth that even your shade makes darkest absence bright, that shadows live wherever there is light.</p>

Appendix 2: Prose Fiction Reading List

Chinua Achebe	Things Fall Apart
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Purple Hibiscus, Americanah
Monica Ali	Brick Lane
Margaret Atwood	The Handmaid's Tale, Oryx and Crake, The Blind Assassin
Jane Austen	Pride and Prejudice, Emma, Sense and Sensibility
James Baldwin	Giovanni's Room
Charlotte Brontë	Jane Eyre
Emily Brontë	Wuthering Heights
AS Byatt	Possession
J. L. Carr	A Month in the Country
Angela Carter	The Bloody Chamber, Nights at the Circus,
Joseph Conrad	The Secret Agent, The Heart of Darkness
Charles Dickens	Great Expectations, Hard Times, Bleak House, Little Dorrit
Daphne Du Maurier	Rebecca
George Eliot	The Mill on The Floss, Middlemarch
Sebastian Faulks	Birdsong, Charlotte Gray
F. Scott Fitzgerald	Tender is the Night
E.M. Forster	A Room with a View, A Passage to India
Elizabeth Gaskell	North and South, Wives and Daughters
Gabriel Garcia Marquez	Love in the Time of Cholera
Graham Greene	Brighton Rock
Thomas Hardy	Far from the Madding Crowd, Tess of the D'Urbervilles
L.P. Hartley	The Go-Between
Ernest Hemingway	For Whom the Bell Tolls, A Farewell to Arms
Khaled Hosseini	A Thousand Splendid Suns
Aldous Huxley	Brave New World

Kazuo Ishiguro	The Remains of the Day, Never Let Me Go
James Joyce	Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Dubliners
Jhumpa Lahiri	The Namesake
D.H Lawrence	Sons and Lovers, Women in Love
Harper Lee	To Kill a Mockingbird
Andrea Levy	Small Island
Hilary Mantel	Wolf Hall, Bring Out the Bodies, The Mirror and the Light
Ian McEwan	Atonement, Enduring Love
Toni Morrison	Beloved
Iris Murdoch	The Bell, The Sea, the Sea
George Orwell	Nineteen Eighty-Four
Arundhati Roy	The God of Small Things
Sylvia Plath	The Bell Jar
Jean Rhys	Wide Sargasso Sea
John Steinbeck	The Grapes of Wrath, East of Eden, Of Mice and Men
Bram Stoker	Dracula
Alice Walker	The Colour Purple
Sarah Waters	The Little Stranger
Jeanette Winterson	Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit
Zadie Smith	White Teeth, NW, On Beauty
Virginia Woolf	Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse