

Preparing for A Level English Literature 2018-19

OCR English Literature A Level

Congratulations on choosing this subject. You have chosen an A Level that will introduce you to some of the most beautiful, brilliant and powerful words ever put onto paper.

Summer Reading

Spend the summer reading. Depending on which teachers teach you, you'll be working within one of our set department topics. This gives you at least three texts to start reading this summer shown in bold below.

You may end up reading a text that your Y12 Literature group does not end up studying. Until we finalise the groups we can't tell you your topic in advance. Instead we're guiding you towards reading widely to have as broad an experience of literature as possible to prepare you for degree study in this subject.

At the moment, we have an even split between department members teaching either the American Literature or the Women in Literature topics. This may alter come September. The texts shown in bold are the key texts to be reading this summer.

Women in Literature:

'The Bell Jar' by Plath

'Mrs Dalloway' by Woolf

'Sense and Sensibility' by Austen

Dystopian Literature:

'The Handmaid's Tale' by Atwood

'1984' by Orwell

'A Clockwork Orange' by Burgess

American Literature:

'The Great Gatsby' by Fitzgerald

'The Grapes of Wrath' by Steinbeck

'The Age of Innocence' by Wharton

For Shakespeare we recommend watching any live performance available to you. You live in London. There are plenty of places to watch a Shakespeare play. Your 'Macbeth' study at GCSE may lead you

to seek out some of the stranger late plays like 'The Tempest' or 'The Winter's Tale' but earlier works like 'Hamlet' or 'Othello' are equally fascinating to see in performance. There are excellent film versions available of these plays. Start by reading a plot synopsis of each of our set exam plays shown below.

Until you know your Literature group, you won't know which play will be your set play. At the moment, these are the favoured options in the department for the set Shakespeare exam text:

- Richard III
- The Tempest
- Measure for Measure
- Twelfth Night

Do not overlook poetry, contemporary drama and short story collections. Poetry features in the coursework component of Y13 and is often forgotten by students embarking on A Level study. The favoured department options for poetry and plays in recent years are:

Poetry:

'The World's Wife' by Carol Ann Duffy

'Rapture' by Duffy

Plays:

'The History Boys' by Alan Bennett

'Translations' by Brian Friel

'Streetcar Named Desire' by Williams

Short story collections may also be a good idea for those of you seeking a different experience of literature and can be useful for preparing you for interviews for English at university. There are plenty of excellent collections out there. It might be worth reading short story collections related to the set topics: Women in literature, American fiction and/or dystopian literature. but any wider reading you undertake over the long vacation is worthwhile.

Enjoy the texts . We look forward to meeting you to start your first term of A Level English Literature in September.

