



UXBRIDGE
HIGH SCHOOL



Sixth Form Transition Pack

A Level English Literature

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What can I read to prepare for my A Level and throughout Year 12 to be top of the class?

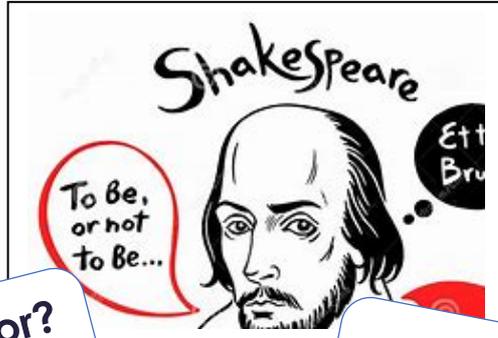
5 – Transition homework tasks

These are tasks you need to complete before beginning your A Level. They'll give you a taste of what it's like.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

What is English Literature all about?

In English literature, you'll study a range of literary forms. But what's **literature**?



What can I use Literature for?

English Literature is a highly respected A level. As well as an English Literature degree itself, students of Literature might go on to study for University degrees in a range of subjects including: History, Sociology, Psychology, Drama and Theatre Studies and Law. Even Medical Schools value the subject highly.

Studying literature

The study of English Literature at A Level **helps you to develop a number of subject-specific as well as transferable skills** by encouraging in-depth, critical and contextual thinking in response to a range of literary works. A level English Literature courses can develop all sorts of skills.

What skills will I use?

Reading, discussing and writing are key. You will be expected not just to read, but to develop the skill of thinking critically about what you read and of analysing texts to work out how the author's use of situation and language create powerful impressions. You will need to explore your own emotional response to writing and be able to discuss it, in class and through your own writing, and to argue constructively for your point of view.

What skills will I learn?

It is also very effective in developing transferrable skills such as interpretive abilities, communication, an understanding of how language works, close analysis, and the ability to construct a well-argued case. These are highly valued in a range of graduate careers such as Teaching, Business and Finance, Journalism, and Publishing.

A level English Literature studies how great writing enables the exploration of many of life's fundamental themes: love, loneliness, prejudice, bravery and perseverance to name but a few.

Skills you develop through the study of English Literature (effective written and verbal communication, time-management, organisational skills, team-work, independent study and research, developing persuasive arguments ...to name but a few), are marketable in a wide variety of professional areas.

What are the career opportunities?

What have some people gone on to do after studying English Literature?

- Journalism
- Law
- Copywriting
- Politics
- Psychology
- Information officer
- Drama
- The arts including writing and script writing
- Medicine
- PPC specialist (Internet advertising)
- Police and armed forces
- Publishing
- Social media manager
- Teaching
- Historian

Ezra Pound: "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree."



A level English Literature Specification

Official specification:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/english-literature-2015.html>

Course Overview

- Drama
- Prose
- Poetry
- Coursework
- Wider reading

Year 12 Subject Content	Year 13 Subject Content
Othello The Handmaid's Tale Frankenstein Poems of the Decade (12 poems) Rossetti poems (10 poems) Preparation for coursework	Complete coursework Poems of the Decade (8 poems) Rossetti (8 poems) Text revision Exam preparation

Paper 1 Drama; *Othello* by William Shakespeare and *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams 30%

Paper 2 Prose; comparing *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *A Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood 20%

Paper 3 Poetry; *Poems of the Decade* and *Rossetti Selected Poems* 30%

Non-examined Assessment (Coursework)

This counts for 20% of your final grade and consists of;

Non-examination assessment will be assessed via two texts. There are no prescribed texts but centres must select complete texts which may be drawn from poetry, drama, prose or literary non-fiction. Students must select different texts from those studied in Components 1, 2 and 3. The selected texts may be linked by theme, movement, author or period. Literary study of both texts should be enhanced by study of the links and connections between them, different interpretations and the contexts in which they were written and received. Advisory total word count is 2500–3000 words

	Hard Times Oliver Twist The Pickwick Papers
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor	Crime and Punishment
Faulks, Sebastian	Birdsong
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	The Great Gatsby
Garland, Alex	The Beach
Golding, William	Lord of the Flies
Hardy, Thomas	Tess of the D'Urbervilles Jude the Obscure
Heller, Joseph	Catch 22
Hornby, Nick	About a Boy Fever Pitch
Huxley, Aldous	Brave New World
Joyce, James	Dubliners Portrait of the Artist... Ulysses
Lawrence, D.H.	Sons and Lovers
Lee, Harper	To Kill a Mockingbird
Morrison, Toni	Beloved Paradise
Nabokov, Vladimir	Bend Sinister Despair Lolita Invitation to a Beheading
Orwell, George	Animal Farm The Clergyman's Daughter Inside the Whale and other Essays Nineteen Eighty-Four
Plath, Sylvia	The Bell Jar
	Tales of Mystery and Imagination

Blogs, Podcasts, Websites
The Guardian top 100 novels

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/03/the-best-novels-in-english-readers-alternative-list>

Litcharts Revision

<https://www.litcharts.com/>

Sparknotes Revision

<https://www.sparknotes.com/>

Edexcel website



<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/english-literature-2015.html>

York notes Revision

<https://www.yorknotes.com/alevel/english-literature/type/advanced-style>

	The Raven
Remarque, Erich Maria	All Quiet on the Western Front
Salinger, J.D	The Catcher in the Rye
Shelley, Mary	Frankenstein
Steinbeck, John	Cannery Row East of Eden The Grapes of Wrath Of Mice and Men Tortilla Flat
Stoker, Bram	Dracula
Swift, Jonathan	Gulliver's Travels
Syal, Meera	Anita and Me
Tokein, JRR	Lord of the Rings
Walker, Alice	The Colour Purple
Wells, H.G	The Time Machine War of the world
Wilde, Oscar	The Picture of Dorian Grey
Winterson, Jeanette	Oranges are Not the Only Fruit The Passion

Summer transition tasks:

The following tasks will help prepare you for working at A Level standard, whilst also introducing you to a range of important topics, ideas and concepts. Each of them will be collected in your first week of the A Level, so expect a teacher to look at them!

“Literature is important and necessary. It provides growth, strengthens our minds and gives us the ability to think outside the box.”

TASK 1 – essential summer reading

Read the following texts:

- *The Handmaid’s Tale* Margaret Atwood
- *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley
- In preparation for your study of Othello, watch the following YouTube videos;
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmw3vp5Boj0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2tkLkGgQAE>
- Make your own notes for the context of the play in preparation for your first lesson in September

EXTENSION TASK – Narrative voice in *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Read the following article; <https://graduateway.com/discuss-the-narrative-structure-of-the-handmaids-tale/>

And answer this question;

Does the narrative style in the novel make you more or less sympathetic with Offred?

TASK 2 – Learning key terminology

Attached is a list of key terminology. Learn the definition for each term and answer the questions which follow.

Allusion

A reference to another piece of literature, work of art, person, place etc. This will be *alluded to* for a particular reason.

Ambiguity

A word or expression which has two or more possible meanings. Used by poets with the intention of evoking some kind of emotive response in a reader.

Anaphora

A rhetorical device in which a word or phrase is repeated in several successive lines. Used by poets to build towards a climactic moment or develop a particular image or emotion.

Apostrophe

A rhetorical device for a speech addressed to a person, idea or thing, usually signalled by the word 'O' at the start.

Assonance

The repetition of vowel sounds in successive words. Used by poets to create a pattern of sounds and associate words (particularly actions) together.

Ballad

A form of poetry which relates a story to the reader, such as Keats' 'La Belle Dame'. Often characterised by short stanzas and rhyme; strong links with song.

Blank verse

A line of five stressed beats that is unrhymed. This is one of the commonest metres used in English poetry.

Caesura

A pause within a line of verse. Used by poets to emphasise a certain emotion and can point to a flatness in tone.

Colloquialism

A local or regional expression which may not be understood by outsiders or informal language. Used by poets to build a certain 'local flavour' to their verse or to establish a more comfortable relationship with the reader.

Elegy

A poem of lamentation, focusing on the death of a single person. It can create an *elegiac tone*.

End-stopped

The end of a line of verse coincides with an essential grammatical pause usually signalled by punctuation i.e. a full stop.

Enjambment

The running over of the sense and grammatical structure from one verse line or stanza to the next without a punctuated pause. Often used by poets to indicate some kind of 'outpouring' but it can mean very different things too.

Epigraph

An inscription or quotation placed at the start of a poem.

Euphony

Language which sounds pleasantly smooth and musical in a *particularly striking way*.

Fricative Sounds (/f/ /v/ /th/ /th/)

These are divided into voiced (hard) and voiceless (soft). It's fun to notice the connection: the <f> in 'knife', is soft, and becomes hard in the plural 'knives'. The same thing happens in 'loaf' and 'loaves'.

Hyperbole

A rhetorical device where language is used an exaggerated manner, either for comedic or emotive effect.

Iambic pentameter / tetrameter

Lines of poetry which contain five / four stressed beats. Most commonly used in poetry from c.15th-19th centuries.

Imagery

The words or phrases a writer selects to create a certain picture in the reader's mind. Imagery is usually based on sensory details.

In Media Res

A phrase describing a common technique of storytelling in which the narrator begins in the middle of the action.

Lyric

A poem in which personal and subjective feelings are expressed. Lyric poems are usually short and songlike.

Metaphor

Goes further than a comparison between two different things or ideas by fusing them together. The subject of the metaphorical comparison is separate from the vehicle (e.g. the metaphoric word which carries the meaning) and sometimes the reader has to guess at the subject. An **extended metaphor** develops the comparison beyond a single line or image in a poem.

Metre

Verse is distinguished from prose because it contains some linguistic element which is repeated, creating a sense of pattern. The commonest pattern is stress-based metre such as Iambic (stressed, unstressed beats).

Monologue

A single person speaking, with or without an audience; Victorian poets popularised the form of the **dramatic monologue**, where a poet speaks in a particular dramatic situation, often to one intended speaker.

Ode

A form of lyric poem characterised by its length (e.g. long!), intricate stanza forms and seriousness of purpose. Easily mocked!

Onomatopoeia

Words which sound like the noise they describe.

Oxymoron

A figure of speech in which contradictory terms are brought together in what is at first sight an impossible contradiction, such as 'sweet sorrow'.

Paradox

An apparently self-contradictory statement, yet lying behind its absurdity is some kind of truth.

Parallelism

The building up of a sentence or statement using repeated syntactic units, achieving a sense of balance. E.g. repeated three word phrases.

Parody

An imitation of a specific work of literature, designed to mock or undermine it e.g. mockery of the sonnet form to show up the folly of courtly love.

Pathetic fallacy

Used to describe the assumption of the equation between the mood and the world around them; nature can be specifically described in terms of a poet or persona's feelings.

Persona

Many poems are spoken by a speaker who is clearly not the poet; this is a 'persona'.

Personification

A variety of figurative or metaphorical language in which things or ideas are treated as if they were human beings.

Plosive Sounds

Plosive /b/ /p/ /t/ /d/ sounds create an abrupt, sharp, sometimes shocking effect.

Refrain

Words or lines repeated in the course of a poem, recurring at intervals and perhaps with a slight, purposeful variation.

Rhyme

Chiming or matching sounds which create an audible sense of pattern. If the pattern is regular or irregular, the poet may well have made this choice deliberately. Internal and end rhyme may create different effects.

Semantic Field

Semantic (or sometimes called lexical) fields are a technique often used by poets to keep a certain image persistent in their readers' mind. They are a collection of words which are related to one another be it through their similar meanings, or through a more abstract relation.

Sibilance

Sibilants are 's', 'z' or 'sh' sounds and their repetition is just a specific kind of alliteration. They are often associated with softening and carry more pleasant connotations than assonance.

Simile

A figure of speech in which one thing is said to be like another, using the words 'like' or 'as'.

Sonnet

A form of poetry of fourteen lines, used typically to explore feelings related to love. The Shakespearian Sonnet involves a volta before the final couplet; the Petrarchan volta occurs more typically after the octet.

Stanza

A verse in poetry. Different lengths have specific names. Couplet: two-line stanza / Triplet: three-line stanza / Quatrain: four-line stanza / Quintet: five-line stanza / Sestet: six-line stanza / Octave: eight-line stanza

Symbol

Something that represents something else, particularly a material object representing an abstract idea.

Tone

In conveying tone, words can suggest a particular manner or mood in which a poem should be read. Remember to use a specific adjective for this one and avoid the vagueness of 'positive' and 'negative'!

Volta

The word comes from the Italian word for 'turn'. A volta is the turn in thought in a sonnet that is often indicated by such initial words as 'but', 'yet' or 'and yet'.

What is the difference? Explain through a picture, a bullet point or an example

1. Sonnet and Ballad
2. Rhythm and Metre
3. Juxtaposition and oxymoron
4. Blank verse and Rhyme

Justify your groupings: Place these different techniques into groups – you may have to look up some of these terms

Repetition

Dramatic irony

Stage directions

Ethos

Dialogue

Aside

Iambic pentameter

Juxtaposition

Proleptic irony

Aside

Logos

Stage directions

Soliloquy

Hamartia

Order of scenes

Foreshadowing

Props

Pathos

Monologue

Tragic Hero

Blank Verse