

English Literature A Level: Reading and Writing About The Very Best

Course Content (Edexcel)		
Drama Paper 1 30%	<i>Hamlet</i> William Shakespeare Renaissance Tragedy	A young prince sees the ghost of his father who tells him that he was murdered. He is thrown into chaotic indecision: should he avenge his father or will this make him a monster? Madness and blood ensue.
	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> Tennessee Williams 20 th century American Tragedy	A woman, haunted by her past, arrives to visit her newly pregnant sister and her alluring but toxic husband in their cramped apartment. She becomes caught in a web of lies, desire and madness.
Prose Paper 2 20%	<i>Frankenstein</i> Mary Shelley Science Fiction	Frankenstein, a young and naïve scientist, creates a monstrous creature out of others' dead body parts. The creature is desperate to be loved by his creator but, when he is not, goes on bloody, vengeful mission.
	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> Margaret Atwood Dystopian/Science Fiction (comparative)	A Feminist, Dystopian tale which imagines the horrifying extent of oppression of women in a future world where some women are forced to bear children for others. Offred, the protagonist, rebels against society's constraints.
Poetry Paper 3 30%	Selection of Keats Poems Romantic poetry	Keats, a young Romantic, writes to regain a pre-modern time where his connection with nature is not interrupted by Industrialism. Before his untimely death, he wrote beautiful odes to explore feelings of disconnection, loneliness, and loss. His poetry is counted as some of the most beautiful in the English language.
	Selection of Poetry of the Decade + Unseen (comparative)	Some of the most celebrated, diverse and interesting poems of the 21 st century are brought together. They explore growing up, loss, identity, death. Students compare them with unseen poems, and consider how poetry explores the human condition.
Coursework Paper 4 20%	<i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> Jean Rhys Post Modern Novel <i>Maud Martha</i> Gwendolyn Brooks Poetic Novel (comparative 2,500 – 3,000 word essay)	In Bronte's novel <i>Jane Eyre</i> , Antoinette is presented as unstable, 'mad' and animalistic woman. She is locked in an attic by her husband and he marries someone else. Rhys' text imagines what Antoinette's life was like before this suffering, when she lived on an old plantation in Jamaica. The text explores race, gender and presents a fragmented narrative which mirrors the internal fragmentation. In Brooks' <i>Maud Martha</i> , a poetic novel written in fragmentary prose, Brooks gives us a window into the domestic life of Maud, a black woman navigating the world of 1940s Chicago.

Oasis Academy South Bank English Subject Summer Project

*Studying texts at English A Level is about breadth and depth – students read a range of texts in class and their understanding of these texts is enriched by the things they have read in their own time. This summer, you are going to be **reading around**, not **reading ahead**. Your job is to understand the background of these texts, so that, by the time you start them in class, you will be familiar with some of the ideas. Do not read any of the taught texts over the summer.*

Paper	Taught Texts	Summer Task	Additional information
P1 Drama	A Streetcar Named Desire	Read 'Death of a Salesman' (https://joycei.kenstonlocal.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/109/2015/01/Death-of-a-Salesman.pdf)	Both 'Death of a Salesman' and 'Streetcar' are tragedies about modern America. They explore the fragility of life and relationships in rapidly developing country, and the individual fragmentation caused by trying to attain The American Dream.
P2 Prose	Frankenstein and A Handmaid's Tale	Compulsory: Read 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by Coleridge (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43997/the-rime-of-the-ancient-mariner-text-of-1834) On an A4 sheet of paper, write down 10 moments where man and nature unite and conflict.	Both Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> and Coleridge's <i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i> explore ideas around man's respect for nature and living things, as well as retribution for transgression. Each text explores the power of natural forces: the Mariner intrudes on nature by killing an albatross bird and is punished, much like Frankenstein intrudes on nature by playing god as in punished.
P3 Poetry	Keats	Compulsory: Listen to 'In Our Time' <i>The Romantics</i> podcast for an overview of the period of Romanticism. (https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546ws) On an A4 sheet of paper, take notes on ideas about Keats and the Romantics. Optional: This website has a lot of podcasts about interesting and important things. Find another that interests you and listen! https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01drwny	The Romantic poets were writing from the late 18 th to early 19 th centuries. The early Romantics were Coleridge, Wordsworth and Blake and the Later Romantics were Shelley, Keats and Byron. We will be studying the poetry of Keats who died aged 25 following a challenging life of emotional and physical suffering. His writing is an exploration of the human condition and a searching for some universal truth about mortality and our place in the natural world.

<p>P4 Coursework</p>	<p>Wide Sargasso Sea and Maud Martha</p>	<p>Optional but recommended: Read 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Bronte (https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/119-2014-04-09-Jane%20Eyre.pdf)</p> <p>Read some poetry by Gwendolyn Brooks (https://artasccommunity.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/brooks-selected-poems.pdf)</p>	<p>Jean Rhys read the 19th novel 'Jane Eyre' and was shocked by its ending. At the end of the novel, when the hero Rochester and the heroine Jane Eyre are just about to marry, it is revealed that Rochester is already married – to Bertha, a “fearful and ghastly [...] savage” who he has trapped in his attic. Rhys, who had grown up in the West Indies, wanted to offer another narrative about Bertha. She wrote a prequel which explained Bertha’s upbringing, marriage, and eventual psychological instability. This novel explores the effects of colonialism, of liminal identities and of responses to difference.</p>
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Additional Summer Reading: Sixth Form English Reading List

As A-Level English students, you are going to read widely. This will develop your enjoyment of language and genre as well your own written voice. This reading list is split into two sections: reading around the texts you're taught and reading separate texts of all genres to discover what else you are interested in.

Do not read set texts before you're taught them. *Do* begin understanding the genre, concerns and styles of writers.

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As you read the texts below, ask yourself:

- Is this similar to anything I have read before? Why? When? How?
- Is this different to anything I have read before? Which text is it most different to and why?
- Does this writer tell their story in a traditional or a transgressive way? Do they break any rules of storytelling? What is the effect to this?
- Which sections do I find most interesting and why?
- Which sections do I find most difficult and why?
- What are the main ideas of this text?

You may want to keep a log of your thoughts and note down some rough ideas using the questions above, as well as writing anything else that strikes you.

Section 1: Reading around your studied texts:

Paper 1 (Drama): A Streetcar Named Desire – Post-War American Drama

Other texts by the author

Tennessee Williams:

- The Glass Menagerie (1944)
- Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1952)

Texts which likely inspired the author

- August Strindberg's Miss Julie (1888) – sexuality and class antagonism
- Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard (1904) – plantation culture
- Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House (1879) – protagonist and character

Texts by authors at a similar period and/or concerned with similar things

- Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind (1936)
- Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman (1949) + The Crucible (1953)
- Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh (staged 1946)

Paper 2 (Prose Comparison): Frankenstein – 19th Century Gothic Fiction

Texts which likely inspired the author

- Milton's *Paradise Lost*
- The myth of Prometheus
- S. T Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*
- Bram Stoker's *Dracula*
- Defoe's *The Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*

Texts by authors at a similar period and/or concerned with similar things

- Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*
- R L Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
- Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Contemporary texts that relate to 'Science and Society'

- Tender is the Flesh, Agustina Bazterrica
- Severance, Ling Ma
- Station Eleven, Emily St John Mandel
- Blue Ticket, Sophie Mackintosh
- Little Eyes, Samanta Schweblin
- Leave the World Behind, Rumaan Alam
- Geek Love, Katherine Dunn
- The Memory Police, Yoko Ogawa
- The Answers, Catherine Lacey
- The Other Black Girl, Zakiya Dalila Harris

Contemporary texts that relate to the Gothic

- Beloved, Toni Morrison
- Come Closer, Sara Gran
- Mrs Death Misses Death, Salena Godden
- The Yellow Wallpaper, Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- We Have Always Lived in the Castle, Shirley Jackson
- Water Shall Refuse Them, Lucie McKnight Hardy
- Revenge, Yoko Ogawa
- Her Body and Other Parties, Carmen Maria Machado
- The Vegetarian, Han Kang
- The Vet's Daughter, Barbara Comyns

Paper 2 (Prose Comparison): Never Let Me Go – Post-Modern Science Fiction

Other texts by the author

- *The Remains of the Day*
- *Klara and the Sun*
- *The Buried Sun*

Texts by authors at a similar period and/or concerned with similar things

- McEwan's *Enduring Love*
- Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse 5*
- Ali Smith's *Hotel World*
- Attwood's *Blind Assassin*

Paper 4 (Coursework): Wide Sargasso Sea – Post-Colonial, Feminist Fiction

Other texts by the author

- *Good Morning, Midnight*
- *Voyage in the Dark*
- *Quartet*

Texts which likely inspired the author

- Bronte's *Jane Eyre*

Texts by authors at a similar period and/or concerned with similar things

- Ford Maddox Ford's *When the Wicked Man* (Ford was Rhys' lover and parodies her in this novel)
- Attwood's *Alias Grace*
- Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*
- Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*

Section 2: Wider Reading

Black writers

- Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- Nella Larsen, *Passing*
- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*
- James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*
- Claude McKay, *Romance in Marseille*
- James Baldwin, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*
- Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*
- Kathleen Collins, *Whatever Happened to Interracial Love?*
- Margo Jefferson, *Negroland*

Feminist writing

- *The Bloody Chamber* by Angela Carter
- *A Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath
- *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf
- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
- *What Time of Night It Is* by Sojourner Truth
- *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

The 19th Century Novel

- *Wuthering Heights* by Emile Bronte
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
- *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens
- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy
- *The Picture of Dorian Grey* by Oscar Wilde
- *The Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot
- *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell
- *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens
- *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy
- *Silas Marner* by George Eliot

The 20th Century Novel

- *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald
- *1984* by George Orwell
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
- *To the Lighthouse or Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf
- *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker
- *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway
- *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *A Passage to India* by EM Forster
- *The Heat of the Day* by Elizabeth Bowen
- *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons
- *The End of the Affair* by Graham Greene

- The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie by Muriel Spark

The Contemporary Novel

- White Teeth by Zadie Smith
- Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett
- Trumpet by Jackie Kay
- The Death of Vivek Oji by Akwaeke Emezi
- Convenience Store Woman by Sayaka Murata
- Atonement by Ian McEwan
- Love in the time of Cholera by GG Marquez
- Cerce by Madeline Miller
- Department of Speculation by Jenny Offill
- Fen by Daisy Johnson
- Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson
- No One is Talking About This by Patricia Lockwood
- A Visit from the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan
- Days of Abandonment by Elena Ferrante
- A Girl's Story by Annie Ernaux
- Where The Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
- Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout
- Girl, Woman, Other
- How To Be Both by Ali Smith
- Such A Fun Age by Kiley Reid
- No One Is Talking About This by Patricia Lockwood
- Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell

Writing about nature and environment

- Far from the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy
- The Road by Cormac McCarthy
- The Overstory by Richard Powers
- Dart by Alice Oswald
- H is for Hawk by Helen Macdonald

Short stories

- A Manual for Cleaning Women by Lucia Berlin
- Selected Stories by Alice Munro
- Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri
- What we Talk about When we Talk About Love by Raymond Carver
- Mothers by Chris Powers
- Revenge by Yoko Ogawa
- The Thing Around Your Neck by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

American Fiction

- The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
- Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson
- The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers
- Revolutionary Road by Richard Yates

- My Antonia by Willa Cather
- The White Album by Joan Didion
- Stoner by John Williams

Irish Fiction

- The Country Girls by Edna O'Brien
- Dubliners by James Joyce
- Amongst Women by John McGahern
- Milkman by Anna Burns
- A Girl is a Half Formed Thing by Eimear McBride
- Notes To Self by Emilie Pine
- Exciting Times by Naoise Dolan
- Milkman by Anna Burna

Non-Fiction

- Why I'm No Longer Talking To White People About Race by
- Natives by Akala
- In the Dream House by Carmen Maria Machado

Post-Colonial Fiction

- Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
- The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy
- Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie
- Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai
- Disgrace by J.M. Coetzee