

Year 11: Preparing for 'A' level English literature.

Welcome students!

Over the following pages, you'll find plenty of reading and research ideas which will not only keep you busy, but will also give you a great 'head start' to your studies of Advanced Level English literature.

If you're still unsure about the main texts you'll be studying as part of this fabulous course, have a look below - there are course outlines and reading lists provided.

If all you've read in the last few years are your GCSE texts, now is a great time to 'catch up' with the type of **reading you need to do to be successful** at 'A' level. Again, have a look at the reading list below.

Good luck, enjoy and if you have any questions please email me at kate.wallis@st-anthonys-academy.com.



'A' Level English Literature: AQA Specification A:

Main Texts and Wider Reading for the Course

The Main Texts Studied:

'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Brontë

'Othello' by William Shakespeare

AQA Anthology: Love Poetry Through the Ages: Pre-1900 selection

'Unseen' poems about aspects of love

'Regeneration' by Pat Barker

'The Wipers Times' by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman

'Up the Line to Death' poetry anthology (ed. Brian Gardner)

Unseen extracts around the literature of WW1

Wider Reading:

- British Library Website – Articles in the section: Discovering Literature - related to time periods from Renaissance to Modern and Contemporary.
- Any background reading on the writers studied for main texts above
- Other literature depicting love through the ages or WW1. For example:

Love:

Any Thomas Hardy Novel

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier

The Go-Between by L.P. Hartley

WW1:

Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks

Testament of Youth by Vera Brittain

Forgotten Voices of the Great War ed. Max Arthur

First Casualty by Ben Elton

Introduction to the Novel: 'Jane Eyre'

What would you say if someone asked you to define a novel?

Have you ever wondered how a novel came to be called a 'novel'?

Like everything else, novels have changed over time - so what, if anything, has remained constant?

Hopefully, you will consider and maybe even learn the answers to these questions and more, as your study of literature progresses.

Self -audit task:

Answer the following questions honestly in order to assess your reading knowledge/experience and understanding of novels so far.

1. The novels I have read (all of the way through) in the past 3 years are:
2. Please list the ones you've enjoyed and the reasons you enjoyed them:
3. The most challenging novel I have read and the reason I found it challenging:
4. Give details of *any information you know* about specific writers of novels, other than those studied in school:
5. Who won the Booker Prize in 2019 and what was the name of the winning novel?
6. What book are you reading at the minute - why would you recommend it?

Read through the extracts from a variety of novels below.

Try to order them chronologically, by giving them a number (1=earliest novel 5 = most recent)

I leave it to any man to judge what difficulties presented to my view. I was away from my native country, at a distance prodigious, and the return to me unpassable. I lived very well, but in a circumstance insufferable in itself. If I had discovered myself to my mother, it might be difficult to convince her of the particulars, and I had no way to prove them. On the other hand, if she had questioned or doubted me, I had been undone, for the bare suggestion would have immediately separated me from my husband, without gaining my mother or him, who would have been neither a husband nor a brother; so that between the surprise on one hand, and the uncertainty on the other, I had been sure to be undone.

The water of the Gulf stretched out before her, gleaming with the million lights of the sun. The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude. All along the white beach, up and down, there was no living thing in sight. A bird with a broken wing was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down, down to the water.

Immediately they had dropped down the hill she entered the churchyard, going to a secluded corner behind the bushes where rose the unadorned stone that marked the last bed of Giles Winterborne. As this solitary and silent girl stood there in the moonlight, a straight slim figure, clothed in a plaitless gown, the contours of womanhood so undeveloped as to be scarcely perceptible in her, the marks of poverty and toil effaced by the misty hour, she touched sublimity at points, and looked almost like a being who had rejected with indifference the attribute of sex for the loftier quality of abstract humanism. She stooped down and cleared away the withered flowers that Grace and herself had laid there the previous week, and put her fresh ones in their place.

At a certain Assembly Ball at Richmond (there used to be Assembly Balls at most places then), where Estella had outshone all other beauties, this blundering Drummle so hung about her, and with so much toleration on her part, that I resolved to speak to her concerning him. I took the next opportunity; which was when she was waiting for Mrs. Blandley to take her home, and was sitting apart among some flowers, ready to go. I was with her, for I almost always accompanied them to and from such places.

Clutching my left hand is a girl of seven or eight, gazing up at me with trusting eyes. My right hand rests on the head of a woman crouched at my side, her hair veiled, her eyes upturned in an expression that could be read as either craven or grateful - one of our Handmaids - and behind me is one of my Pearl Girls, ready to set out on her missionary work. Hanging from a belt around my waist is my Taser. This weapon reminds me of my failings: had I been more effective, I would not have needed such an implement. The persuasion in my voice would have been enough.

Reflection:

How did you do this task? What signs or 'clues' in a text might suggest how old or recent it is?

Writers of novels use a wide range of techniques in order to tell their story the way they wish. Some of those techniques are in a table below. Try to match each technique with the correct definition:

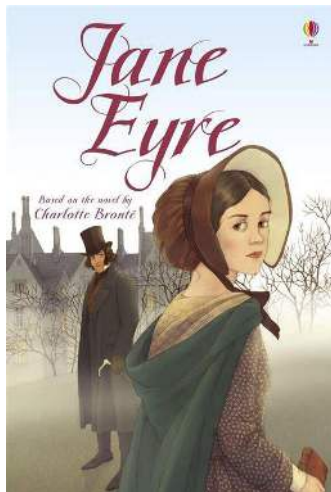
1. Chronological or linear structure	A) This is when two stories run alongside each other. It may be two people telling the same story or just two different ones that alternate.
2. Multi-narrative	B) A work of fiction which is self-conscious or openly draws attention to the fact it is constructed.
3. Dual-narrative	C) This is where the story is written in the time sequence that it took place.
4. Flashbacks	D) This is when more than one voice is telling the story. Different points of view of characters are given.
5. Fragmented narrative	E) This is when the narrative moves back in time.
6. Metafiction	F) This is when the story is all over the place. We just get bits of it from past and present and future and have to work out what happened and in what order for ourselves.

Research Task 1: 'The Victorian Novel: 'Jane Eyre''

What do you currently know about:

- ☐ Life in the Victorian Period (including education, health, men and women, social status, science and religion, laws and punishments?)
- ☐ Typical writers of novels at this time?
- ☐ Typical readers of novels at this time?
- ☐ Typical ways of publication at this time?
- ☐ Popular styles and genres of novel at this time?
- ☐ Charlotte Bronte?
- ☐ 'Jane Eyre' the novel and its contemporary and modern reception?

Make some notes on what you already know about these things. Then, make your notes more detailed by doing some wider reading and research! Use reliable internet sites such as *British Library: Discovering Literature* and *Victorianweb*.



Watch the following short videos and make notes about anything new that you learn from them about 'Jane Eyre', the era or the literature of the time:

<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/videos/gender-in-19th-century-britain>

<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/videos/the-governess>

<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/videos/jane-eyre-fairytale-and-realism>

Notes:

Research Task 2: Charlotte Bronte Biography and Writing

Find out as much as you can about Charlotte Bronte's life in Haworth. Make notes about how her own life might have influenced her writing in 'Jane Eyre'.



Introduction to Poetry: The Poetry of Love

Have you ever wondered why some writers can express full thoughts and ideas in six lines, whereas others take 800 pages?

Did you know that poetry is one of the earliest forms of writing?

Have you ever asked the question: *but do you think he/she really intended to say or do that though - or do you think it's just what we read into it?*

Hopefully, you will consider and maybe even learn the answers to these questions and more, as your study of literature progresses.

Self-reflection task:

Which of the following (if any) do you agree with? Give reasons below.

'Prose = words in their best order; poetry = the best words in the best order.' **S. T. Coleridge**

'Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood'. **T.S. Eliot**

'Poetry is ordinary language raised to the Nth power' **P. Engle**

'Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history'. **Plato**

'Poetry is what gets lost in translation' **R. Frost**

'The Crown of literature is poetry' **W. Somerset Maugham**

'A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language'. **W.H. Auden**

'Poetry is finer and more philosophical than history; for poetry expresses the universal, and history only the particular'. **Aristotle.**

Ones I might agree with and why:

Task: Try to put the following extracts of love poetry in chronological order (1= earliest poem: 5 = most recent)

Whan that aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan zephirus eek with his sweete breath
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the ram his halve cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(so priketh hem nature in hir corages);
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially from every shires ende
Of engelond to caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

The river's tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.

Who killed his wife,
insane with jealousy? And which Scots witch
knew Something wicked this way comes? Who said
Is this a dagger which I see? Which Tragedy?
Whose blade was drawn which led to Tybalt's death?
To whom did dying Caesar say Et tu? And why?
Something is rotten in the state of Denmark - do you
know what this means? Explain how poetry
pursues the human like the smitten moon

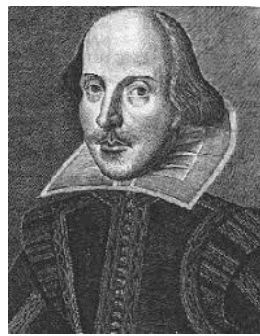
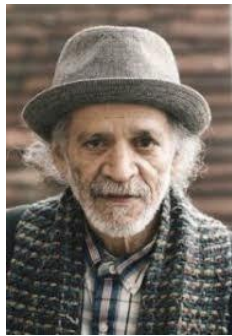
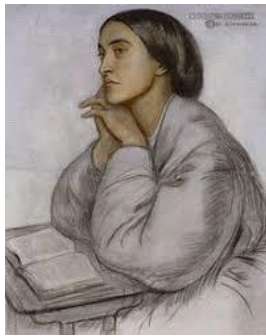
Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments,
Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends, with the remover to remove...

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover!

Research Task 3: Find out some typical features of poetry that was written during the following eras. For extra challenge, include some contextual information about what life was like during these times.

- ☐ **Renaissance era;**
- ☐ **Restoration era;**
- ☐ **Romantic Era;**
- ☐ **Victorian Era;**
- ☐ **Post-Victorian/ modern era.**

Just for fun... Try to name the following poets:



How did you do?

Introduction to Drama: Love Through the Ages

Have you ever been to the theatre to see how watching a play is different to when you read it?

Have you ever wondered why a writer might choose to write in this form, rather than prose or poetry?

Why might you be less likely to pick up a play and read it by yourself than you would with other forms?

Hopefully, you will consider and maybe even learn the answers to these questions and more, as your study of literature progresses.

Self-reflection Questions:

1. Thinking about the plays you have read or studied so far, what did you enjoy or not enjoy about them?
2. What genre(s) were involved in the plays you have read?
3. How did the genres influence your understanding and enjoyment of the plays?
4. What techniques of literary analysis have you come across that tend to be unique to drama texts?

Task: Read the dramatic techniques and definitions below. Match the terms with their definitions.

Dramatic technique	Definition
Stage directions	Plays within plays and references to other works, often included in a script.
Asides	The playwright must rely upon what the characters say to shape the plot. The director decides how it should be interpreted. The actor will try different ways.
Entrances and exits	Text apart from dialogue usually written in italics. Includes directions about movement on stage and details about the actor's physical actions and psychological intentions. May refer to lighting, musical or technical changes too.
Acts and scenes	The actor performs out of character for a moment and speaks directly to the audience or camera, and then reverts to being their character again.
Symbolism	This may represent social status, nationality, education, emotional state and the 'intentions' of the characters. It can vary by using different accents, dialects, intonation or the use of prose or verse.
Language	The way an author chooses words, arranges them in sentences or in lines of dialogue or verse, and develops ideas and actions with description, imagery, and other literary techniques.
Dialogue	Important to notice these as they introduce the arrival or departure of the characters on stage. Actors are encouraged to make colourful exits and entrances on stage rather than wandering on and off. Interesting entrances and exits become a sign of good direction.
Characterisation	The spectacle a play presents in performance, including the position of actors on stage, the scenic background, the props and costumes, and the lighting and sound effects.

Intertextuality	Facial expressions, gestures, stamping a foot or shaking a fist, can communicate emotions and thoughts in the same way as an adjective does in a narrative.
Body language	These have dramatic significance as they signal the beginning or ending of a situation or climax of some kind. They may also indicate a change of physical setting e.g. Inside a room changes into an outdoor scene.
Subtext	The people presented on stage are a combined product of the creativity of the playwright, the director and the actor. The director and actor interpret the playwright's intentions.
Staging	Also known as undertone, this is the content of a play which is not announced explicitly by the characters (or playwright) but is implicit or becomes something understood by the observer of the work as the production unfolds. This can also refer to the thoughts and motives of the characters which are only covered in an aside.
Style	Objects may be used as devices to represent various elements e.g. a moon, a knife, a broken glass. They are always included deliberately and never randomly included as part of the set. Props are meaningful and symbolism may also be a part of the script.

Research task 4: Investigating Tragedy and Shakespeare

Do some research and create a spidergram, poster or written notes to show what you learn about the following:

- ☐ Typically accepted features of 'tragedies'
- ☐ Features of Shakespearean tragedy;
- ☐ Features of Shakespeare's style as a dramatist ☐
- Shakespeare's life and times
- ☐ Shakespeare's most popular tragedies ☐
- Modern 'realist' drama
- ☐ Henrik Ibsen's life and times.

If you have access to the internet, read the following article on the British Library website:

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/an-introduction-to-shakespearean-tragedy>

English Literature A Level:

Introduction to WWI Literature



"My subject is war and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity." - Wilfred Owen

Course content: English Literature Paper 2: WW1 and its aftermath.

- ☐ 'Up the Line to Death' ed. Brian Gardner.
- ☐ 'Regeneration' by Pat Barker.
- ☐ 'The Wipers Times' by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman.
- ☐ Unseen extracts.

Task 1:
*explore
the key
themes of
WWI
Literature.*

Read the following article from the British Library to understand the key features of WWI Literature. Make notes on the following themes:

- ☐ *Power*
- ☐ *Commemoration and remembrance* ☐
- Disenchantment*
- ☐ *Rise of WWI literature*

<https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/literary-memories-of-world-war-one>

Task 2: *research key historical and literary figures from WWI.*

Pat Barker intertwines fact and fiction in 'Regeneration' by presenting real life, historical figures such as Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen and Dr W. H. R. Rivers. Barker fictionalises the experience of these characters during their time at Craiglockhart War Hospital and explores the traumatic impact that war has on individuals.

Research the following individuals to find out their experiences before and during the war:

- ☐ **Dr W. H. R. Rivers**
- ☐ **Siegfried Sassoon**
- ☐ **Wilfred Owen**
- ☐ **Robert Graves**

Suggested links for research:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets>

<https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one>

Task 3: Explore the developments in WWI poetry.

Throughout the war, the characteristics of war poetry changed as the war continued and morale fell. These changes are evident in the poetry anthology 'Up the Line to Death' that we study as part of the level specification.

Create a timeline mapping the changes in attitudes and themes in WWI poetry based on the following poems:

- ☐ **'The Soldier' by Rupert Brooke (1914)**
- ☐ **'In Flanders Fields' by John McCrae (1915)**
- ☐ **'When you see the Millions of Mouthless Dead' by Charles H. Sorley (1916)**
- ☐ **'nthem for a Doomed Youth' by Wilfred Owen (1917)**
- ☐ **'The Kiss' by Siegfried Sassoon (1918)**

Include ideas about the poet's attitude towards war and key quotations from the poems.

Wider reading:

<https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/reframing-first-world-war-poetry>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/70139/the-poetry-of-world-war-i>

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/9-poets-of-the-first-world-war>

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2016/poets-of-the-somme/>



1914



1918



'The Soldier' by Rupert Brooke

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/13076/the-soldier>

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be

In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;
body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven

'In Flanders Fields' by John McCrae

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47380/in-flanders-fields>

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie, In
Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

'When you see the Millions of Mouthless Dead' by Charles H. Sorley

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47427/when-you-see-millions-of-the-mouthless-dead>

When you see millions of the mouthless dead
Across your dreams in pale battalions go,
Say not soft things as other men have said,
That you'll remember. For you need not so.
Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know
It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?
Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow. Nor
honour. It is easy to be dead.
Say only this, "They are dead." Then add thereto,
"Yet many a better one has died before."
Then, scanning all the o'ercrowded mass, should you
Perceive one face that you loved heretofore,
It is a spook. None wears the face you knew.
Great death has made all his for evermore.

'Anthem for a Doomed Youth' by Wilfred Owen

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47393/anthem-for-doomed-youth>

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle Can
patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,— The
shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

'The Kiss' by Siegfried Sassoon

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57213/the-kiss-56d23a7c0343d>

To these I turn, in these I trust—
Brother Lead and Sister Steel.
To his blind power I make appeal,
I guard her beauty clean from rust.

He spins and burns and loves the air,
And splits a skull to win my praise;
But up the nobly marching days
She glitters naked, cold and fair.

Sweet Sister, grant your soldier this:
That in good fury he may feel
The body where he sets his heel
Quail from your downward darting kiss.