

# English Literature

## A Level Preparation Work

### Our expectations of you

**Read for pleasure:** This subject requires a great deal of reading. If you don't read novel/poetry/plays for pleasure, then you will find the amount of reading required a chore rather than a joy (which is how we see reading).

**Be willing to be challenged:** Some of the texts and topics in this subject are difficult, complex and require a great deal of discussion and thought for you to understand them. We will constantly push you in our work in the class and in our assessment feedback. Be prepared for this.

**Discuss/listen/debate:** Much of the time spent in lessons will be based around discussion and debate of what we are reading. You will be expected to contribute fully to this, if you don't you will miss out on vital opportunities to express your ideas and have them challenged.

**Intellectual Curiosity:** You must be curious. You must be independent in your reading and research. You must be willing to have your preconceptions challenged and to challenge them yourselves.

**If you would like further information about the English Literature course please contact Mrs Slocombe [cslocombe@sblacademy.org.uk](mailto:cslocombe@sblacademy.org.uk) or Miss Scott [hscott@sblacademy.org.uk](mailto:hscott@sblacademy.org.uk)**

### Practical tips for success!

X - follow writers and academics who blog about literature.

Write your own private blog on your reading and note down what you have discovered.

Read at least **two** wider reading texts over the summer from our reading list.

Download the audio book of the text – listen and read at the same time.

Get an understanding of what Marxism and Feminism are and how they help our understanding of literature.

Find out about specific periods in history and how life then may have influenced literature– Victorian period, Renaissance, Romantic period etc.

Create a profile of an author you will be studying such as

Visit the library and explore - Google books, the British Library online, the school library, university libraries, local libraries.

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Welcome to A Level English Literature! Please complete the following tasks ready for September:

“There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them.” - *Ray Bradbury*

**In order to prepare for your course you should complete the following tasks to the best of your ability. These should be handed into your English teacher at the start of the course.**

### Task 1: Independent reading task

Choose one of the following texts to read independently:

Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte

The Road – Cormac McCarthy

The Wasp Factory - Iain Banks

The Great Gatsby – F. Scott Fitzgerald

Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury

Wuthering Heights - Emily Bronte

Parable of the Sower – Octavia Butler

**Read the text carefully and write a 500-word review of the book. You should consider:**

- The storyline and how the text has been crafted
- How the writer uses language for specific effect
- How the writer creates character and setting
- How the text reflects the time in which it was produced and received
- What has influenced the writer e.g. the gothic genre
- What the writer was trying to say to their reader.

**Task 2:** An important aspect of the course is understanding how literature has changed over time. The following periods are used to define the different stages of English Literature from 1485 until the present day. Research the different periods and create a timeline to show how literature has developed. Ensure your timeline clearly shows:

- The dates of the literary period
- A definition or explanation of the literary period
- Key writers from the time period

1. The Renaissance
2. The Neoclassical Period (often called the Enlightenment or Age of Reason)
3. The Romantic Period
4. The Victorian Period
5. The Modern period (Modernism)
6. The Post-Modern Period (Post-modernism)

### Extension:

- Research **one** of these areas in more detail and create a handout on it. This should include:
- More detail on the key factors influencing literature during this period
- Common themes and ideas that writers covered
- A brief biography of one major writer from your chosen period

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### Wider Reading List

Here are a selection of texts from our A Level reading list. The more you read, the more connections you will be able to make during the course to other texts.

#### Dystopia

H G Wells - *The Time Machine*  
Aldous Huxley - *Brave New World*  
Ray Bradbury - *Fahrenheit 451*  
Anthony Burgess - *A Clockwork Orange*  
J G Ballard - *The Drowned World*  
Doris Lessing - *Memoirs of a Survivor*  
P.D. James - *The Children of Men*  
Octavia Butler - *Parable of the Sower*  
Cormac McCarthy - *The Road*

#### Plays

Shakespeare - *The Winter's Tale*  
Arthur Miller – *All My Sons*  
Harold Pinter - *The Homecoming*  
Henrik Ibsen – *Hedda*  
*Gabler/Ghosts*  
Tennessee Williams – *The Glass Menagerie*

#### Prose

Charlotte Bronte - *Jane Eyre*  
Emily Bronte - *Wuthering Heights*  
Margaret Atwood – *Oryx and Crake*  
Kate Chopin - *The Awakening*  
F. Scott Fitzgerald - *The Great Gatsby*  
Sylvia Plath – *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* (short stories)

#### Critical Works

Alexander, Michael - *English Literature A History of*  
Collins, A. S. - *English Literature of the 20th Century*  
Cruttenden, Aidan - *English Literature - The Victorians*  
Gill, Richard - *Mastering English Literature*  
Grierson, Herbert J C - *Critical History of English Poetry*  
Gurr, Elizabeth - *English Literature In Context*  
Hobsbaum, P - *Literary Criticism Essentials of*  
Jacobs Richard - *Critical Reading-A Beginners Guide*