

English Literature Summer Work

The best preparation you can make for the course is to get a feel for the subject and the genres you will be studying next year. Perhaps try to read a book from each section below to give yourself a good grounding in the subject.

Getting a feel for the subject

- *A Little history of Literature* by Jonathan Sutherland
- *A Brief History of English Literature* by John Peck and Martin Coyle
- *English Literature: A Very Short introduction* by Jonathan Bate
- *Tragedy: A Very Short Introduction*, by Adrian Poole
- *Crime Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* by Richard Bradford
- *Crime Fiction (The New Critical Idiom)* by John Scaggs
- *The Secret Life of Poems* by Tom Paulin

1. Getting a feel for the genres we will study

Tragedy

- *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles
- *The Poetics* of Aristotle
- Any Shakespearean Tragedy, but particularly:
 - Macbeth
 - King Lear
 - Hamlet
 - Titus Andronicus
 - Romeo and Juliet

Crime

- Any Sherlock Holmes Stories by Arthur Conan Doyle
- Any Agatha Christie novel ('Murder on the Orient Express' is a good example)

2. Getting a feel for literary theory

- *Literary Theory: An Introduction* by Terry Eagleton
- *Literary Theory: A Complete Introduction* by Sarah Upstone

3. Improving your SPaG skills -

Use the link below to brush up on punctuation and grammar. There are lessons and tests available to do online. You could also make notes on areas of weakness as another way of improving your written expression.

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/index.htm

4. Getting a feel for quality literature

Students that do well at English Literature A-Level are those who develop their own passion for the subject and read quality literature independently. Use the A Level English reading list (attached) to help get you started on your journey...

A Level English Recommended Reading List

Literary Prose

Sci-fi / Speculative / Dystopian fiction

The Handmaid's Tale (Margaret Atwood)
The Power (Naomi Alderman)
Vox (Christina Dalcher)
Oryx and Crake (Margaret Atwood)
Nineteen Eighty Four (George Orwell)
Brave New World (Aldus Huxley)
A Clockwork Orange (Anthony Burgess)

Gothic fiction

Frankenstein (Mary Shelley)
Dracula (Bram Stoker)
Wuthering Heights (Emily Bronte)
The Romance of the Forest (Ann Radcliffe)
The Castle of Otranto (Horace Walpole; considered the first gothic novel)

Some 'classics'

Jane Eyre (Charlotte Bronte)
Hard Times (Charles Dickens' shortest novel – to get you started on the rest!)
The Mill on the Floss (George Eliot)
Pride and Prejudice / Emma (Jane Austen)
Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Thomas Hardy)
The Picture of Dorian Gray (Oscar Wilde)
The Great Gatsby (F Scott Fitzgerald)
The Woman in White / The Moonstone (Wilkie Collins)
The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (R.L. Stevenson)

Some 'modern classics'

The Bell Jar (Sylvia Plath)
Oranges are not the only fruit (Jeanette Winterson)
The Catcher in the Rye (JD Salinger)
Lord of the Flies (William Golding)
Alias Grace (Margaret Atwood)
The Remains of the Day (Kazuo Ishiguru)
The Unbearable Lightness of Being (Milan Kundera)
The Alchemist (Paulo Coelho)
To Kill a Mockingbird (Harper Lee)
A Room with a View / A Passage to India (E.M. Forster)
A Room of One's Own (Virginia Woolf)

21st Century novelists to explore

Donna Tartt
Audrey Niffenegger
Michael Faber
Ian McEwan
Sebastian Faulks
Margaret Atwood
Michael Chabon
Hilary Mantel
Zadie Smith
Cormac McCarthy

Scarlett Thomas
Haruki Murakami
John Irving
Junot Diaz

Non-Literary Prose

Goodbye to all That (Robert Graves)
The Diary of a Young Girl (AnneFrank)
Into Thin Air (Jon Krakauer)
Notes from a Small Island (Bill Bryson)
Be Awesome (Hadley Freeman)
On Writing (Stephen King)
Walden (Henry David Thoreau)
Longitude (Dava Sobel)
Angela's Ashes (Frank McCourt)
Dark Star Safari (Paul Theroux)
The Songlines (Bruce Chatwin)
Wild (Cheryl Strayed)
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (Maya Angelou)
How to be a Woman (Caitlin Moran)
In Cold Blood (Truman Capote)

Poetry

18th Century – The Romantics:

William Blake (1757 – 1827) “Songs of Innocence and Experience” – read a couple of each
William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850) “The Lucy Poems”, “Tintern Abbey”
Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1776 – 1849) “Frost at Midnight”
John Keats (1795 – 1821) “La Belle Dame sans Merci”, “Eve of St Agnes”
Lord Byron (1788 – 1824) “She walks in Beauty”

19th Century – The Victorians (1837 – 1901)

Christina Rossetti (1831 – 94) “A Birthday”, “Remember”
Emily Dickinson (1830 – 86) “My Life Closed Twice”, “Love’s Stricken Way”
Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809 – 92) “Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal”, sections of In Memoriam
Elizabeth Barrett Browning – “Poems for the Portuguese”
William Butler Yeats (1865 – 1939) “When you are old and grey and full of sleep” “Prayer for my daughter”
Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) “The Voice” (written after the death of his wife)

20th Century – Modernism (1910 – 52)

TS Eliot (1888 – 1965) “The Love Song of Alfred J Prufrock”
WH Auden (1907 – 1973) – “O Tell me what you think about love”, “Stop All The Clocks”

20th Century – Post Modernism (1952 -)

Ted Hughes (1930 – 1998) - “Birthday Letters”
Sylvia Plath (1932 – 63) – “Ariel”
Philip Larkin 1922 – 1985) – “High Windows”, “Whitsun Weddings”, “When First we Faced and Touching Showed”

Drama

Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare)
Antony and Cleopatra (Shakespeare)
Much Ado About Nothing (Shakespeare)
The Crucible (Arthur Miller)
Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller)
The Importance of Being Earnest (Oscar Wilde)
A Woman of No Importance (Oscar Wilde)
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (Tennessee Williams)
The Glass Menagerie (Tennessee Williams)
The Rover (Aphra Behn)
Tis Pity She's A Whore (John Ford)
Dr Faustus (Christopher Marlowe)
The Duchess of Malfi (John Webster)
Murmuring Judges (David Hare)