



ROEDEAN
MOIRA HOUSE

A level English Literature

ENGLISH LITERATURE A LEVEL

Preparation for the course

English Literature isn't reading books; it's the study of passion and belief, morality and mercy, full of the ambiguity of humanity. In Literature, an answer can never be simply right or wrong, it is your opinion, supported by what think about what you read. We specialise in grey areas, the possibilities of interpretation, where what you bring to the subject shapes what the text means. You will join in a discussion - in some cases, discussions that have been going on for 400 years or just within your lifetime - where your insightful opinion will be one of the voices.

What you study

The English Literature course is designed to encourage wide reading and advanced detailed research within the whole field of literary studies. It builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired by candidates who have successfully passed GCSE English and English Literature.

The course offers a programme of study which will be rewarding and enjoyable in its own right and can also, for some students, form a basis for further specialist study at degree level.

This course involves the close study of texts from the three genres of literature, both pre- and post-1900: poetry, prose and drama.

Year 12

Study of Poets of the Decade: A collection of post 2000 poetry which will be examined with an unseen poem.

Study of one drama: Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Study of two novels: Bram Stoker's Dracula and Oscar Wilde's A Picture of Dorian Gray

Organisation of coursework: A free choice of two texts that you, with support, study and design a question for one 3000 word essay.

Year 13

Coursework is completed

Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*, prologue and tale

A Level English Preparation Summer Reading

We will begin the course with an introduction to English Literature, but then we will move into coursework where you will be using your teachers as one of the resources to explore 2 texts. Edexcel gives you a very wide range of texts – a veritable free choice – so to prepare you **would recommend that you read 4 books** over the summer which will hopefully form a basis to choose from. The following are a beginning list for recommendation. At the end is a further list of recommended books from Edexcel. Please notice that your coursework text does not need to be prose – it can be poetry or plays or any combination. The only requirement is that it must be originally written in English.

Happy Reading!

Great Gatsby – F. Scott Fitzgerald Gatsby always seems alone in the crowd, watching and waiting, though no one knows what for. Beneath the shimmering surface of his life he is hiding a secret: a silent longing that can never be fulfilled. And soon this destructive obsession will force his world and those around him to unravel.

Cat's Eye – Margaret Atwood - Elaine Risley, a painter, returns to Toronto to find herself overwhelmed by her past. Memories of childhood - unbearable betrayals and cruelties - surface relentlessly, forcing her to confront the spectre of Cordelia, once her best friend and tormentor, who has haunted her for forty years.

Jane Eyre – Charlotte Bronte - *Jane Eyre* ranks as one of the greatest and most perennially popular works of English fiction. Although the poor but plucky heroine is outwardly of plain appearance, she possesses an indomitable spirit, a sharp wit and great courage.

She is forced to battle against the exigencies of a cruel guardian, a harsh employer and a rigid social order. All of which circumscribe her life and position when she becomes governess to the daughter of the mysterious, sardonic and attractive Mr Rochester.

However, there is great kindness and warmth in this epic love story, which is set against the magnificent backdrop of the Yorkshire moors. Ultimately the grand passion of Jane and Rochester is called upon to survive cruel revelation, loss and reunion, only to be confronted with tragedy.

Life of Pi – Yann Martel - One boy, one boat, one tiger . . . After the tragic sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild, blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen year-old boy named Pi, a hyena, a zebra (with a broken leg), a female orang-utan and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger. The scene is set for one of the most extraordinary and best-loved works of fiction in recent years.

The Road – Cormac McCarthy - By the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* is the story of a father and son walking alone through burned America, heading through the ravaged landscape to the coast.

Beloved – Toni Morrison - Terrible, unspeakable things happened to Sethe at Sweet Home, the farm where she lived as a slave for so many years until she escaped to Ohio. Her new life is full of hope but eighteen years later she is still not free. Sethe's new home is not only haunted by the memories of her past but also by the ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved.

The Color Purple – Alice Walker - Celie is a poor black woman whose letters tell the story of 20 years of her life, beginning when she is abused by her father whilst trying to protect her sister. She in turn marries a brutal man but through her friendships and the strength of her love for her sister, she is able to transcend her past and find her creative, loving self.

Wuthering Heights – Emily Bronte - *Wuthering Heights* is a wild, passionate story of the intense and almost demonic love between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, a foundling adopted by Catherine's father. After Mr Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff is bullied and humiliated by Catherine's brother Hindley and wrongly believing that his love for Catherine is not reciprocated, leaves Wuthering Heights, only to return years later as a wealthy and polished man. He proceeds to exact a terrible revenge for his former miseries.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles – Thomas Hardy - When Tess is driven by poverty to claim a blood tie with the wealthy D'Urbervilles she meets her “cousin” Alec who forces himself on her. When a good man, Angel Clare, offers her love she has to decide whether to reveal what Alec has done to her and risk being rejected. What she does can change the whole path her life can take.

We Need to Talk about Kevin – Lionel Shriver - Eva never really wanted to be a mother; certainly not the mother of the unlovable boy who murdered seven of his fellow high school students, a cafeteria worker and a teacher who tried to befriend him. Now, two years later, it is time for her to come to terms with marriage, career, family, parenthood and Kevin's horrific rampage in a series of startlingly direct correspondences with her absent husband, Franklyn. Uneasy with the sacrifices and social demotion of motherhood from the start, Eva fears that her alarming dislike for her own son may be responsible for driving him so nihilistically off the rails.

The Poisonwood Bible – Barbara Kingsolver - Barbara Kingsolver's acclaimed international bestseller tells the story of an American missionary family in the Congo during a poignant chapter in African history. It spins the tale of the fierce evangelical Baptist, Nathan Price, who takes his wife and four daughters on a missionary journey into the heart of darkness of the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them to Africa all they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it - from garden seeds to the King James Bible - is calamitously transformed on African soil. Told from the perspective of the five women, this is a compelling exploration of African history, religion, family, and the many paths to redemption.

Portrait of a Lady – Henry James - Transplanted to Europe from her native America, Isabel Archer has candour, beauty, intelligence, an independent spirit and a marked enthusiasm for life. An unexpected inheritance apparently gives her freedom, but despite all her natural advantages she makes one disastrous error of judgement and the result is genuinely tragic.

Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen - *Pride and Prejudice*, which opens with one of the most famous sentences in English Literature, is an ironic novel of manners. In it the garrulous and empty-headed Mrs Bennet has only one aim - that of finding a good match for each of her five daughters. In this she is mocked by her cynical and indolent husband.

Cold Comfort Farm – Stella Gibbons - When sensible, sophisticated Flora Poste is orphaned at nineteen, she decides her only choice is to descend upon relatives in deepest Sussex. At the aptly-named Cold Comfort Farm, she meets the doomed Starkadders: cousin Judith, heaving

with remorse for unspoken wickedness; Amos, preaching fire and damnation; their sons, lustful Seth and despairing Reuben; child of nature Elfine; and crazed old Aunt Ada Doom, who has kept to her bedroom for the last twenty years. But Flora loves nothing better than to organise other people. Armed with common sense and a strong will, she resolves to take each of the family in hand. A hilarious and ruthless parody of rural melodramas and purple prose, *Cold Comfort Farm* is one of the best-loved comic novels of all time.

Catch – 22 Joseph Heller - Set in the closing months of World War II, this is the story of a bombardier named Yossarian who is frantic and furious because thousands of people he has never met are trying to kill him. His real problem is not the enemy - it is his own army which keeps increasing the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. If Yossarian makes any attempts to excuse himself from the perilous missions then he is caught in Catch-22: if he flies he is crazy, and doesn't have to; but if he doesn't want to he must be sane and has to. That's some catch...

God of Small Things – Arundhati Roy - They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much.'

This is the story of Rahel and Estha, twins growing up among the banana vats and peppercorns of their blind grandmother's factory, and amid scenes of political turbulence in Kerala. Armed only with the innocence of youth, they fashion a childhood in the shade of the wreck that is their family: their lonely, lovely mother, their beloved Uncle Chacko (pickle baron, radical Marxist, bottom-pincher) and their sworn enemy, Baby Kochamma (ex-nun, incumbent grand-aunt).

Animal Farm – George Orwell - 'All animals are equal - but some are more equal than others'When the downtrodden animals of Manor Farm overthrow their master Mr Jones and take over the farm themselves, they imagine it is the beginning of a life of freedom and equality. But gradually a cunning, ruthless élite among them, masterminded by the pigs Napoleon and Snowball, starts to take control. Soon the other animals discover that they are not all as equal as they thought, and find themselves hopelessly ensnared as one form of tyranny is replaced with another.

'It is the history of a revolution that went wrong - and of the excellent excuses that were forthcoming at every step for the perversion of the original doctrine,' wrote Orwell for the first edition of *Animal Farm* in 1945. Orwell wrote the novel at the end of 1943, but it almost remained unpublished; its savage attack on Stalin, at that time Britain's ally, led to the book being refused by publisher after publisher. Orwell's simple, tragic fable has since become a world-famous classic.

Fahrenheit 451 – Ray Bradbury - The hauntingly prophetic classic novel set in a not-too-distant future where books are burned by a special task force of firemen. Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to burn books, which are forbidden, being the source of all discord and unhappiness. Even so, Montag is unhappy; there is discord in his marriage. Are books hidden in his house? The Mechanical Hound of the Fire Department, armed with a lethal hypodermic, escorted by helicopters, is ready to track down those dissidents who defy society to preserve and read books. The classic novel of a post-literate future, 'Fahrenheit 451' stands alongside Orwell's '1984' and Huxley's 'Brave New World' as a prophetic account of Western civilization's enslavement by the media, drugs and conformity

1984 – George Orwell - Orwell's chilling prophecy of a "negative utopia" is compelling, powerful, and perhaps more relevant as a social criticism of the west today than ever.

Gulliver's Travels – Jonathon Swift - A satire on human nature and a parody of the "travellers' tales" literary genre, this is widely considered Swift's greatest work as well as one of the indisputable classics of English literature.

A Thousand Acres – Jane Smiley - Larry Cook's farm is the largest in Zebulon County, Iowa, and a tribute to his hard work and single-mindedness. Proud and possessive, his sudden decision to retire and hand over the farm to his three daughters, is disarmingly uncharacteristic.

Ginny and Rose, the two eldest, are startled yet eager to accept, but Caroline, the youngest daughter, has misgivings. Immediately, her father cuts her out.

In *A Thousand Acres*, Jane Smiley transposes the King Lear story to the modern day, and in so doing at once illuminates Shakespeare's original and subtly transforms it. This astonishing novel won both of America's highest literary awards, the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Critics' Circle Award.

Rebecca – Daphne DuMaurier - Working as a lady's companion, Rebecca life looks very bleak until, on a trip to the South of France, she meets Maxim a handsome widower whose sudden proposal of marriage takes her by surprise. She accepts, but whisked from glamorous Monte Carlo to his estate, Manderley, she finds Max a changed man. The memory of his dead wife Rebecca is forever kept alive by the scary housekeeper, Mrs Danvers . Will she be beaten by Rebecca's memory or be brave and fight for her rights as mistress of Manderley.

French Lieutenant's Woman – John Fowles - A love-intrigue triangle. Charles is a gentleman of independent means his fiancée, Tina, a pretty heiress and Sarah Woodruff, mysterious & fascinating...deserted after a brief affair with a French officer a short time before the story begins. Obsessed with Sarah, Charles is plunged by a moment of lust to the edge as a result; duty commands that his engagement to Tina must be broken as he goes to seek the woman who has captured his heart.

Clockwork Orange – Anthony Burgess - Fifteen-year-old Alex likes lashings of ultraviolence. He and his gang of friends rob, kill and rape their way through a nightmarish future, until the State puts a stop to his riotous excesses. But what will his re-education mean?

A dystopian horror, a black comedy, an exploration of choice, *A Clockwork Orange* is also a work of exuberant invention which created a new language for its characters. This critical edition restores the text of the novel as Anthony Burgess originally wrote it, and includes a glossary of the teen slang 'Nadsat', explanatory notes, pages from the original typescript, interviews, articles and reviews, shedding light on the enduring fascination of the novel's 'sweet and juicy criminality'.

Atonement – Ian McEwan - Thirteen-year-old Briony sees her sister Cecilia remove her clothes and plunge into the fountain in the garden of their country house. Watching her is Robbie her childhood friend who, like Cecilia, has recently come down from Cambridge University. By the end of that day, the lives of all three will have been changed forever. They will have become victims of the younger girl's imagination. Briony will have committed a crime for which she will spend the rest of her life trying to atone.

The Bell Jar – Sylvia Plath - Sylvia Plath's shocking, realistic, and intensely emotional novel about a young woman falling into the grip of insanity.

Woman in White – Wilkie Collins - Walter Hartright's encounters an eerie sight on a moonlit London road one evening. Because of this, Walter soon becomes involved in the sinister intrigues of Sir Percival Glyde. The novel pursues questions of identity and insanity along the corridors of the Victorian English country house and the madhouse.

Middlemarch – George Eliot - Vast and crowded, rich in irony and suspense, Middlemarch is richer still in character, with two of the era's most enduring characters, Dorothea Brooke, trapped in a loveless marriage, and Lydgate, an ambitious young doctor.

Possession – A.S. Byatt As the relationship between two fictional Victorian poets, Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, is revealed to present day academics Roland Mitchell and Maud Bailey, so their own relationship seems to follow. There are a trail of clues from various letters and journals as they attempt to uncover the truth about Ash and LaMotte's past before it is discovered by rival colleagues.

A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf
A Taste of Honey, Sheila Delaney
A Thousand Splendid Suns, Khaled Hosseini
Ada or Ardour: A Family Chronicle, Vladimir Nabokov
Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Armadale, Wilkie Collins
Behind the Scenes at the Museum, Kate Atkinson
Birdsong, Sebastian Faulks
Brick Lane, Monica Ali
Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Louis de Bernières
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Tennessee Williams
Catch 22, Joseph Heller
Cloud Atlas, David Mitchell
Collected works of Rochester, John Wilmot
Death of a Naturalist, Seamus Heaney
Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller
Disgrace, J.M. Coetzee
Dispatches, Michael Kerr
Emma, Jane Austen
Empire of the Sun, J G Ballard
For Whom the Bell Tolls, Ernest Hemingway
Foster, Claire Keegan
Hamlet, William Shakespeare
Hard Times, Charles Dickens
Hawksmoor, Peter Ackroyd
Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad
Hold Your Own, Kate Tempest
Homage to Catalonia, George Orwell
How to be a Woman, Caitlin Moran
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou
Into The Wild, Jon Krakauer
Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer
Jerusalem, Jez Butterworth
King Lear, William Shakespeare
Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Caryl Churchill
Lolita, Vladimir Nabokov
London: The Biography, Peter Ackroyd
Mansfield Park, Jane Austen
Mean Time, Carol Ann Duffy
Mister Pip, Lloyd Jones
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Frederick Douglass
Netherland, Joseph O'Neill
Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro
Jude the Obscure, Thomas Hardy
Frankenstein, Mary Shelley
Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen
On The Road, Jack Kerouac
Once in a House on Fire, Andrea Ashworth
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's nest, Ken Kesey
Oranges are not the only Fruit, Jeanette Winterson
Othello, William Shakespeare

Poetry of the First World War, Tim Kendall (published anthology)
Red Dust Road, Jackie Kay
Regeneration, Pat Barker
Room, Emma Donoghue
Roxana, Daniel Defoe
The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood
Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War, Ed.
Catherine Reilly
Selected Poems, Sylvia Plath
Small Island, Andrea Levy
Songs of Innocence and of Experience, William Blake
Texts written in English by Chinua
Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda
Ngozi Adichie and Nii Ayikwei Parkes
The Adoption Papers, Jackie Kay
The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm X
The Awakening, Kate Chopin
The Bloody Chamber, Angela Carter
The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison
The Bone Clocks, David Mitchell
The Castle of Otranto, Horace Walpole
The Collector, John Fowles
The Crucible, Arthur Miller
The Danish Girl, David Ebershoff
The Dark Room, Rachel Seiffert
The Duchess of Malfi, John Webster
The Fixer, Bernard Malamud
The Glass Menagerie, Tennessee William
The Go-Between, L P Hartley
The History Boys, Alan Bennett
The House Gun, Nadine Gordimer
The Importance of Being Earnest, Oscar Wilde
The Joy Luck Club, Amy Tan
The Killer Angels, Michael Shara
The Little Stranger, Sarah Waters
The Madness of King George, Alan Bennett
The Monk, Matthew Gregory Lewis
*The Murders in the Rue Morgue and
Other Tales*, Edgar Allan Poe
The Mysteries of Udolpho, Ann Radcliffe
The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde
The Price of Salt, Patricia Highsmith
The Stars My Destination, Alfred Bester
The Stories of Edgar Allan Poe (published collection)
The Township Plays, Athol Fugard
The Virgin Suicides, Jeffrey Eugenides
The Vortex, Noel Coward
The Waste Land, T S Elliott
The World's Wife, Carol Ann Duffy
The Yellow Wallpaper, Charlotte Perkins Gillman
Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe
This Side of Paradise, F Scott Fitzgerald

Titus Andronicus, William Shakespeare
Titus Groan, Mervyn Peak
To The Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf
True History of the Kelly Gang, Peter Carey
Union Street, Pat Barker
Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett
White Teeth, Zadie Smith
Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Rhys
Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte
Trainspotting, Irvine Welsh
Digging to America, Anne Tyler
King Charles III, Mike Bartlett
Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, Tom Stoppard
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Mark Haddon (adult edition)
The Wasp Factory, Iain Banks
The World's Wife, Carol Ann Duffy
Feminine Gospels, Carol Ann Duffy
We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves, Karen Joy Fowler
Vernon God Little, DBC Pierre
A Separate Peace, John Knowles
The Go-Between, LP Hartley
An Ideal Husband, Oscar Wilde
High Rise, JG Ballard
Rabbit, Run, John Updike

