

# English Literature

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## TRANSITION WORK FOR YEAR 11-12

### **Welcome to English Literature A Level!**

We hope you enjoy working through the activities in this booklet. The tasks and wider reading are designed to give you a strong foundation upon which you can start Year 12 in a great position as a well-read, highly-skilled student of Literature.

You are welcome to complete the activities in this booklet or complete them on paper and keep in a file.

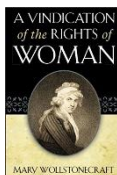
We look forward to seeing you in September!

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## Reading Challenge

Choose two books from this list. They will support your study of our Political and Social Protest module as well as give you some options for your coursework.



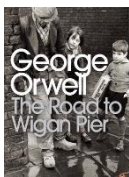
### **A Vindication of the Rights of Woman by Mary Wollstonecraft**

Writing in an age when the call for the rights of man had brought revolution to America and France, Mary Wollstonecraft produced her own declaration of female independence in 1792. Passionate and forthright, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman attacked the prevailing view of docile, decorative femininity, and instead laid out the principles of emancipation: an equal education for girls and boys, an end to prejudice, and for women to become defined by their profession, not their partner. Mary Wollstonecraft's work was received with a mixture of admiration and outrage - Walpole called her 'a hyena in petticoats' - yet it established her as the mother of modern feminism.



### **Hard Times by Charles Dickens**

The novel is set in Coketown, a northern industrial city. Thomas Gradgrind rules his family and his school according to Utilitarianism, the philosophy of the time, which has as its aim the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number of people. However, the form of Utilitarianism which Dickens attacks in the novel is plain materialism that denies all other values than material ones, or "Facts" as they are called.

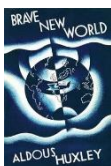


*The Road to Wigan Pier* is a book by the English writer George Orwell, first published in 1937. The first half of this work documents his sociological investigations of the bleak living conditions among the working class in Lancashire and Yorkshire in the industrial north of England before World War II. The second half is a long essay on his middle-class upbringing, and the development of his political conscience, questioning British attitudes towards socialism. Orwell states plainly that he himself is in favour of socialism, but feels it necessary to point out reasons why many people who would benefit from socialism, and should logically support it, are in practice likely to be strong opponents.



### **Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury**

In an oppressive future, a fireman whose duty is to destroy all books begins to question his task. Based on the 1951 Ray Bradbury novel of the same name. Guy Montag is a firefighter who lives in a lonely, isolated society where books have been outlawed by a government fearing an independent-thinking public.



### **Brave New World by Aldous Huxley**

The novel examines a futuristic society, called the **World State**, that revolves around science and efficiency. In this society, emotions and individuality are conditioned out of children at a young age, and there are no lasting relationships because "every one belongs to every one else."



### **The Crucible by Arthur Miller**

Written in the early 1950s, Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible" takes place in Salem, Massachusetts during the 1692 Salem witch trials. This was a time when paranoia, hysteria, and deceit gripped the Puritan towns of New England. Miller captured the events in a riveting story that is now considered a modern classic in the theater. He wrote it during the "Red Scare" of the 1950s and used the Salem witch trials as a metaphor for the "witch hunts" of communists in America.



**Doctor Zhivago by Boris Pasternak**, tells the story of Yury Zhivago, a man torn between his love for two women while caught in the tumultuous course of twentieth century Russian history.



#### **1984 by George Orwell**

A dystopian novella by George Orwell published in 1949, which follows the life of Winston Smith, a low-ranking member of 'the Party', who is frustrated by the omnipresent eyes of the party, and its ominous ruler Big Brother. 'Big Brother' controls every aspect of people's lives.



#### **Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist by Sunil Yapa**

Yapa's acclaimed, multi-cultural take on the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle is required reading for an idealistic, panoramic view of civil disobedience with the goal of greater inclusion and economic participation. The novel offers a tribute to those brave enough to step forward and take the physical risk of protesting.

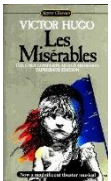


**William Golding's 1954 novel *Lord of the Flies*** tells the story of a group of young boys who find themselves alone on a deserted island. They develop rules and a system of organization, but without any adults to serve as a 'civilizing' impulse, the children eventually become violent and brutal. In the context of the novel, the tale of the boys' descent into chaos suggests that human nature is fundamentally savage.



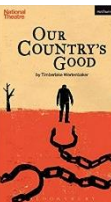
#### **Paradise Lost by John Milton**

The poem concerns the biblical story of the Fall of Man: the temptation of Adam and Eve by the fallen angel Satan and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Milton's purpose, stated in Book I, is to "justify the ways of God to men."



#### **Les Misérables by Victor Hugo**

There are few more complete, or more vivid pictures of France at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is at once a thrilling narrative and a social document, embracing a wider field than any other novel of its time.



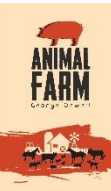
#### **Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker** concerns a group of Royal

Marines and convicts in a penal colony in New South Wales, in the 1780s, who put on a production of *The Recruiting Officer*. The play shows the class system in the convict camp and discusses themes such as sexuality, punishment, the Georgian judicial system, and the idea that it is possible for "theatre to be a humanising force".

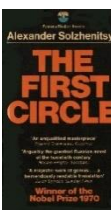


#### **The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan**

Published in 1963, it gave a pitch-perfect description of "the problem that has no name": the insidious beliefs and institutions that undermined women's confidence in their intellectual capabilities and kept them in the home.



**Animal Farm by George Orwell**, is an allegorical story about the Soviet Union's early years. At the beginning of the story, Old Major inspires his fellow farm animals to revolt against their human master, Mr. Jones, owner of Manor Farm.



#### **The First Circle by Alexander Solzhenitsyn**

Set in Moscow during a three-day period in December 1949, *The First Circle* is the story of the prisoner Gleb Nerzhin, a brilliant mathematician. At the age of thirty-one, Nerzhin has survived the war years on the German front and the post-war years in a succession of Russian prisons and labour camps.

## English Literature Reading Challenge

**Title and author:**

**Key political, social message (What's it about? What's the argument?):**

**How is this text link to contemporary society and wider issues?**

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## Taster Tasks

At the heart of this course is the ability to engage with a question, debate, discussion, and create a thoughtful, developed argument based on your reading.

## Task 1

**“Sexism is still alive and well in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” To what extent do you agree?**

For your argument, you can use any evidence you wish, e.g. real life examples, literature, TV/film, etc.

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This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, text, or other markings on the page.

## Task 2

Shakespeare is an important element of our cultural and literary heritage so it is no surprise that you will be studying one of his plays for your A Level course!

Prepare a convincing argument as to **Why Shakespeare should be *or* should not be studied by school students.**

Presentation is up to you – could be a blog post, a video, photo story, conventional written piece, a sonnet, a short play! You should make reference to at least one of his plays in your argument.

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### Task 3

Short story response: read *'The Yellow Wallpaper'* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, it can be found here: <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sysfiles/Books/documents/2009/01/09/TheYellowWallpaper.pdf>

Choose at least 2 of these questions to explore:

1. What could the wallpaper symbolise?
2. How does Gilman explore ideas about power and powerlessness in the story?
3. Do you see the ending as more positive or negative and why?
4. To what extent does Gilman present John as an oppressive character?

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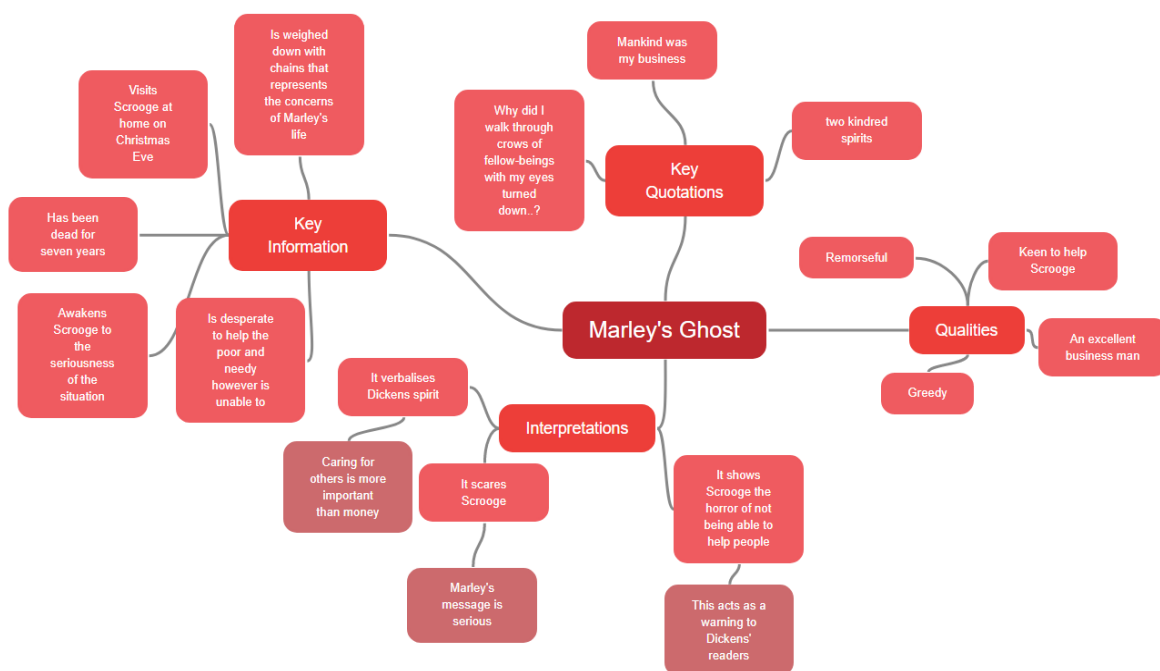
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## Task 4

Over the course of the A-level, you will study a number of texts that are seen as 'Political and Social Protest' writing (PSPW).

With this task, you can be more creative. Take that concept and develop a mindmap of what you think it might mean: '**Political & Social Protest**'. Maybe you could look at the political side; maybe think about protest beyond literature (Art? Music?); think about different things you've read that could be seen as PSPW. The opportunities are endless!!

We've attached a sample mindmap to show the kind of depth we'd like...



# **Beyond Books**

## **Literature events near you**

### **Chester Literature Festival**

Every year, the city comes alive with literature in all of its forms! Hear poets, authors, actors talk about their life, their work, their experiences. There are also many free events run by the University of Chester during the festival.

**Storyhouse** in Chester is a wonderful place for literature lovers to wile away an afternoon, with a library, a theatre, a cinema, and a café – what more could you want?

### **Podcasts:**

- The History of Literature – Jacke Wilson
- Anything but Silent – British Library
- Books and Authors – BBC
- Words and Nerds (explicit!)
- Book Fight

### **Social Media**

#### *Instagram*

- @StrandBookstore
- @SubwayBookReview
- @BraveLiteraryWorld
- @litquotesdaily
- @penguinukbooks

#### *Twitter*

- @goodreads
- @poetryfoundation
- @lithub
- @electriclit

**Check out the TED Talks available too** – there are 218 on ‘literature’ alone!

## **Core texts and complementary reading**

### **Core text: The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood**

#### **Reading to complement:**

- 1984 by George Orwell
- The Scarlett Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
- The Crucible by Arthur Miller
- The Feminine Gospels by Carol Ann Duffy

### **Core text: The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini**

#### **Reading to complement:**

- The Pearl That Broke Its Shell by Nadia Hashimi
- Shantaram by Gregory David Roberts
- One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

### **Core text: Songs of Innocence and Experience by William Blake**

#### **Reading to complement:**

- The Social Contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- The Marriage of Heaven and Hell by William Blake
- Hard Times by Charles Dickens

### **Core text: Othello by William Shakespeare**

#### **Reading to complement:**

- The Guilty Party by O. Henry
- I, Iago by Nicole Galland
- Desdemona by Toni Morrison
- New Boy by Tracy Chevalier

### **Core text: Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller**

#### **Reading to complement:**

- Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
- Fences by August Wilson

- King Lear by William Shakespeare
- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

**Core text: Tess of the d'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy**

Reading to complement:

- Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
- Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte
- Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen
- Far from the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy

## Useful Glossary of Terms

### Frequently misused words

Literary terms	Explanation
<b>Incredible</b>	Literally means 'cannot be believed'. You might use it academically to say that the events in Angela Carter's <i>The Magic Toyshop</i> (1967) 'range from the credible to the incredible'; you wouldn't use it as a word of praise: 'Angela Carter is incredible!'
<b>Ironic</b>	Often used to mean 'unfortunate' but should mean 'turning out against expectation' or, in the case of human expressions, sarcastic instead of sympathetic. An 'ironic smile' is mocking not friendly. Irony is the essence of <b>poetic justice</b> .
<b>Figurative</b>	Figurative language should introduce a comparison, such as a <b>simile</b> or <b>metaphor</b> .
<b>Literal</b>	Literal language has no metaphorical intent.
<b>Massive</b>	Only use this word about objects that have mass. A mountain range can be 'massive'; popular opinion cannot be. Words like 'extensive' or 'significant' or 'widespread' are often more accurate.
<b>Pathetic</b>	Used to mean 'useless' instead of 'inspiring pathos'. 'Pathos' means 'appealing to the emotions'.
<b>Radical</b>	Popular culture is used to this word being shouted by skateboarders or mutant turtles to mean 'great!' It is actually from the Latin word 'radix' (root). A 'Radical MP' in 19 <sup>th</sup> century Britain was one who wanted to make changes to fundamental aspects of society; in other words to go to the <i>root</i> of a problem.

## General terms

Literary terms	Explanation
<b>Allegory</b>	<b>Allegory</b> is a rhetorical device that creates a close, one-to-one comparison. An <b>allegorical</b> comparison of 21 <sup>st</sup> century Britain to a hive might point out that Britain and the hive have queens, workers and soldiers.
<b>Burlesque</b>	Satire that uses caricature.
<b>Colloquial</b>	<b>Colloquial</b> language is the informal language of conversation.
<b>Denouement</b>	The culmination or result of an action, plan or plot.
<b>Diatribes</b>	An impassioned rant or angry speech of denunciation.
<b>Empiricism</b>	As a philosophy <b>empiricism</b> means basing knowledge on direct, sensory perceptions of the world. <b>Empirical</b> means seeking out facts established by experience not theory.
<b>Foreground</b>	To emphasise or make prominent.
<b>Form</b>	The type of literary expression chosen by an author
<b>Genre</b>	A more precise definition of the different literary <b>forms</b> . There are <i>general</i> categories, such as poetry, drama, prose. There are <i>specific</i> categories within these larger divisions, so a <b>sonnet</b> is a <i>specific genre</i> within the larger <b>genre</b> of poetry.
<b>Hyperbole</b>	The use of exaggeration for effect: 'The most daring, prodigious, death-defying feat attempted by man or woman in all human history!'
<b>Intertextuality</b>	A term describing the many ways in which texts can be interrelated, ranging from direct quotation or echoing, to <b>parody</b> .
<b>Ludic</b>	From the Latin word 'ludo', a game. A text that plays games with readers' expectations and/or the expectations aroused by the text itself. Tom Stoppard's <i>The Real Inspector Hound</i> (1968) is both a <b>parody</b> of Agatha Christie's murder-mystery play <i>The Mousetrap</i> (1952) and a <b>ludic</b> text that arouses audience expectations there will be a plot and a mystery to solve but provides no solution. Here the audience is first enticed, then teased and finally frustrated.



<b>Meta</b>	From the Greek meaning 'above or beyond'. Metaphysics' is 'above' or 'beyond' physics. 'Meta' is often used in compound words: <b>metatext</b> , <b>metatheatre</b> , etc. These words usually describe moments when a text goes beyond its own fictionality or makes readers/audience aware of the conventions of its fiction. An <b>aside</b> could be described as a 'metatheatrical' event. The audience offstage hear words the audience onstage cannot hear.
<b>Metaphor</b>	A comparison that creates a direct correspondence 'society is a hive' unlike a <b>simile</b> .
<b>Modernism</b>	The name given to experiments carried out in poetry, prose, and art from around 1920-1939. The relationship of Modernism with tradition is frequently complex but the appearance of a Modernist work is usually aggressively different to that of an older text. Often spelt with a capital: ' <b>Modernism</b> ', ' <b>Modernity</b> ' to distinguish the word from 'modern' meaning 'up to date'.
<b>Narrator/narrative voice</b>	A <b>narrator</b> or a <b>narrative voice</b> conveys a story. Sometimes the narrator's presence is emphasised, as in the 'Dear Reader' convention employed by Charlotte Brontë's <i>Villette</i> (1853). This is called a <b>first person narrative</b> . Sometimes the story is told by an unseen author, as in George Orwell's <i>1984</i> (1949). This is called a <b>third person narrative</b> . Some stories are told by an <b>unreliable narrator</b> . In these tales readers are expected to work out that the person who tells the story is biased, partial or mistaken in the views they put forward. The narrator of Kazuo Ishiguro's <i>The Remains of the Day</i> (1989) is a narrator of this kind. By contrast the <b>omniscient narrator</b> maintains a god-like view of the story in order to provide shaping and commentary. This is the <b>viewpoint</b> usually adopted by George Eliot (1819-80) in her novels.
<b>Oxymoron</b>	Language device where two opposite words or meanings are used side by side e.g. 'sour sweet'.
<b>Parody</b>	The reducing of another text to ridicule by hostile imitation.
<b>Pathetic Fallacy</b>	The use of setting, scenery or weather to mirror the mood of a human activity. Two people having an argument whilst a storm breaks out is an example. The technique is used to make sure the feelings of readers or audience are moved. See <b>pathetic</b> .

<b>Poetic Justice</b>	A literary version of the saying 'hoist with his own petard'. The trapper is caught by the trap in an example of ironic but apt justice. Despite the word 'poetic', examples usually turn up in texts which are narrative and not necessarily poems.
<b>Point of View/viewpoint</b>	These words look as though they should be interchangeable but this is not always the case. A <b>point of view</b> is an opinion; a <b>viewpoint</b> can also be the foundation on which an opinion is based or, literally, a place from which a view can be enjoyed.
<b>Postmodernism</b>	A complex term. Postmodern texts tend to be aware of their own artifice, be filled with <b>intertextual</b> allusions, and <b>ironic</b> rather than sincere.
<b>Satire</b>	A destructive reduction of an idea, image, concept or text. It can employ exaggeration, mimicry, irony or tone.
<b>Semantics</b>	The study of how words create meaning.
<b>Semantic field</b>	The area of language from which a text draws most of its <b>tropes</b> .
<b>Simile</b>	A comparison introduced with 'like' or 'as': 'society is like a hive'.
<b>Stream of Consciousness</b>	The removal of conventional sentence structures and grammar in an attempt to imitate the free flow of thoughts. Virginia Woolf's <i>Mrs Dalloway</i> (1925) and <i>To the Light House</i> (1927) are examples.
<b>Symbol</b>	a thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract.
<b>Transgressive</b>	The crossing of a boundary of culture or taste, usually with a subversive intention. Vladimir Nabakov's <i>Lolita</i> (1955) can be described as a <b>transgressive</b> text that challenges assumptions about sex, love, the age of consent and morality.
<b>Trope</b>	Any of the devices ( <b>metaphors</b> , <b>similes</b> , rhyme etc.) whereby art language differentiates itself from functional language.
<b>Writing Back</b>	A term which describes the appropriation of a text or genre and a rewriting in response. This is a technique frequently employed by Post-colonial writers or feminist writers. Rastafarianism reinterprets the Bible as text of black liberation; Margaret Atwood's <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (1985) revisits the Bible to expose its anti-feminist implications.

## Top Tips for Studying Literature

- Read! Read different genres, different periods, different authors, different forms
- Twitter - follow writers and academics who blog about literature
- Keep a blog on your reading and what you have found – far easier than carrying around a big file
- Download the audio book of the text – Listen and read at the same time
- Get an understanding of what Marxism, feminism etc. are and how they help our understanding of literature
- Historical reading of specific periods in history – Victorian period, Renaissance, Romantic period etc.
- Create a profile of an author you will be studying
- Challenge the teacher with something that you have read
- Library – Google books, school library, university libraries, local libraries
- Download an app called Pocket (available on Android and Apple devices) – keeps all your reading saved in one place
- Write a weekly reflection of what you have learnt each week – These notes can build up to some great revision notes.
- Listen to TED talks on literature and grammar to widen your understand of the subject. This enables you to see what other people's perspectives are. You can listen to them online or download the app. Follow these links to get you started:
  - <https://www.ted.com/topics/literature>
  - <http://blog.ed.ted.com/2014/05/29/be-a-better-writer-in-15-minutes-4-ted-ed-lessons-on-grammar-and-word-choice/>

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