

## **Guildford County School**

**Welcome to the...**

# **English Literature**

**Course Handbook**

## Contents

Introduction

GCSE to A level

The Lessons

Assessment

Study Skills

Curriculum Outline

The Course Content

Assessment Objectives

Band Descriptors

Personalised learning checklist

Reading List

## Introduction

Congratulations! You have made the choice to study English Literature for two more years. This is a course like no other.

You will get the opportunity to experience many different types of literature and discuss your own interpretations with your classmates and your teachers. Many students find the experience both stimulating and inspirational – we hope that you are one of them.

This course handbook tells you everything that you need to know about what you will study and when. There are also some tips about how you will need to change your studying habits now that you are a member of the Sixth Form. We do have different expectations of you (as, no doubt, you have of us) and we want to make that clear in this handbook.

As you have chosen English Literature, we are making the assumption that you enjoy reading as much as we do. We do have a list of set texts that we shall study together but the best of you will read way beyond those texts and will wish to explore new and exciting literature. Please feel free to ask any of us for recommendations and, if you come across something that really fires your imagination or enthusiasm, please share it with us.

As the course progresses into the second year, we expect you to become more independent; the piece of coursework that you submit in the U6 will allow you to explore in closer detail a particular theme or idea that interests you. There is no set title and you are encouraged to not only select your own texts but to decide upon the question you are going to answer.

During your GCSE you will have been encouraged to express your own views and listen and respond to the opinions of others. This becomes even more important at A level as we encourage you to adopt an academic critical standpoint when discussing literature.

All the staff in the English Department warmly welcome you onto our course and hope that you enjoy the experience as much as we do.

## What are the differences between GCSE and A level?

At A Level you will find...

- A relaxed atmosphere
- More in-depth study
- More discussion
- More opportunity to express opinions
- More chances to hear what others think
- The need to apply your own knowledge to questions
- Independent study
- Brilliant books and imaginative resources

These are not just our views, this list was compiled by students sitting right where you are now!

## What will the lessons be like?

Smaller classes mean that you will get much more interaction with your teacher and classmates. Many of the lessons will involve an element of discussion so that you can develop your responses as a reader and discover alternative ones from others.

Your teachers will, of course, guide you and make sure that you are stimulated and stretched in your studies, but there is much more focus on YOU.

You will need to develop into more of an independent learner in the Sixth Form. This means that you will need to take the main responsibility for your own learning. If there is something you don't understand, it is now down to you to find out the answers. In the study of English Literature, so much is based on what answers and interpretations you find in texts. That is why we think this style of learning is hugely beneficial – it also prepares you for university and adulthood.

## Assessment

Assessment is very different at A level. We use bands to mark your work, not grades. The coursework will be marked by your teacher and then moderated both by the department and an external moderator, so you can be sure that your mark is fair.

Because the learning is very much in your hands, your teacher will make sure you are well aware of the assessment criteria too. In other words – we tell you what the examiners want you to do and then guide you towards achieving it.

As well as regular essay practice and coursework, you will be set other types of home and class work. You may be asked to prepare a presentation or topic for class discussion. There will also be smaller writing tasks which may ask you to write empathetically. Although these tasks will not be assessed formally, they are an essential indication of your progress and so must be completed by the deadline. Acting on the feedback your teachers give you is a vital part of your learning and DIRT is integral to the process for all written work you submit.

In addition to the work you do in lessons we anticipate that you will need to spend between 4 and 5 hours a week on private study; this could be anything from consolidating notes, research, reading or essay writing. We will provide you with a form to record this on and this too should be kept in your current work folder so that we can keep track of the extra work you are doing.

## Study Skills

You will be expected to keep charge of your own notes, marked work, exemplar materials, mark schemes and any other pieces of paper you might be given. We suggest that you use a large lever arch file and use dividers to organise your work. It is really important that you start well and don't let the filing get on top of you. Your folder is your responsibility, but your teachers will check regularly to make sure it meets the high standards we expect of you. Your folder should be divided into sections for Paper 1 and Paper 2. Within these sections you should have dividers for lesson notes and handouts on each topic, marked work, and independent learning. You should also have a folder that contains about two-weeks of work to bring to every lesson.

In addition to your notes, you will have a number of texts which you will annotate as you study them. It is important that you keep these annotations clear and readable so it is often a good idea to use a combination of text written notes and supplement these with more in depth notes written on paper.

Compared to KS4, there is a much greater emphasis placed on you analysing your own strengths and weaknesses; you will be expected to produce DIRT sheets for all pieces of assessed work in which you analyse your own performance against set criteria, setting yourself personal targets for improvement.

## Curriculum Outline

SUBJECT: English Literature	Year 12	Year 13
<b>Autumn 1</b>	Introduction to historicism/context  Unseen poetry  Unseen prose	Othello  A Streetcar Named Desire
<b>Autumn 2</b>	The Great Gatsby  The Handmaid's Tale	Othello  A Streetcar Named Desire and Skirrid Hill Comparison
<b>Spring 1</b>	Poetry Anthology & Gatsby comparison  The Handmaid's Tale	Othello  A Streetcar Named Desire and Skirrid Hill Comparison  Revision and mock exam prep.
<b>Spring 2</b>	Poetry Anthology & Gatsby comparison  The Handmaid's Tale  Mock exam prep.	Revision/exam prep cycle
<b>Summer 1</b>	NEA	Revision/exam prep cycle
<b>Summer 2</b>	NEA	N/A

# What do we study?

This is a two-year course.

## **Board: AQA Spec A**

### **Paper 1: Love through the Ages**

- Study of three texts: AQA Poetry Anthology, The Great Gatsby and Othello  
Examination will include comparison of two unseen poems.
- Written exam: 3 hours, open book in Section C only (Poetry Anthology/Gatsby), 75 marks, 40% of A-level.
- Section A: Othello: one passage-based question with linked essay (25 marks)
- Section B: Unseen poetry: compulsory essay question on two unseen poems (25 marks).
- Section C: Poetry Anthology/Gatsby comparison, one essay question (25 marks).

### **Paper 2: Texts in shared contexts**

- Option 2B: Modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day.
- Study of three texts: The Handmaid's Tale, A Streetcar Named Desire, Skirrid Hill.
- Examination will include an unseen prose extract.
- Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes, open book, 75 marks, 40% of A-level
- Section A: The Handmaid's Tale. One essay question (25 marks).
- Section B: one compulsory question on an unseen prose extract (25 marks) and one essay question comparing A Streetcar Named Desire and Skirrid Hill (25 marks).

### **Non-exam assessment: Independent critical study: texts across time**

- Comparative critical study of two texts, at least one of which must have been written pre-1900
- One extended essay (2500 words) and a bibliography
- 50 marks, 20% of A-level, assessed by teachers, moderated by AQA

## Assessment Objectives

All your pieces of extended writing will be assessed according to the relevant Assessment Objectives (AOs). Here they are – become familiar with them quickly to help you focus your work appropriately.

**AO1** essentially requires informed and relevant responses which are accurately written and use appropriate concepts and terminology.

**AO2** requires students to analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts, with particular focus on the structures of texts as a form of shaping.

**AO3** relates to the many possible contexts which arise out of the text, the specific task and the period being studied.

**This specification treats AOs 1, 2 and 3 as broadly equal, given their relative weightings: AO1 has a weighting of 28% whilst AOs 2 and 3 both have a weighting of 24%.**

**AO4** involves connections across texts and sees possible meanings and interpretations arising not only out of the contexts of the text itself (AO3 above) but also out of the wider and broader contexts which comes from the study of period. Thus even when an individual text is being investigated it should still be seen as being framed by a wider network of texts and contexts to which it connects.

**AO5** completes the picture by acknowledging that if work in AOs 2, 3 and 4 had been included in the response to the question then debate and interpretations will arise out of this work showing that the interpretation of texts is not a fixed process but a dynamic one. In non-exam assessment (NEA) only, discussion of different interpretations must include, on at least one text, consideration of different interpretations of the text(s) over time.

**AOs 4 and 5 each have a weighting of 12% in all questions.**

Familiarise yourself with the English Literature A Level pages of the AQA website. Here you will find a range of useful resources including mark schemes and past paper questions.

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-literature-a-7711-7712>

## Band Descriptors

Band	Key Features	What this means
5	Perceptive, assured	<b>'Perception'</b> is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task. <b>'Assuredness'</b> is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.
4	Coherent, thorough	<b>'Coherence'</b> is shown when students are logical and consistent in their arguments in relation to the task. They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way. <b>'Thoroughness'</b> is shown when students write carefully, precisely and accurately.
3	Straightforward, relevant	<b>'Straightforward'</b> work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known. <b>'Relevant'</b> work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.
2	Simple, generalised	<b>'Simple'</b> work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task. <b>'Generalised'</b> work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.
1	Largely irrelevant, largely misunderstood, largely inaccurate	<b>'Largely irrelevant'</b> work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question. <b>'Largely misunderstood'</b> and <b>'largely inaccurate'</b> work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.

**A level English Literature Personalised Learning Checklist**

<b>Autumn Term</b>	Signature 1	Signature 2	Signature 3
<b>Reading ahead/recapping and note-making (one hour per teacher every week)</b>			
<b>Wider reading:</b> other texts from same genre or by same author as set text			
<b>Critical response:</b> research and record responses to your set text from critics and other readers			
<b>Create an exam question:</b> using the sample material you have looked at in class, create your own exam style questions			
<b>Practise exam responses:</b> write a response to your own/your colleagues question and, using the mark schemes provided, assess them			
<b>Reading exam reports and other support materials:</b> become familiar with the wealth of support material provided by AQA and use it			
<b>Investigating context:</b> research into the social, historical and literary context of the texts you are studying, make notes			

<b>Spring Term</b>	Signature 1	Signature 2	Signature 3
<b>Reading ahead/recapping and notemaking (one hour per teacher every week)</b>			
<b>Wider reading:</b> other texts from same genre or by same author as set texts			
<b>Critical response:</b> research and record responses to your set text from critics and other readers			
<b>Create an exam question:</b> using the sample material you have looked at in class, create your own exam style questions			
<b>Practise exam responses:</b> write a response to your own/your colleagues question and, using the mark schemes provided, assess them			
<b>Reading exam reports and other support materials:</b> become familiar with the wealth of support material provided by AQA and use it			
<b>Making links:</b> make notes on theme, meaning and literary devices which link your texts			

## Reading List

The following list of books is an indication and is by no means exhaustive – other books by the same authors are equally valid but it is important to read a range of literature rather than focusing all your efforts on one genre, time period or author.

### Drama

Othello – William Shakespeare  
The Taming of the Shrew – William Shakespeare  
Measure for Measure – William Shakespeare  
The Winter's Tale – William Shakespeare  
Top Girls – Caryl Churchill  
A Streetcar Named Desire – Tennessee Williams  
Translations – Brian Friel  
All My Sons – Arthur Miller  
Our Country's Good – Timberlake Wertenbaker  
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof – Tennessee Williams

### Prose

Persuasion – Jane Austen  
Jane Eyre – Charlotte Bronte  
Wuthering Heights – Emily Bronte  
The Awakening – Kate Chopin  
The Rotters' Club – Jonathan Coe  
The Mill on the Floss – George Eliot  
Tess of the D'Urbervilles – Thomas Hardy  
The Great Gatsby – F Scott Fitzgerald  
A Room with a View – E M Forster  
The Go-Between – L P Hartley  
Rebecca – Daphne du Maurier  
Atonement – Ian McEwan  
The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood  
Waterland – Graham Swift  
Spies – Michael Frayn  
One Few Over the Cuckoo's Nest – Ken Kesey  
The God of Small Things – Arundhati Roy  
The Help – Kathryn Stockett  
The Color Purple – Alice Walker  
Oranges are not the Only Fruit – Jeanette Winterson  
Revolutionary Road – Richard Yates  
1984 – George Orwell

**Poetry**

Feminine Gospels – Carol Ann Duffy

Skirrid Hill – Owen Sheers

Selected Poems 2013 edition – Tony Harrison

New Selected Poems – Seamus Heaney

Birthday Letters – Ted Hughes

Ariel – Sylvia Plath

As part of your course, you will have access to the English and Media Centre emagazine: (<https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk>) Here you will find a wealth of stimulating articles written by experts on a wide range of texts. Your teacher will give you the login details.