
A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

Transition Booklet 2022-23

Welcome to A Level English Literature!

We're delighted you have chosen to study English Literature with us and we're sure you're going to enjoy studying the fantastic texts we've chosen for you.

We recognise that it can be nerve wracking to start a new course, so we want to give you the best support in developing the skills you need to succeed.

Studying Literature at A Level is more demanding than at GCSE and requires much more independent study to be successful. This booklet offers you the chance to practise some of these skills and gives you an introduction to some of the texts we will be studying. We do not expect you to submit it, but of course we would be delighted to see any work you have done and to discuss it with you.

If you find yourself unsure about any of the tasks in the booklet, please email ecosnett@sbe.magnificat.org.uk, aredfern@sbe.magnificat.org.uk or dfernie@sbe.magnificat.org.uk and we will do our best to help you.

We're looking forward to seeing you in September!

The English Department

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Week One - Independent Study Skills

Internet research

Most people know how to perform a basic search using search engines like 'Google'. However, there are tricks to help you make your searches more effective, something that will be really useful for A Level study.

Did you know?

Google has a sister search engine designed especially for academic research. You can access it by going to: <https://scholar.google.co.uk>

Search Commands

Here are some of the ways you can make your search more accurate.

Note: Don't put spaces between symbols and your search term.

Operator	Function	Example
AND	Limits results to sites which include all search terms.	Vegetarianism AND obesity (Search for content that contains both vegetarianism and obesity.)
OR	Include results for sites which contain at least one of the search terms	Scholarly OR academic (Search for content that contains either scholarly, academic or both)
-	Exclude a term from the search	Students -school (Limits results to sites that contain the term students but not school)
-site	Excludes a website from the search	Students -site:wikipedia.org (Limits results to sites other than Wikipedia)
SITE:	Searches specific sites	Students SITE:.ac.uk (Limits results to sites that end in .ac.uk - educational establishments.)
RELATED:	Finds sites with similar content to one you specify.	RELATED:bcu.ac.uk (Will find sites that have similar content to BCU.ac.uk)
" "	Find an exact match	"Dickens' childhood" (Will limit results to sites that include the exact phrase Dickens' childhood.)
~	Find synonyms of a term	~academic

		(Will search for the term 'academic' and its synonyms)
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Practice Tasks

Use the following tasks to practice designing effective search strategies.

1. Create a search to find out about the life of F Scott Fitzgerald.

2. Narrow your search down to articles from the British Library only.


3. Open one of your results and make some notes about what you find.

Critical Literacy

Not all information sources are created equal!

Anyone can create a web page and post information on to the internet, without having to prove they know what they're writing about. This means it's down to us to think carefully about the sources we select, so that our work is as accurate as possible.

To help us, we can do the **CRAAP test!**

EVALUATING MY SOURCES WITH CRAAP 

C **Currency** The timeliness of the information
✓ When was the information published or posted? ✓ Has the information been revised or updated? ✓ Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic? ✓ Are the links functional?

R **Relevance** The importance of the information for your needs
✓ Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question? ✓ Who is the intended audience? ✓ Is the information at an appropriate level? ✓ Have you looked at a variety of sources before choosing this one? ✓ Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

A **Authority** The the source of the information
✓ Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor? ✓ Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given? ✓ What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given? ✓ What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic? ✓ Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address? ✓ Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?

A **Accuracy** The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content
✓ Where does the information come from? ✓ Is the information supported by evidence? ✓ Has the information been reviewed or refereed? ✓ Can you verify any of the information in another source? ✓ Does the language or tone seem biased and free of emotion?

P **Purpose** The reason the information exists
✓ What is the purpose of the information? ✓ Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear? ✓ Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda? ✓ Does the point of view appear objective and impartial? ✓ Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

Adapted from the CRAP Test
created by Librarian Molly Beestrum, Dominican University

Task 1. Visit the following site: <https://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/evaluating/craap>

Watch the video and read the information given.

Task 2. Visit the two following sites and carry out the CRAAP test on them. For the purpose of this task, you are researching the context of *The Great Gatsby*.

Site 1: <https://www.history.com/news/great-gatsby-roaring-twenties-fitzgerald-dark-side>

Site 2:

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/reinvention/archive/bcur2011specialissue/duffy/

	Site 1	Site 2
Currency		
Relevance		
Authority		
Accuracy		
Purpose		

Now, which site do you think is the most appropriate source to use in your research?
Explain why.

Task 3. For the following tasks, we will look at an extract from Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and *She Walks in Beauty* by Lord Byron.

You should read the extract and the poem before moving on. You should annotate them in as much detail as you can.

She Walks in Beauty

Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Extract from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. (Chapter 2)

"Hello, Wilson, old man," said Tom, slapping him jovially on the shoulder. "How's business?"

"I can't complain," answered Wilson unconvincingly. "When are you going to sell me that car?"

"Next week; I've got my man working on it now."

"Works pretty slow, don't he?"

"No, he doesn't," said Tom coldly. "And if you feel that way about it, maybe I'd better sell it somewhere else after all."

"I don't mean that," explained Wilson quickly. "I just meant----"

His voice faded off and Tom glanced impatiently around the garage. Then I heard footsteps on a stairs and in a moment the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door. She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crepe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and walking through her husband as if he were a ghost shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Then she wet her lips and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice:

"Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit down."

"Oh, sure," agreed Wilson hurriedly and went toward the little office, mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls. A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity--except his wife, who moved close to Tom.

"I want to see you," said Tom intently. "Get on the next train."

"All right."

"I'll meet you by the news-stand on the lower level."

She nodded and moved away from him just as George Wilson emerged with two chairs from his office door.

We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a grey, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track.

"Terrible place, isn't it," said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg.

"Awful."

"It does her good to get away."

"Doesn't her husband object?"

"Wilson? He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive."

So Tom Buchanan and his girl and I went up together to New York--or not quite together, for Mrs. Wilson sat discreetly in another car. Tom deferred that much to the sensibilities of those East Eggers who might be on the train.

She had changed her dress to a brown figured muslin which stretched tight over her rather wide hips as Tom helped her to the platform in New York. At the news-stand she bought a copy of "Town Tattle" and a moving-picture magazine and, in the station drug store, some cold cream and a small flask of perfume. Upstairs, in the solemn echoing drive she let four taxi cabs drive away before she selected a new one, lavender-colored with grey upholstery, and in this we slid out from the mass of the station into the glowing sunshine. But immediately she turned sharply from the window and leaning forward tapped on the front glass.

N.B. The *Great Gatsby* is an American text and the original spellings have been preserved.

Week 2 - Introduction to research and Writing

So, now we are able to easily find information online and decide how valid it is. But how do we know what to look for in the first place?

Research is likely to be the most time-consuming part of your A Level English Literature course; it can also be one of the most enjoyable! You'll need to do independent research into the ideas we discuss in class, read a wide range of texts around the ones we study and find out everything you need to know for your non-examined assessment. As with all tasks this big, it's worth spending some time breaking it down and creating a plan before we begin so we can stay on track and avoid wasting valuable time.

There are lots of planning strategies available and it can be useful to experiment and find one that works for you. In this section we are going to look at using INQUIRY QUESTIONS to help us plan our research.

Step One

First, we need to decide what it is we are going to investigate and create our INQUIRY QUESTION. Often, this will be given to you in the assignment instructions but sometimes (like in your NEA) you will have to choose your research topic. It might look something like: "How does Shakespeare's presentation of human power in Macbeth differ from Shelley's ideas as shown in Ozymandias?"

For this exercise you are going to write about **the treatment of women in the extract and poem you have been given**. Write an inquiry question you might use:

Step Two

Now we need to break the inquiry question down into different topic areas. This will help us to think about different perspectives in our answer.

Here is our example:

Inquiry Question: How does Shakespeare's presentation of human power in Macbeth differ from Shelley's ideas as shown in Ozymandias?			
Topic 1: What language do the writers use to present human power?	Topic 2: Who were the audiences for the texts?	Topic 3: What are the differences in the writers' contexts?	Topic 4: What is the difference between a drama text and a poem?

Now try with your inquiry question:

Inquiry Question:			
Topic 1:	Topic 2:	Topic 3:	Topic 4:

Step Three

Our next step is to consider synonyms and keywords that might help us to research our question. For example:

1. Language	Synonyms/Keywords: Figurative, words, phrases, device, technique, method Reader, viewer, consumer, people Politics, society, class, history, contemporary, empire Text, form, style, technique, conventions, genre
2. Audience	
3. Context	
4. Drama/poem	

Now your turn:

1. 2. 3. 4.	Synonyms/Keywords:
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Step Four

Our final step, before setting off on our research is to consider where we might find the best information. This is important to help us decide on the best search to create for our task. For example:

Source: <i>Academic sites, such as universities (.ac.uk)</i>	Reason: <i>They offer academic articles that are usually properly researched. I should still check for their sources.</i>
Source: <i>Oxford online dictionaries.</i>	Reason: <i>They produce reliable definitions of terms and have a specialist literary dictionary. Must be aware that words will sometimes mean different things in other contexts.</i>
Source: <i>Literary sites (The British Library, the RSC, the Byron Society)</i>	Reason: <i>They offer an authoritative source on their specialism but I must be aware of any biases.</i>

Now you:

Source:	Reason:
Source:	Reason:
Source:	Reason:

The next page contains an example research plan.
Don't look past this page until you have attempted the exercises.

<p>Inquiry Question: <i>How is the treatment of women presented in the extract from Fitzgerald's <i>The Great Gatsby</i> and Byron's <i>She walks in Beauty</i>?</i></p>			
<p>Topic 1: <i>How are the women described in the texts?</i></p>	<p>Topic 2: <i>Who is speaking in the texts?</i></p>	<p>Topic 3: <i>How were women treated in society when the writers were working?</i></p>	<p>Topic 4: <i>Who were the texts aimed at (their audience)?</i></p>
<p>1. Described</p> <p>2. Who</p> <p>3. Society</p> <p>4. Audience</p>	<p>Synonyms/Keywords: <i>Language, portrayed, created, device, technique, method</i></p> <p><i>Narrator, voice, perspective, point-of-view</i></p> <p><i>Politics, class, history, contemporary, sexism, feminism</i></p> <p><i>Reader, reaction, society, target, purpose</i></p>		
<p>Source: <i>The texts and my own interpretation</i></p>	<p>Reason: <i>I need to give evidence from the texts themselves and present an independent analysis. I should be careful to check my thoughts, maybe by discussing it with someone I know.</i></p>		
<p>Source: <i>The British Library</i></p>	<p>Reason: <i>They have lots of information on the texts and the writers that is produced by experts. They are a trusted institution. I should still double check the information though as critics can have different opinions.</i></p>		
<p>Source: <i>A Level Revision guides.</i></p>	<p>Reason: <i>They offer information that is explained carefully and is going to be relevant to my course. I shouldn't rely on them alone though as the course needs me to give more detailed information.</i></p>		

You will notice that this plan doesn't stick to online resources for research. There are lots of resources available to you for research including the internet, the school library, the town library, your teachers and your classmates - make use of them all!

Now you are going to use your research plan to explore and write about the extract and poem you have been working with.

Task 1

Use your research plan and the search commands to design at least three searches:

Task 2

Now use your searches to research the task. Use this page and the following page to record your findings.

Summer tasks to complete in preparation for the A-Level course:

You need to read *Othello*, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Kite Runner*.

You need to produce 5 pages of notes for each text. These should include:

- 2 pages on key characters
- 1 page on context (social, historical)
- 1 page on key themes of the text
- 1 page on the writers' style (writers' methods - use of language, structural techniques, narrative)

Support:

There are lots of places you can find support while reading the texts:

No Fear Shakespeare website: <https://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/> (gives a modern English translation of Shakespeare's plays.)

The Royal Shakespeare Company website: www.rsc.org.uk

The library - look for York Notes or revision guides for the texts

Film adaptations of texts can be found on YouTube

Audio books are also available online - Amazon

It is essential you have read the texts above before the course starts. Although we will be studying them in depth, you will need to have a good understanding of the plot and key information to access lessons properly.

Wider Reading

The A-Level English Literature course requires you to have a confident understanding of the texts you are studying through wider reading. 19th Century novels, drama and poetry are a good way to support your wider knowledge for Paper 1, 'Love through the Ages', and to help you choose the text you will compare with *The Kite Runner* for your NEA. Reading other texts written post 1945 for Paper 2, 'Modern Times' will help you develop your understanding of the shared historical period and of the individual contexts of each of our set texts (*Top Girls*, *The Help* and *n. Starting your wider reading now, will ensure that you excel in the A-Level Literature course. In the list below are some texts that you could choose to read as part of your wider reading:*

Post-1945 Texts (including African-American feminist works):

J.D. Salinger	<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>
Harper Lee	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
Alice Walker	<i>The Colour Purple</i>
Maya Angelou	<i>I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings</i>
John Updike	<i>Rabbit, Run</i>
Sylvia Plath	<i>The Bell Jar</i>
Jeanette Winterson	<i>Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit</i>
Tom Wolfe	<i>The Bonfire of the Vanities</i>

19th Century Texts that are relevant for Paper 1 ('Love through the Ages') and which are possible candidates for your NEA:

Jane Austen	<i>Mansfield Park</i>
Jane Austen	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>

Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre

Emily Brontë

Wuthering Heights

Charles Dickens

Great Expectations

Charles Dickens

A Tale of Two Cities

Mary Shelley

Frankenstein

Bram Stoker

Dracula

Henrik Ibsen

A Doll's House

A useful text to show wider reading for F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* in Paper 1 is Ernest Hemingway, *Fiesta (The Sun Also Rises)*, which presents a very different take on romantic love.p