



Pre-entry Preparation, Requirements and Recommendations

Welcome to A-Level English Literature at Comberton Sixth Form.

Preparation Recommendations

It is vital that you read *The Great Gatsby* (F Scott Fitzgerald, Penguin Modern Classics) over the summer. September lessons will start from an assumption that it has been read. There will also be poetry texts to study, but we will provide an anthology for you in due course.

By September you will need your own copy of *Othello*. The edition used in the classroom is Arden Shakespeare (3rd Revised edition) ISBN 978-1903436455 available at bookshops; second-hand copies can be found in Charity shops as well as online at this time of year. Other companies publish the text, but these vary in content and pagination, so please invest in the Arden one, to make referencing easier.

This year, we are providing a more detailed programme of study for you to engage in before the course commences formally, as your GCSE studies have been curtailed. Please see the attached sheets and the tasks they contain, to help you arrive in September feeling confident that you have kept your literary and analytical skills sharply honed. There are a number of tasks to be completed, so read them as soon as possible.

Requirements

It is strongly recommended that you buy the AQA Literature B Student Book (by CUP, ISBN: 978-1107468023) which is £25.20 at Amazon (less for Used) or can be purchased from our Sixth Form library for £22, as it will be the source for homework and for independent and extension tasks during the two year course. You will need 2 separate A4 folders and A4 lined paper, highlighters and pens during year 12.

You will also be studying *Death of a Salesman* (Miller, Penguin Classic edition) during Year 12 but will not need the text until December. Further details will follow in the first term.

A selection of critical texts exploring various aspects of literature are provided in our Sixth Form library.

We look forward to working with you from September. In the meantime, if you have any queries regarding your course preparation, please contact me: sblackford@combertonvc.org

Mrs S Blackford

Head of KS5 Literature & Film Studies

English Literature – A Level transition tasks

In September, our first text for study will be *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. As an A level Literature student, you're expected to have read it by the time you arrive. Unfortunately, there is no time to read along in class – and you wouldn't want to, as you'll prefer to arrive bursting with ideas and views to share!

Task 1:

Read *The Great Gatsby* all the way through. Don't rush: a careful first reading will help you when you come to re-read sections for analysis in the autumn. Avoid any film versions of it, so they don't influence your personal, imaginative responses to the characters or mislead you as some events are added/omitted in them.

Task 2:

Create a wider reading booklet on F Scott Fitzgerald by using the questions below to guide your research.

AO3 - Contexts

Research the writer's work and style to establish their 'agenda'

- Why were they writing?
- What did their work tend to focus on?
- Who were their influences etc.?

Research the literary context

- What was happening in literature at the time? What themes were popular?
- What themes, issues and concepts were being written about? Why? By whom?
- What are the typical qualities of the theatre/prose/poetry of the time?
- How were texts published / performed at the time? For what size/type of audience?
- What censorship /publishing laws affected the way texts could be written?
- Was this text revolutionary or conventional? Research the social and historical context
- What were the dominant beliefs about gender roles, religion, class, etc.?
- What events / issues might have influenced writers at the time?
- How might the writer have adapted the text to reflect contemporary society or consciously be critical of society in some way?

AO2 – Analysis of authorial methods

- What is the overall structure of the text – how does the plot and characterisation develop? How is the text divided into acts, chapters etc. Are there any recurring motifs / symbols? Is there a resolution or an open ending? Which characters are most central to driving the narrative?
- What sort of narrative voice does the author use? What is the narrative perspective? Do these shift/change at all?
- What (different) types of language does the writer use?
- What is the setting of the narrative?
- How is characterisation achieved?

Select 2-3 quotations that best represent the key themes, issues or concepts in the text and annotate for techniques of language, structure and form. Remember to consider where in the text the quotations are from and who says them – does the writer want us to sympathise, agree, ridicule this perspective?

AO1 – Argument and Interpretation

- How are the key issues, themes and concepts presented in the text? What is championed, what is undermined? How does the writer use characters to communicate this?

AO5 – Different Perspectives

- How was it received at the time?
- How is it perceived now?

Consider how different critics would interpret the text:

- Feminism: How are gender roles presented? Is there equality for men and women? Is there a power struggle?
- Marxism: How are social class, wealth and power hierarchies presented? Considering aspects of the text's form, style, themes and subject matter – which other texts could you draw similarities with? Try and find links with poetry, prose and drama texts across a range of historical periods.

Recommended list of literature texts for wider reading:

Aim to read at least one of these novels that were also published in the 1920s:

Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

The Mysterious Affair at Styles by Agatha Christie (also useful for Yr13 Elements of Crime Writing unit)

Mrs Dalloway by Virginia Woolf

The Sun also Rises by Ernest Hemingway

Task 3: Reading for Pleasure

Hopefully, reading is always a pleasure for a Literature student, but here are a few titles that are much loved by various members of the English dept here at CSF – not always easy reads, but the effort is hopefully worth it. You can let us know in September! Aim to read at least 2 of these as well as other novels of your choosing.

Enduring Love by Ian McEwan

Things falls Apart by Chinua Achebe

The Color Purple by Alice Walker

Of Mice & Men by John Steinbeck

Outcast by Sadie Jones

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell

Orlando by Virginia Woolf

Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks

Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

The Little Stranger by Sarah Waters

White Teeth by Zadie Smith