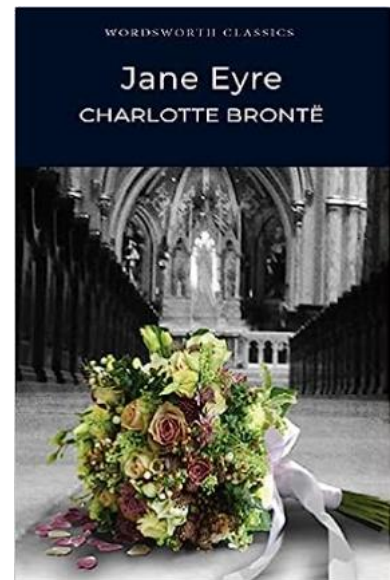
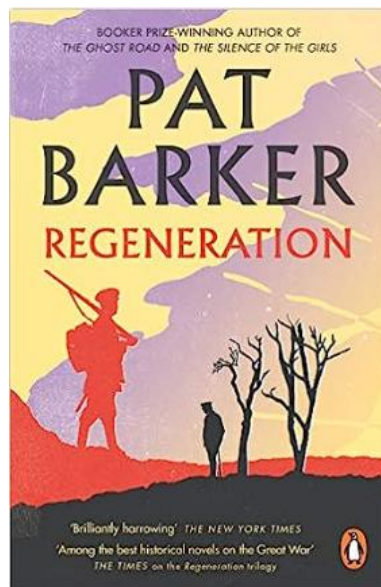
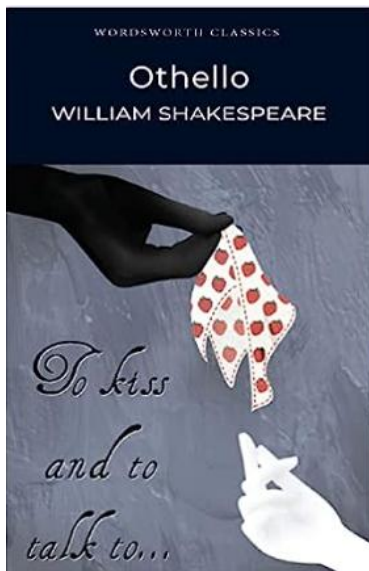




A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE GUIDE BOOK



Name:

Welcome to English Literature at Prince Henry's

This transition booklet is designed to help you bridge the gap between your GCSE studies and A Level

Why do transition work?

Preparation is crucial for studying A Levels. A Levels require you to be an independent learner. Although you have fewer subjects, the volume of work is greater due to the increased demand of depth and detail. This information will ensure you are ready for the challenges of becoming an A Level student in September.

How can you prepare?

The themes for A Level Literature are 'LOVE THROUGH THE AGES' and 'WORLD WAR ONE AND ITS AFTERMATH'. We explore the ways in which these themes have been presented in literature and how this has changed across time.

1. Read as widely as possible – choose poetry, prose and drama from the reading lists and think about the ways in which the ideas are being presented.
2. It is also really useful to have a working knowledge of the Bible, especially the Creation story, main events of the Old Testament and the life of Jesus. The language and images of both the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer resonate in Literature. It's also useful to explore Greek and Roman mythology, <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/greek-mythology> and https://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Mythology/ are a good place to start.
3. Think about major historical events and cultural and social changes that have happened over the last few hundred years and consider ways that these might influence the way that writers write. It really adds to your understanding of literature if you know something of the period and the influences on a writer.
4. It is great preparation to go to the Theatre as much as possible, we are very blessed with easy access to Cheltenham Everyman, the RSC at Stratford and the theatres in Birmingham and Bristol. Many theatres also offer a subscription service for filmed productions. Try Marquee TV. BBC iPlayer often has something to offer here, too.
5. Film adaptations. There have been some great adaptations of literature texts: *Little Women*, *Schindler's List*, *The Color Purple*, *Trainspotting*, *Never Let Me Go*, *American Psycho*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Beloved*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Great Gatsby* are just some that spring to mind. Consider how the original texts have been adapted. There have also been some excellent biopics about writers: *Iris*, *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, *Wilde* are three to get you started.
6. It's always good to visit the places that have influenced writers or which feature in their novels: explore the Dorset heathland that becomes almost another character for Thomas Hardy, or Jane Austen's Bath and the Brontës' West Yorkshire, or visit some of the National Trust properties that have featured in adaptations of novels. There are also great museums dedicated to writers such as Dove Cottage (Wordsworth) and the different Shakespeare properties which are on our doorstep in Stratford-upon-Avon.

7. Art and literature are inextricably linked. A surprising amount of great art is inspired by literature and vice versa. William Blake's artistic vision influenced the Romantic era and the Pre-Raphaelites forged close links with literature and Hogarth's satire is reflected across eighteenth and nineteenth century literature. *The Lady of Shalott* and Hamlet's Ophelia have been repeatedly depicted in art. Equally the art of World War One is crucial to our understanding, look particularly at the paintings of Paul Nash and Christopher Nevinson who fought at the front.
8. Check out both Radio and BBC Four. Culture is at their heart and there is a range of excellent programmes: Listen to *Book at Bedtime*, Melvyn Bragg's *In Our Time*, *A Good Read* and *The Book Programme*; watch *The Secret Life of Books* or *Novels that Shaped our World*. The Sky Arts Channel is also a great platform for the arts in a multitude of different formats.
9. Or try Podcasts: *The History of Literature*, *Vintage Literature*, *You're Booked*, *Mostly Lit*, *Hay Festival*, *The Guardian Books Podcast* are some of the best, but there are many more particularly for special interest eg *Shedunnit* for Golden Age crime.
10. Visit literary festivals if you can; hearing authors talk about their work, or the work of others, can be incredibly illuminating. We are lucky to have the Cheltenham Literature Festival on our doorstep, so do use it; the programme is always announced in mid-August whether that be live or online. There is also a literary festival in Worcester and in Chipping Campden and the world famous Hay Festival has put a lot of past events on line.
11. Read books about studying Literature: for example *Studying English Literature* by Ashley Chantler, *English Literature: A Very Short Introduction* by Jonathan Bate or *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* by Jonathan Culler
12. Try an online course to develop some of the skills that will help you as you become an A level critical reader. Try this course from the university of York: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykk1JVufvE8&t=32s> or this course building up all your literary analysis skills: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/literature/approaching-literature-reading-great-expectations/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>

ABOVE ALL – KEEP READING!

Book lists are great for opening up debates and that is what many of these are. See what you think. Challenge yourself to read one book from any of the lists that you haven't already.

- www.thegreatestbooks.org
- www.theguardian.com/books/series/toptens
- <https://www.goodreads.com/>
- <https://poetryarchive.org/explore/>
- <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/find-your-next-read/reading-lists/>

“Great books help you understand, and they help you feel understood”

John Green

Summer Holiday Task

1. Watch this TED talk:

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?referrer=playlist-the_power_of_fiction_1&autoplay=true

Search: 'Adichie Danger of a Single Story'

2. Make notes on the following:

- What does Adichie say about her understanding of the world from her childhood reading?
- What books did you read when you were growing up and how did they influence your world view?
- What is a 'single-story' and how would you apply that to our society?
- Are there any 'single stories' that you have assumed to be true?

EXTENSION:

Read a novel by Adichie.

- Americanah
- Half of a Yellow Sun
- The Purple Hibiscus
- Dream Count
- The Thing Around Your Neck (short story collection)

How does she challenge ideas of a 'single story' in her writing?



Course Pathway

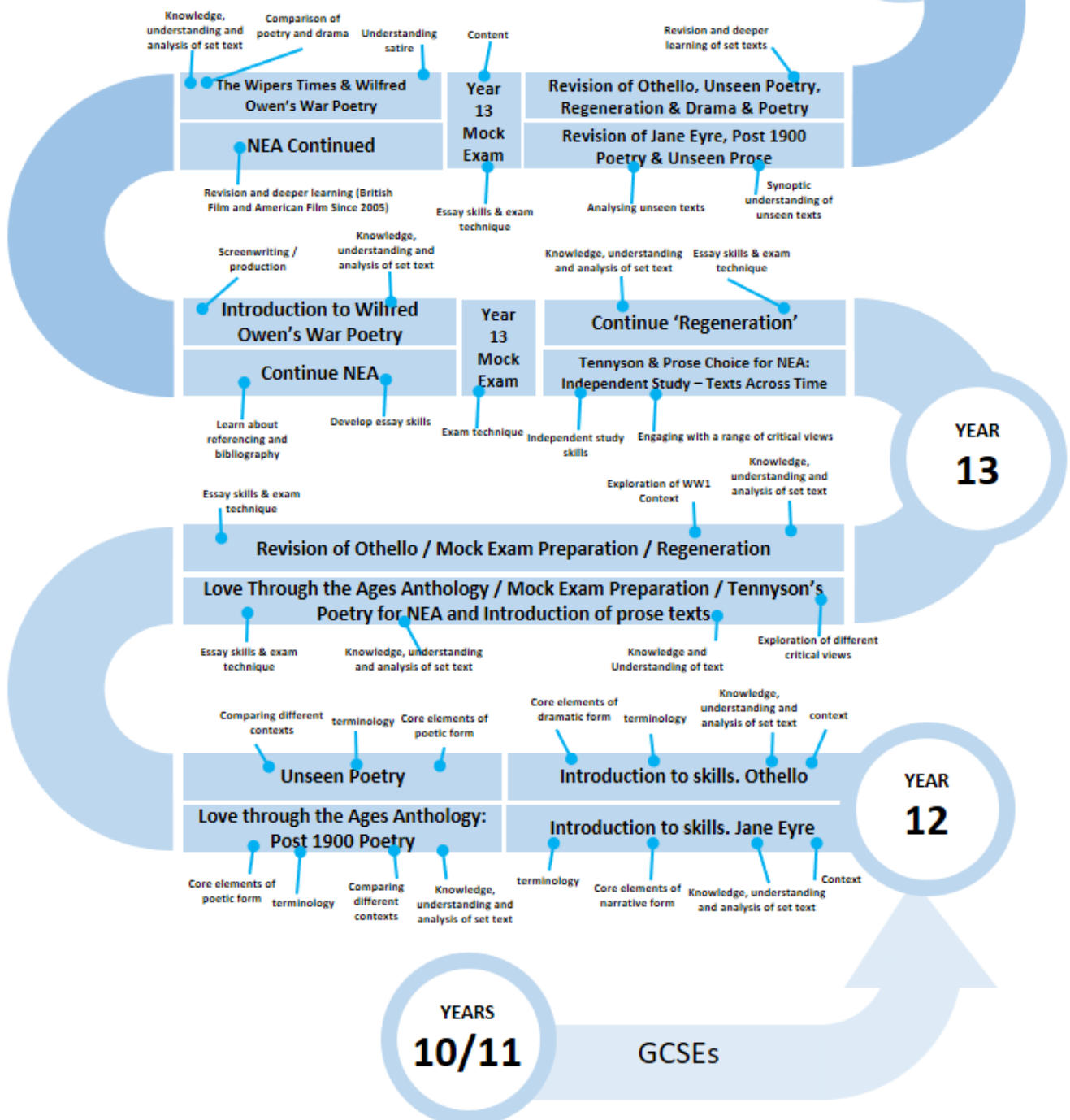
A Level English Literature

Degree Courses: English Literature, Creative Writing, Journalism, Broadcasting, Law, Psychology, Linguistics, Liberal Arts, Drama, Librarianship

Apprenticeships: Law, media, creative arts, journalism.

Careers: Marketing, the media, the arts, law, teaching, public relations, journalism, editing, broadcasting, public relations, human resources, publishing, theatre education, arts administration, curating, writing.

**NEXT
STEPS**



Exam Information

Paper 1: Love through the ages 3 hour exam Study of three texts: <i>Jane Eyre</i> & <i>Poetry Anthology</i> comparison, <i>Othello</i> , comparison of two unseen poems 40% of A Level	Paper 2: WW1 and its Aftermath 2 hour 30 minute exam Study of three texts: <i>Regeneration</i> , comparison of <i>The Wipers Times</i> and the poetry of Wilfred Owen, and analysis of an unseen prose extract 40% of A Level	Non Examined Assessment: Texts Across Time 2,500 word essay Independent critical study on a novel of your choice, compared with the poetry of Tennyson. You could explore a variety of themes. 20% of A Level
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What Sort of Activities Will We Do?

- Reading and discussion of texts
- Exploration of writers and their ideas
- Analysis of language, structure and form in texts
- Exploration of influences on writers from different times
- Visit to Haworth in West Yorkshire – home of the Bronte Sisters
- University-style lectures
- Reading – choose your own wider reading
- Research
- Drama
- Theatre Visits
- Formal essay writing

Transition from GCSE to A-Level Essential skills to develop:

A love of learning and thirst for knowledge:

Be inquisitive; ask questions and then be motivated to find out the answers. These might not be in the first place you go to: be prepared to read around and conduct extensive research.

Independent learning:

Unlike at GCSE, you will be expected to take responsibility for your own learning with support from your teachers who can facilitate your learning. Think autonomously and respond personally to texts.

Perseverance and resilience:

Persist with your A-Level learning even when it seems difficult or challenging. You also need to be resilient and thrive on constructive criticism. It will take time to build on your skills from GCSE to achieving the same grades or higher grades at A-Level. The texts and concepts you come across at A-Level will be challenging, but you will learn a number of strategies to support you in accessing these texts and ways of thinking.

Organisation and time management:

Learning requires effort and a commitment to your studies. The more you invest in your learning, the more you will gain in terms of academic achievement. The English department will expect you to complete a substantial amount of independent study per week. In addition to reading and preparation for lessons, you will also regularly write formal essays and you will follow a Private Study programme of wider reading and activities to give you a broader understanding of the texts that you are studying. There may also be additional reading and revision to complete at some points in the year.

Wider reading and research:

Be prepared to read widely on an English course. You will receive set text lists, as well as recommended reading and wider reading suggestions. The expectation is that you will be a keen reader. You will also be expected to research texts independently, investigating biographical details for authors and literary, social, cultural, political and historical contexts to develop an informed reading of texts. Texts do not exist in isolation and, as such, you should seek to gain a strong understanding of the contexts in which they are produced and received. Don't rely on Wikipedia and Google searches; use the recommended reading lists and the LRC to support your research.

Become a critical, active reader:

Question writers and texts. Be critical of their representations of the world and form an educated viewpoint.

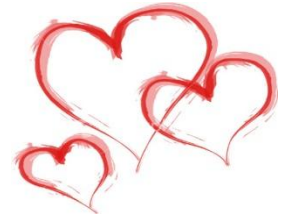
Note-taking:

It is essential that you maintain detailed, well-organised and well-presented notes. Notes will be checked, but ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure your notes will enable you to be successful at the end of the course. It is much better to keep on top of recording summary notes for texts read and wider reading notes, than to try to 'cram' your note-taking in the final few weeks of the unit.

Discussion and debate:

You will be expected to have an opinion, an educated viewpoint on texts you read and issues with which you will engage. You will need to be prepared to communicate your views to others and participate in discussions and debates. You will also need to respect the views of others.

'Love Through the Ages' Reading List



PROSE

André Aciman	<i>Call Me by Your Name</i>	2007
Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche	<i>Americanah</i>	2013
Margaret Atwood	<i>Cat's Eye</i>	1980s
Jane Austen	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	1813
Louis de Bernières	<i>Captain Corelli's Mandolin</i>	1994 but set in WW2
Anne Brontë	<i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i>	1848
Emily Brontë	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>	1847
Angela Carter	<i>The Magic Toyshop</i>	1967
Candice Carty Williams	<i>Queenie</i>	2019
Daniel Defoe	<i>Moll Flanders</i>	1722
Charles Dickens	<i>Bleak House</i>	1852
Daphne du Maurier	<i>Rebecca</i>	1938
Nawal El Saadawi	<i>Woman at Point Zero</i>	1975
Bernardine Evaristo	<i>Girl, Woman, Other</i>	2019
E M Forster	<i>A Room With a View</i>	1908
Graham Greene	<i>Brighton Rock</i>	1938
Thomas Hardy	<i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i>	1891
L P Hartley	<i>The Go-Between</i>	1953 (set in Edwardian England)
Nathaniel Hawthorne	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	1850 (set in C17 USA)
Zoe Heller	<i>Notes on a Scandal</i>	2003
Khaled Hosseini	<i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i>	2007
Ian McEwan	<i>On Chesil Beach, Atonement, Enduring Love</i>	2000+
Toni Morrison	<i>Jazz</i>	1992
Audrey Niffenegger	<i>The Time Traveler's Wife</i>	2003
Maggie O'Farrell	<i>The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox</i>	2006
Maggie O'Farrell	<i>Hamnet</i>	2020
Maggie O'Farrell	<i>The Marriage Portrait</i>	2022
Arundhati Roy	<i>The God of Small Things</i>	1997 – set in India
Irene Sabatini	<i>The Boy Next Door</i>	2010
F Scott Fitzgerald	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	1925
Elif Shafak	<i>There are Rivers in the Sky</i>	2024
Lionel Shriver	<i>We Need to Talk About Kevin</i>	2003
Zadie Smith	<i>White Teeth</i>	2000
Anne Tyler	<i>Digging to America</i>	2006
Alice Walker	<i>The Color Purple</i>	1980s
Sarah Waters	<i>Fingersmith</i>	2002 (set in C19 England)
Edith Wharton	<i>The Age of Innocence</i>	1920 (set in 1870s New York)
Jeanette Winterson	<i>Oranges are Not the Only Fruit</i>	1985
Virginia Woolf	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>	1927

DRAMA

Edward Albee	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf</i>	1962
Aphra Behn	<i>The Rover</i>	1677
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>	1982
Noel Coward	<i>Private Lives</i>	1930

John Ford	<i>Tis Pity She's A Whore</i>	1629
Natasha Gordon	<i>Nine Night</i>	2018
Henrik Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>	1879
William Inge	<i>Picnic</i>	1953
Ben Jonson	<i>Volpone</i>	1606
Larry Kramer	<i>The Normal Heart</i>	1985
Arthur Miller	<i>A View from the Bridge</i>	1955
Abi Morgan	<i>Lovesong</i>	2011
Lynn Nottage	<i>Ruined</i>	2009
Joe Orton	<i>Entertaining Mr Sloane</i>	1953
Sarah Ruhl	<i>In the Next Room</i>	2009
William Shakespeare	<i>Romeo and Juliet / The Winter's Tale</i>	Elizabethan / Jacobean
George Bernard Shaw	<i>Mrs Warren's Profession</i>	1893 (banned until 1920s)
Tom Stoppard	<i>The Real Thing</i>	1982
John Webster	<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>	Jacobean
Oscar Wilde	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	1895
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	1947

POETRY

Read a selection of poetry from the following writers:

Shakespeare	<i>Sonnets</i>	Elizabethan
Maya Angelou		C20
E Barrett Browning	<i>Sonnets</i>	Victorian
Anne Bradstreet		C17
Lord Byron	<i>Don Juan</i>	Romantic
Wendy Cope		C20/C21
Emily Dickinson		Victorian
John Donne	<i>The Sun Rising, The Flea etc</i>	C17
Seamus Heaney		C20
John Keats		Romantic
Philip Larkin	<i>The Whitsun Weddings</i>	C20
Pablo Neruda	<i>Twenty Poems of Love</i>	C20
Sylvia Plath	<i>Ariel</i>	mid C20
Rumi	<i>The Book of Love</i>	C13
William Wordsworth	<i>The 'Lucy' poems</i>	Romantic

These titles should give you some ideas of things to read so that you already have an understanding of the concept of 'Love Through the Ages', pick a few texts from different genres and different eras and make a note of the types of love being presented and the way in which these ideas of love are presented.



Terms and Concepts

Ways of Reading

- Meanings in texts are not closed and fixed but open to several interpretations. You will explore alternative readings and be informed by the views of others.
- Reading is an active process: the reader is an active creator, not a passive recipient of second-hand opinion – you are the ‘maker of meaning’.
- It can never be an ‘innocent’ process: all readings are historically, socially and individually specific – you bring your own personal context and experience to the text.

Meaning

- For an individual reader, meaning depends as much on what is brought to the text as on what is contained within it: your own experience will influence the way you read it.
- Meaning will not necessarily be instantly accessible; you may well need to research difficult or obscure references and vocabulary to draw out meaning.
- Meaning will be different on different occasions, and changeable as a result of discussion and reflection: when you reread a text, you may find your response is different from your first reading; a critical commentary may change your response.
- Meaning can be multiple; different readings of a text can coexist – you need to be aware that some texts are ambiguous or capable of delivering multiple meanings, and it is your own selection of and response to textual evidence that will determine your own personal interpretation.

Reading through a ‘lens’

- You will explore texts through particular ‘lenses’ or ‘filters’.
- One of these lenses will be the social, cultural and historical contexts. The texts you will study have been received and understood in different ways at different times.
- This Historicist approach explores the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the reader. Literature texts are a product of a time, culture and environment and meaning continues to change as these factors change and our response changes. In your reading consider how the text has been received over time, and how the text can be interpreted by readers now.
- Looking at texts thematically involves connecting individual texts with others and being able to consider typicality.
- Because contexts are not fixed, this means that interpretation is not fixed, and that multiple interpretations are possible.

Developing 'Critical' Analysis

What is analysis?

- Analyse = take apart an idea/concept/text in order to consider the factors it consists of. Your answer needs to be methodical and logically organised.
- You need to identify devices or techniques used by the writer to create effects on the reader.
- It involves exploring why the writer used the technique, what the specific effects are, and how these effects are created.
- Throughout your analysis, you need to ensure you are responding to the question so that your analysis is relevant.
- This is all part of close reading.

Questions to ask of a text:

How does it make me feel?

Start with broadly: positive or negative? Then be more specific e.g. joyful, uncomfortable, uplifted, depressed, amused, thoughtful, irritated, angry, anxious, curious.

Once we have identified a feeling, we can ask ourselves where and how the writer is using the tools of their chosen genre to evoke this response / these responses in us and why they might want to do this.

What are they saying?

How are they saying it?

What effect do they wish to have on us?

Why?

The Basics: The Anatomy of a Good Essay

Developing strong essay writing Skills is essential for success in English Literature. Read this guide to help kick-start your journey to finding your own academic voice.

<https://www.york.ac.uk/english/about/writing-at-york/writing-resources/anatomy-good-essay/#:~:text=Rigorous%2C%20creative%2C%20attentive%20close%20analysis,speaking%20about%20several%20texts%20generally.>