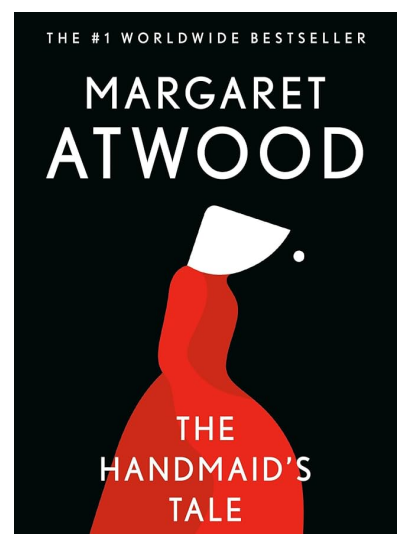
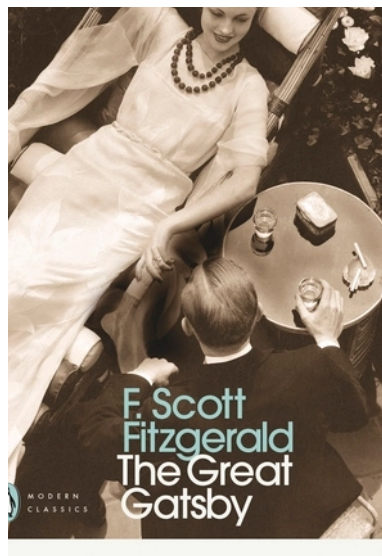
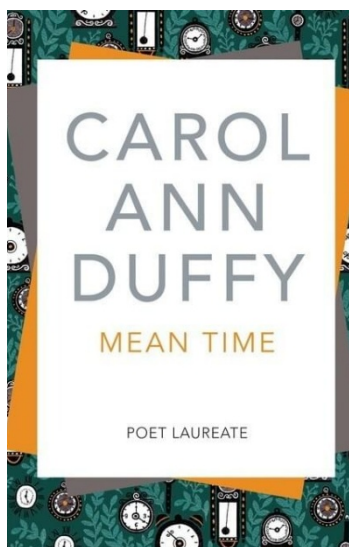
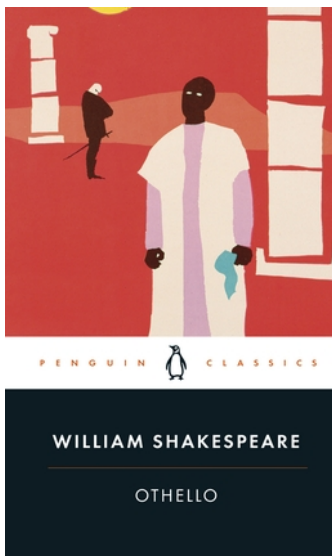




A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE GUIDE BOOK



Welcome to English Language and 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.

English Language and Literature is a fascinating subject that explores the power of language to tell stories, shape identities and influence the way we see the world. By studying a range of literary and non-literary texts, you will investigate how meaning is created and how people, places and ideas are represented.

The course encourages you to think critically, question assumptions and explore different perspectives. You will analyse texts, debate interpretations, conduct independent research and develop your own creative and re-creative writing, gaining valuable skills in communication, analysis and independent thinking.

How can you prepare?

1. Read widely

Read a range of literary and non-literary texts, including:

- novels
- memoirs and autobiographies
- journalism and magazine articles
- speeches
- blogs
- travel writing
- opinion pieces

As you read, consider:

- Who is speaking?
- How are people and places represented?
- What assumptions does the writer make about their audience?

2. Pay attention to language in everyday life

Language is everywhere. Notice:

- conversations
- advertisements
- political speeches
- news reports
- podcasts
- social media posts

Think about:

- how language changes depending on audience and purpose
- how people present themselves through language
- how language can influence opinions and beliefs

3. Explore different perspectives

One of the key ideas on the course is that the same event can be represented in different ways.

When reading or watching something, ask yourself:

- How would this story change if it were told by somebody else?
- This will help develop the skills needed for the re-creative writing element of the course.

4. Listen critically

Podcasts, documentaries and interviews provide excellent opportunities to study language in use.

Consider:

- how speakers establish authority
- how they persuade audiences
- how language creates particular impressions of people and events

Try:

- BBC Sounds
- TED Talks
- Desert Island Discs
- The Rest is History
- The News Agents

5. Watch adaptations and compare representations

Many literary texts have been adapted for television and film.

Consider:

- what has changed
- how characters are represented differently
- how perspective influences audience responses

Examples include:

- The Great Gatsby
- Never Let Me Go
- Rebecca
- The Handmaid's Tale
- Wuthering Heights

6. Become a collector of language

Keep a notebook or digital document where you record:

- interesting vocabulary
- memorable quotations
- unusual headlines
- examples of persuasive language
- examples of storytelling

You may be surprised how useful these become when discussing language choices and crafting your own writing.

7. Think about how language represents society

The course explores how language can represent:

- age
- gender
- class
- power
- identity
- conflict
- place

- isolation

Whenever you read a text, ask:

What view of society is being presented?

8. Develop your creative writing skills

The course includes re-creative writing, where you can transform texts and write from different perspectives.

Try:

- rewriting a news story from another person's viewpoint
- rewriting a scene from a novel through a different character's eyes
- writing diary entries, letters or memoir extracts

The best creative writing often begins with close reading.

9. Read about language

If you are interested in the study of language, try:

- David Crystal – *The Stories of English*
- David Crystal – *The Fight for English*
- Susie Dent – *Word Perfect*
- Jean Aitchison – *Language Change: Progress or Decay?*
- Deborah Cameron – *The Myth of Mars and Venus*

These texts provide fascinating insights into how language works and changes.

10. Research independently

A key part of the course is the Non-Exam Assessment (NEA), where you conduct an independent investigation comparing texts.

Start developing your research skills by:

- asking questions
- exploring different viewpoints
- reading beyond what is immediately required

- following your interests

11. Engage with culture and current affairs

The most successful students are curious about the world around them.

Read:

- newspapers
- magazines
- long-form journalism

Watch:

- documentaries
- interviews
- current affairs programmes

Think about how language is used to shape opinions and represent people, places and events.

Above all, be curious about language

Ask questions:

- Why has a writer chosen that word?
- Why is a story told from that perspective?
- How are people represented?
- How does language shape the way we see the world?

These are the questions that lie at the heart of English Language and Literature.

Summer Holiday Task

Theme: Representing Place

Throughout the A Level English Language and Literature course, we explore how writers use language to create representations of people, places and experiences. This task introduces some of the key skills you will develop on the course.

Read one of the suggested short stories below:

Text A: A literary description of a place/people

- Katherine Mansfield, *Prelude*
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*
- Virginia Woolf, *Street Haunting*
- John Steinbeck, *The Chrysanthemums*
- Margaret Atwood, *Death By Landscape*
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Winter Dreams*

Text B: A newspaper or magazine article about the same or a similar place, or a key theme/idea from the text.

Useful non-fiction sources to find Text B

Reliable sources:

- [Home - BBC Future](#)
- [BBC Travel Features](#)
- [The Guardian Long Reads](#)
- [National Geographic Features](#)
- [Smithsonian Magazine Features](#)

Task 1: First Impressions

For each text, make notes on:

- How is the place represented?
- What atmosphere is created?
- What details does the writer choose to focus on?
- How does the writer want the reader to feel?

Task 2: Re-creative writing

Choose a short passage from Text A and re-write it from a different character's perspective.

Extension Task

Find a literary text and a non-fiction text which represent the same place differently.

Examples:

- London
- New York
- the countryside
- a school
- a seaside town

Write a short comparison explaining which representation you find more convincing and why.

Course content

Paper 1: Telling Stories (Paris Anthology, Carol Ann Duffy 'Mean time', Margaret Atwood 'The Handmaid's Tale')

The aim of this part of the subject content is to allow you to learn about how and why stories of different kinds are told. The term 'telling' in the title is deliberately chosen to reflect the twin aspects of how stories are told, and why stories are 'telling', or valuable, within societies.

You will learn about the ways in which writers and speakers present stories, beginning with a general focus on broad questions such as:

- Why do people tell stories?
- What ingredients do stories need to have?
- What makes a good story?
- How are stories told in different modes?
- Is there a special kind of story called 'literature'?

Drawing both on your everyday experiences of storytelling in different modes, and on published texts, you will learn how language choices help to shape the representations of different worlds and perspectives. You then apply your knowledge to the following:

- narratives that construct different views of a particular place
- prose fiction that constructs imaginary worlds
- poetry that constructs a strong sense of personal perspective.

40%

Paper 2: Exploring Conflict (F. Scott Fitzgerald 'The Great Gatsby', William Shakespeare 'Othello')

This part of the subject content focuses on how language choices help to construct ideas of conflict between people, and between people and their societies.

You will learn about the ways in which writers and speakers use language, beginning with a general focus on broad questions such as:

- How do people interact?
- How do people claim power and position others in talk?
- How do people express identity?

- What communicative strategies do people use when in conflict with others?
- How do different groups or individuals make themselves heard?

Drawing both on their everyday experiences of interaction in different modes and on published texts, you learn about how the language choices writers make are used to express relationships, drive narrative, and construct views about the nature of different societies. You then apply your knowledge to the study of texts about individuals in situations of conflict. Students:

- produce re-creative work that seeks to find an absent or underplayed perspective in the original text
- write a critical reflection on the processes and outcomes involved in re-creative work
- study drama that explores conflicts at different levels from the domestic to the societal.

40%

NEA: Making Connections

Independent investigation

You will:

- choose a language topic
- compare two texts
- conduct independent research
- write a 2,500–3,500 word investigation

20%

What Sort of Activities Will We Do?

You will:

- Analyse language in literary and non-literary texts
- Explore how writers create narrative voices
- Debate interpretations
- Investigate representations of people and places
- Rewrite texts from alternative perspectives
- Produce creative and re-creative writing
- Compare texts
- Research language topics independently
- Complete an independent investigation

- Present ideas and participate in discussion
- Read widely beyond set texts
- Develop university-style analytical skills

Transition from GCSE to A Level

Essential Skills to Develop:

Curiosity about Language and the World Around You

- Successful English Language and Literature students are curious. They notice how language is used in everyday life and ask questions about why people communicate in particular ways. Be inquisitive; question the language you encounter in novels, newspapers, speeches, advertisements, social media and conversations. Consider how language shapes our understanding of people, places and events, and be prepared to explore different viewpoints and interpretations.

Independent Learning

- Unlike at GCSE, you will be expected to take increasing responsibility for your own learning. Your teachers will guide and support you, but you will need to think independently, develop your own interpretations and actively pursue your interests. You will be encouraged to make connections between texts, ideas and language use, as well as undertake independent research as part of your studies.

Perseverance and Resilience

- A Level study can be challenging, particularly when engaging with unfamiliar texts, complex ideas and different theoretical perspectives. You will be expected to analyse language in detail, evaluate alternative interpretations and experiment with your own writing. Be prepared to learn from feedback and use it constructively to improve. Developing confidence as an analytical and creative writer takes time, persistence and resilience.

Organisation and Time Management

- Success at A Level requires commitment and effective organisation. You will complete a significant amount of independent study each week, including reading, research, preparation for lessons and extended writing. You will also develop your creative and re-creative writing skills, complete comparative analysis and undertake an independent investigation. Keeping organised notes and managing your time effectively will help you balance these demands successfully.

Reading Widely and Engaging with Different Text Types

- English Language and Literature students read far beyond their set texts. As well as novels, poetry and drama, you should engage with memoirs, journalism, travel writing, speeches, blogs, articles and other forms of non-fiction. Reading widely will help you understand how language varies according to audience, purpose and context, and will provide valuable insights into the ways writers represent people, places and experiences.

Research and Investigation

- A key feature of the course is independent enquiry. You will learn to research topics, investigate language use and explore the contexts that influence how texts are produced and received. You should develop the habit of asking questions, seeking evidence and exploring different perspectives. Use a range of reliable sources to support your learning and avoid relying solely on quick internet searches.

Become a Critical and Active Reader

- Question what you read. Consider how writers and speakers represent individuals, groups and places. Ask yourself whose voices are being heard and whose voices might be missing. Explore how language choices shape meaning and influence audiences. Remember that texts can be interpreted in different ways, and that your own response is an important part of the meaning-making process.

Develop Your Creative Voice

- The course includes opportunities to experiment with your own writing through creative and re-creative tasks. You will write from different perspectives, adapt texts for new audiences and purposes, and reflect on the language choices you make. Be willing to take risks, experiment with style and develop your confidence as a writer.

Note-taking

- It is essential that you maintain detailed, organised and well-presented notes. These should include not only lesson content, but also wider reading, independent research and reflections on your own ideas. Regular note-taking will help you build a strong understanding of the course and avoid unnecessary pressure when assessments approach.

Discussion and Debate

- You will be expected to develop informed opinions and engage thoughtfully with the ideas explored in texts. Be prepared to share your views, listen to others and participate actively in discussion and debate. Some of the most valuable learning takes place through exploring different perspectives and challenging assumptions about language, literature and society.

English Language and Literature Reading and Resource List

Poetry – explore some poems by the following poets

- Philip Larkin
- Seamus Heaney
- Simon Armitage
- Carol Ann Duffy
- Imtiaz Dharker
- Jackie Kay

Download the Guardian App and explore Carol Rumens 'Poem of the Week' feature: [Carol Rumens's poem of the week | The Guardian](#)

Prose

- *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* – Shirley Jackson
- *Never Let Me Go* – Kazuo Ishiguro
- *The Power*, Naomi Alderman
- *Rebecca*, Daphne du Maurier
- *Atonement*, Ian McEwan

Literary Non-Fiction

- *Night Walks*, Charles Dickens
- *Educated*, Tara Westover
- *The Five*, Hallie Rubenhold
- *H is for Hawk*, Helen Macdonald
- *The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin
- *Underland*, Robert MacFarlane

Non-Fiction

Journalism

The Guardian – Long Reads

Features in-depth journalism on culture, society, politics and everyday life.

Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/the-long-read>

BBC Future

Articles exploring science, technology, culture and society.

Available at:

<https://www.bbc.com/future>

Speeches

The British Library: Voices of Change

A collection of influential speeches and public addresses.

Available at:

<https://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline>

The Guardian Speech Archive

A range of political and social speeches from around the world.

Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com>

Suggested speeches:

- Martin Luther King Jr. – "I Have a Dream"
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – "We Should All Be Feminists"
- Greta Thunberg – UN Climate Action Summit Speech

Essays

The New Yorker

Features literary essays, cultural commentary and personal writing.

Available at:

<https://www.newyorker.com>

Aeon

Publishes thoughtful essays on society, culture, science and philosophy.

Available at:

<https://aeon.co>

Recommended topics:

- Identity
- Memory

- Place
- Technology
- Language

Popular Science

New Scientist

Accessible articles explaining current scientific developments.

Available at:

<https://www.newscientist.com>

BBC Science Focus

Articles exploring science and its impact on society.

Available at:

<https://www.sciencefocus.com>

Social Commentary

The Conversation

Articles written by academics for a general audience.

Available at:

<https://theconversation.com>

Recommended topics:

- Education
- Language
- Media
- Social class
- Gender
- Identity

Prospect Magazine

Essays and commentary on contemporary issues.

Available at:

<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk>

Travel Writing

National Geographic

Travel writing that explores people, places and cultures.

Available at:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com>

BBC Travel

Articles combining travel, culture and history.

Available at:

<https://www.bbc.com/travel>

Recommended writers:

- Bill Bryson
- Rory Stewart
- Colin Thubron

Podcasts

Start with:

- BBC Radio 4 – In Our Time
- BBC Radio 4 – Bookclub
- The Rest Is History
- The New Yorker Podcast