

10 Things to Do to Prepare for...

A Level English Literature

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Activities

These activities will help you to develop reading and writing skills and wider knowledge that will help you succeed at A Level English Literature. In addition, contact your teachers and ask them if they would like you to read any of next year's set texts – they might not want you to do this but if they do then make that a priority over the summer.

1. Exam Board and Set Texts

Find out what exam board and specification you will be doing and download a specification overview from the exam board's website. If your teachers do not want you to read your set texts in advance you can still usefully read around them. For example, if you will be studying Othello as part of your course then you can read other Shakespearean tragedies, such as Hamlet and King Lear. (NB – Most older texts are freely available on the internet)



2. 19th Century Fiction

Read a 19th century novel by an author whose work you have not read before. Make notes on characters, plot, settings and themes [key ideas and messages]. Are there any links or similarities to any other novels you have read?

3. The Sonnet

Research the origin and history of the sonnet. Read at least fifteen sonnets from across the last five centuries and select the three you feel best illustrate the genre. Produce a guide for other English Literature students, including the three sonnets you have selected and a commentary on them.

4. Drama and Theatre

Watch a 'live' theatre performance on the internet or a film adaptation of a literary classic. Write a review of the performance. (Many theatres such as Shakespeare's Globe, the National Theatre, Hampstead Theatre and the Royal Court are currently streaming productions from their archives.)



5. Key Themes and Ideas

Take each of your GCSE texts in turn and for each one make a list of its key themes and ideas. Look for a point of similarity between two of them and then write a comparative essay comparing how they present an issue or deal with a topic.

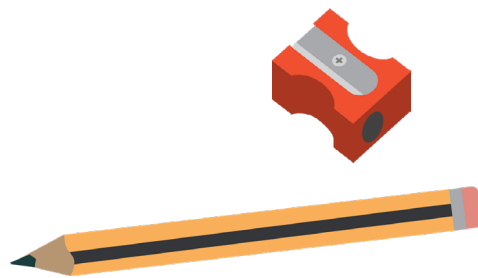
For example, 'Compare the presentation of social injustice in A Christmas Carol and Blood Brothers' or 'Compare how ideas about right and wrong are explored in Macbeth and An Inspector Calls.'

If you can see no points of similarity you could compare the presentation of the main protagonists or how issues such as love or power are explored.

6. Literary Terms

Research the meanings of the literary terms below and learn them. Test yourself regularly.

- Characterisation
- Establishment
- Narrator
- Chronology
- Dramatic irony
- Narrative point of view
- Ideology



7. Establishing Plot and Character

Playwrights have a very short space of time, when compared to novelists, in which to establish their plot and characters. Read the first few pages of Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops To Conquer* (<https://www.fulltextarchive.com/page/She-Stoops-to-Conquer1/>) until just after the entrance of Miss Kate Hardcastle when she says 'and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress to please you'.

Make notes on what you learn about the characters of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle, Tony Lumpkin and Miss Kate Hardcastle and also the dynamics and tensions within the family.

8. Wider Research

Spend two hours exploring the British Library website and make notes on what you read and discover – www.bl.uk. There are amazing collections of texts, films, articles and other resources, so follow your interests and see where they lead you.



9. Poetry

Read at least one poem each week and write a short piece of analysis on it, concentrating on:

- The connotations of the title (if any)
- Voices in the poem
- Characters and settings
- The poet's choice of language and its effects
- Anything interesting about the structure and organisation of the poem
- The overall message and how this is conveyed
- Whether or not you enjoyed the poem and why

You could read poems you have not yet studied from your GCSE poetry anthology, poems from a collection you have at home, or search on the internet.

10. Writing to Persuade

Write an article for a magazine aimed at students about the benefits of studying A Level Literature and why it is a good thing for students to do. Give it a snappy title and make it as convincing as possible.