

## English Language and Literature A Level

### Preparation work: Pre-course Reading, Research and Tasks

We're delighted that you are planning to study English Language and Literature A level at Godalming College next year. In order for you to get the most out of the course, we would like you to do preparatory work over the summer.

### Specification :

A good place to start to look at the A level specification and familiarise yourself with what you will be studying on the course:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-and-a-level/english-language-and-literature-emc-h074-h474-from-2015>

### Task 1:

Please read three novels, one of which should be **The Great Gatsby** by F Scott Fitzgerald. As it is a set text, it is best to buy **Gatsby** (Penguin Classics ISBN 0141394366), so that you can make notes in it. For your other books, please pick something from the reading list on the back of this sheet. As you read, make notes under these headings:

- **Narrator:** is the story narrated in the first person ('I')? Is the narrator a character in the story? Is it told in the third person (he, she), by an unnamed storyteller?
- **Time:** does the narrator start at the beginning of the story and move forward from there? Is the narrator looking back on events which have already happened? Is the story already underway from the first page? Does the narrator tell you, at the beginning, what will happen later?
- **Setting:** where is the opening of the story set? What is interesting about the culture of this place? What time of day is it? What's the weather like? What mood does the setting put you in?
- **Message:** decide what you think the book is mainly about and see if you can find evidence of this from the opening.
- **Genre:** what kind of story is it? Crime thriller? Love story? War drama? What evidence for this do you have from the first few pages?

### Task 2:

In addition, please also read a non-fiction work. This could be a biography or a travel memoir (anything by Bill Bryson, for example), or a history book. You could pick something that overlaps with another of your subjects – a popular science book perhaps, or a book about politics, business or economics.

## Suggested Reading:

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| <p><b>The Kite Runner</b><br/>Khaled Hosseini 2003</p>  <p>'...it's wrong what they say about the past, I've learned, about how you can bury it...'</p>  | <p><b>Rebecca</b><br/>Daphne du Maurier</p>  <p>Rebecca may be physically dead, but she is still a force to contend with...</p>  | <p><b>The Accidental</b><br/>Ali Smith 2005</p>  <p>Norfolk, one hot summer, the home of the Smart family, and what happens when a beguiling stranger called Amber appears at the door...</p>  | <p><b>Pride and Prejudice</b><br/>Jane Austen 1816</p>  <p>In a world where wealth and manners matter, can Elizabeth Bennett and Mr Darcy overcome their pride and prejudice and find love?</p>   |
| <p><b>Little Stranger</b><br/>Sarah Waters 2009</p>  <p>'A gripping story, with beguiling characters... As well as being a supernatural tale, it is a meditation on the nature of the British and class, and how things are rarely what they seem. Chilling' - SundayTimes</p>                   | <p><b>The Colour Purple</b> 1985<br/>Alice Walker</p>  <p>'Dear God, I am fourteen years old. I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me.'</p>                       | <p><b>The God of Small Things</b><br/>Arundhati Roy 1997</p>  <p>An epic story of an eclectic modern Indian family.</p>  | <p><b>Jane Eyre</b><br/>Charlotte Bronte 1847</p>  <p>Is it possible for orphan Jane to find independence and love as a governess for the rich and powerful Mr Richardson? And who is that mad woman in the attic?</p>  |
| <p><b>The Life of Pi</b><br/>Yann Martel, 2001</p>  <p>Pi Patel tells us the story of what happened when he was left on a lifeboat with a 450-pound Bengal tiger. It seems impossible. Is it?</p>  | <p><b>Captain Corelli's Mandolin</b><br/>Louis de Berniere '94</p>  <p>It's WW2. The Italian army invade a small greek island. Pelagia has a dilemma: what happens if you fall in love with an enemy soldier?</p>              | <p><b>Cold Mountain</b><br/>Charles Frazier 1997</p>  <p>Inman, a soldier wounded in the American Civil War, makes a treacherous journey home to Cold Mountain, and to Ada the woman he loved before...</p>  | <p><b>A Room With a View</b><br/>E M Forster 1908</p>  <p>Young and unaffected Lucy Honeychurch's experiences in Venice stay with her. Back in England they threaten to destabilise marriage plans to the wealthy and cultured Cecil.</p>                                   |
| <p><b>Half of a Yellow Sun</b><br/>Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche 2006</p>  <p>Nigeria, 1960s, during the civil war: how does love complicate a story about race, class, the death of colonial power?</p>  | <p><b>The Remains of the Day</b><br/>Kazuo Ishiguro 1989</p>  <p>Summer, 1956: Stevens, the ageing butler of Darlington Hall, embarks on a road trip that will take him deep into the countryside and into his past...</p>    | <p><b>1984</b><br/>George Orwell 1948</p>  <p>'Big Brother is watching you...'</p> <p>The original nightmare vision of the future.</p>  | <p><b>Portrait of a Lady</b><br/>Henry James 1881</p>  <p>Beautiful, spirited American Isabel Archer, visiting Europe and expected to find a suitable husband, has other ideas...</p>   |
| <p><b>Engleby</b><br/>Sebastian Faulkes 2007</p>  <p>Why doesn't Engleby remember parts of his relationship with murdered fellow Cambridge student, Jennifer?</p>  | <p><b>Small Island</b><br/>Andrea Levy 2004</p>  <p>'Small Island is a brilliant picture of the dented dreams of Jamaicans in post-war Britain'</p>  | <p><b>Room</b><br/>Emma Donoghue 2011</p>  <p>Written from the point of view of 5 year old Jack, held captive along with his mother...</p>   | <p><b>Great Expectations</b><br/>Charles Dickens 1854</p>  <p>The story of orphaned boy Pip and his efforts to make something out of his life. Why is Miss Havesham forever reliving her wedding day? And why will her charge, Estella, never be good enough for Pip?</p> |
| <p><b>The Catcher in the Rye</b><br/>J D Sallinger 1951</p>  <p>'I'm not going to tell you my whole goddam autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas...'</p>   | <p><b>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*</b><br/>Mark Haddon</p>  <p>A murder mystery novel like no other. The detective and narrator is Christopher Boone, a fifteen year old with Asperger's Syndrome.</p> | <p><b>Enduring Love</b><br/>Ian McEwan 1998</p>  <p>What has happened to rational Joe Rose? Will his obsession with a stalker ruin his relationship with Clarissa? And why does he need to get hold of a gun?</p>  | <p><b>The Picture of Dorian Gray</b><br/>Oscar Wilde</p>  <p>Why does Dorian's frivolous lifestyle leave no traces on him? Look in the attic and you will see why...</p>  |
| <p><b>Pigeon English</b><br/>Stephen Kelman</p>  <p>Eleven-year-old Harrison Opoku, the second best runner in Year 7, races through life in England in his personalised trainers - the stripes drawn on with marker pen. But his life changes forever when one of his friends is murdered.</p> | <p><b>Birdsong</b><br/>Sebastian Faulkes 1993</p>  <p>Part erotic love affair in pre-WW1 France, part horrific war story, part modern quest into this devastating war</p>  | <p><b>Snow Falling on Cedars</b><br/>David Guterson 1995</p>  <p>Fighting the distrust and prejudice of his neighbors on a remote American island, a Japanese-American man finds himself on trial for murder. Newspaperman Ishmael Chambers embarks on a quest for the truth</p> | <p><b>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</b><br/>Robert Louis Stevenson</p>  <p>Published as a 'shilling shocker', this dark fantasy gave birth to the idea of the split personality. What is our capacity for evil?</p>   |

## Progression Opportunities

### Why choose English Literature and Language A Level:

A level English courses are taken by students doing a wide variety of other subjects, in Arts, Humanities and Sciences. They go on to many different courses and careers. English is often a component in degree courses in Humanities as well as being a very popular choice as a single-subject degree. The skills that you learn are a useful starting point for careers in the arts and the media, law and business, and in other professions where creativity, critical awareness and the ability to communicate clearly are needed.

*We hope you enjoy completing these tasks and look forward to you joining the course.*

