

A-Level English
Language and
Literature
Handbook
2025/2026



Why choose to study English?

In learning about English, you will learn how to think critically about the use of language and the interpretation of Literature. You will develop skills in order to analyse language at many levels: you might study the smallest units of written language and the phonetic alphabet, word-formation and the history of word meanings, notions of 'standard' or 'formal' (and 'non-standard' and 'informal') grammar and pronunciation (and the ethical significance of such distinctions), discourse patterns and dialect variation and change; you will also see language working through Literature.

You will develop advanced insight into the functioning of the language in the world all around you, and you will gain a sophisticated understanding of communication itself.

Entry Requirements

- Ideally you will have at least a '6' in both English Language and English Literature, though there will be discretionary trials for students with special circumstances.
- All students will be given a 'Compatibility' Test before the October half term to ensure that they are progressing and achieving the standards expected at A level. Failing the Test could prevent you from continuing the course.
- **Summer tasks must be completed and handed in on Monday 3rd September if this hasn't been completed your place on the course will be at risk.**

Unit 1	<u>Poetry and Prose</u> • Section A: Poetry pre-1914 and unseen 'open' text • Section B: Prose 'open' text Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre Skills include: • independently select poetry relevant to the question; • analyse how meanings are shaped in texts, including how variations in language, form and context shape and change meanings; • explore connections between poems, and between poems and an unseen text; • analyse concepts related to the writer's craft in presenting plot, setting, characterisation, relationships, themes and style.	Assessment 30% of A-Level External Exam 2 ½ hours Section A: Compare two poems with an unseen text. Section B: Close extract analysis response and linked essay questions.
Unit 2	<u>Drama</u> • Section A: Shakespeare 'closed' text • Section B: Post 1900 Drama 'closed' text Skills include: • analyse how meanings are shaped in their set text; • show knowledge and understanding of relevant language levels; • use accurately a range of linguistic and literary terminology; • demonstrate an understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received.	Assessment 30% of A-Level External Exam 2 hours Section A: Close extract analysis response and essay questions. Section B: Essay Question

Unit 3	<u>Non-Literary Texts</u> • Section A: Analysis of three unseen spoken non-literary texts, one of which will be transcribed. • Section B: Non-Literary text study ‘closed’ text. Skills include: • analyse how meanings are shaped in texts, including how variations in language, form and context shape and change meanings; • show knowledge and understanding of relevant language levels, including knowledge of spoken forms; • use accurately a range of linguistic and literary terminology; • analyse closely the language of the extract; • analyse concepts related to the writer’s craft, in particular with regard to exploring the presentation of viewpoint.	Assessment 20% of A-Level 2 hours Section A: Compare three unseen linked by a single theme. Section B: Close extract analysis response and linked essay questions.
Unit 4	<u>Critical and Creative Genre Study</u> • Section A: Genre Study - students to study a wide range of texts based on a single genre and produce an essay based on their understanding of this genre. • Section B: Related Creative Writing Skills include: • apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study, using associated terminology and coherent written expression; • show understanding of the ways in which texts relate to each other and to the contexts in which they are produced and received; • use English appropriately, accurately and creatively to communicate in different ways; • synthesise and reflect on their knowledge and understanding of linguistic and literary concepts in the study of their genre texts.	Assessment Coursework folder of 3500 words. Section A 1500 word genre study. Section B: Two 1000 creative responses; one literary and one non-literary.

Useful Resources

Essential websites to use:-

<u>Website</u>	<u>Website Address</u>
English A-Level magazine site	http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/emag/
Exam board website, A-Level area	http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?subject=52&level=21

Other Resources

All English students should be immersing themselves in the written word: reading biographies of writers they are studying; reading other works by similar writers on the course and reading challenging texts of their own choice. The below two publications will provide useful support material.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Address</u>
emagazine (Your teacher will talk to you about subscribing to this publication)	English and Media Centre	EMC Publications PO Box 105 Rochester Kent ME2 4BE
The English Review	Philip Allen Updates	Market Place, Deddington, Oxfordshire, OX15 0SE www.philipallan.co.uk

Useful Core Texts to Purchase

The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language: David Crystal (CUP) This is a very useful reference text that will see the students through both AS and A2.

For the Unit 1 examination, students will need to take in 'clean' copies of the text into the exam which the school will provide. It is essential that students purchase their own copy in which they can write their own notes.

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte (Penguin Classics): Year 12

Othello (Norton Edition): Year 12

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (Penguin Classics): Year 13

In Cold Blood (Penguin Classics): Year 13

Enrichment Opportunities & Study Trip

- Enrichment opportunities will enhance your knowledge of the Content Studied during A-Level English Literature/Language and helps bring your learning to life.
- There will be various opportunities to watch productions in the Theatre Royal.
- There will also be opportunities to watch National Theatre productions via their website.

Equipment Required for the Course

Organisation is central to success. Please ensure to bring the following equipment to your first lesson:

- Highlighters
- A4 Revision Cards (coloured)
- Sticky Notes
- Plastic Wallets

A Good Course if you want to

An English A-Level will equip you with analytical and writing skills that are readily transferable into many other situations and many professions. It opens up the opportunity to go into a great variety of careers.

Research Tasks to complete during the Summer and to be prepared ready for the start of the A-level English Literature/Language Course

1. Read *Jane Eyre*
2. Write chapter summary for novel (not copied and pasted from Sparknotes/Shmoop/Chat GTP). Bullet points for the summaries would be more effective than whole prose.
3. Make sure that you have read at least one of the novels on the list provided at the end of this (Appendix A). This will help to prepare for the wider reading expected at A-Level. Feel free to explore! You will be asked about this on your return.
4. As above, write chapter summary for novel (not copied and pasted from Sparknotes/Shmoop/Chat GTP). Bullet points for the summaries would be more effective than whole prose.

APPENDIX A

Genre Study Texts for Component 4

Genre: Gothic

Genre: Dystopia

Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Oryx and Crake* Ray Bradbury: *Fahrenheit 451*

George Orwell: *1984*

Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World*

Anthony Burgess: *A Clockwork Orange*

Cormac McCarthy: *The Road*

Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*

Phillip K Dick: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* William Gibson: *Neuromancer*

Jack London: *Iron Heel*

David Mitchell: *Cloud Atlas* H.G. Wells: *The Time Machine*

Genre: Science Fiction

Ray Bradbury: *The Illustrated Man and other short stories* H.G. Wells: *The War of the Worlds*

Kurt Vonnegut: *The Sirens of Titans*

Isaac Asimov: *Foundation*

JG Ballard: *The Drowned World*

Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World*

Iain M Banks: *Consider Phlebas*

China Mieville: *Embassytown*

John Fowles: *The Magus*

Doris Lessing: *Shikasta* Don DeLillo: *Ratner's Star*

Genre: Romance

Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, *Sense and Sensibility* Emily Brontë: *Wuthering Heights*
Charlotte Brontë: *Villette*
Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*
Audrey Niffenegger: *The Time Traveler's Wife*
Truman Capote: *Breakfast At Tiffany's*
A.S. Byatt: *Possession*
F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*, *Tender is the Night*
George Eliot: *Mill on the Floss*
Michael Ondaatje: *The English Patient*
E. M. Forster: *A Room with a View*
Ian McEwan: *Enduring Love*, *On Chesil Beach*

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Anthony Burgess: *A Clockwork Orange*
Cormac McCarthy: *The Road*
Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*
Phillip K Dick: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
William Gibson: *Neuromancer*
Jack London: *Iron Heel*
David Mitchell: *Cloud Atlas*
H.G. Wells: *The Time Machine*

Genre: Crime

Arthur Conan Doyle: *Short Stories*
Donna Tartt: *The Secret History*
John Buchan: *The Thirty-Nine Steps*
Raymond Chandler: *Farewell, My Lovely*
Joseph Conrad: *The Secret Agent*
Graham Greene: *Brighton Rock*
Kate Summerscale: *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*
David Guterson: *Snow Falling on Cedars*
Iain Banks: *The Crow Road*
Wilkie Collins: *The Moonstone*
John Le Carre: *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*
Patricia Highsmith: *The Talented Mr Ripley*

Genre: Satire/Comedy

Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*
Henry Fielding: *Tom Jones*
Stella Gibbons: *Cold Comfort Farm*
Evelyn Waugh: *Scoop*, *Decline and Fall*
David Lodge: *Small World*, *Changing Places*, *Therapy*
Kingsley Amis: *Lucky Jim*
Iris Murdoch: *The Sea, the Sea*
Anthony Burgess: *Inside Mr Enderby*
Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield*
William Makepeace Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*

Genre: Historical Fiction

Charles Dickens: *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Bleak House*
George Eliot: *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, *Romola*
William Makepeace Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*
Hilary Mantel: *Wolf Hall*, *Bring up the Bodies*

Elizabeth Gaskell: *North and South*
John Fowles: *The French Lieutenant's Woman*
Tracy Chevalier: *Fallen Angels*
Margaret Forster: *Lady's Maid*
Sir Walter Scott: *Ivanhoe*
Tracy Chevalier: *Girl with a Pearl Earring*
Margaret Atwood: *The Penelopiad*
Jeffery Eugenides: *Middlesex*

Genre: War/Conflict

Pat Barker: *Regeneration*, *The Eye in the Door*, *The Ghost Road*
Sebastian Faulks: *Birdsong*
Joseph Heller: *Catch 22*
JG Ballard: *Empire of the Sun*
Khaled Hosseini: *The Kite Runner*
Ernest Hemingway: *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
Andrea Levy: *Small Island*
Susan Hill: *Strange Meeting*
Kurt Vonnegut: *Slaughterhouse 5*
Vera Brittain: *Testament of Youth*
James Fenimore Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Genre: Adventure/Journeys

Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Robert Louis Stevenson: *Kidnapped*, *Treasure Island*
Jack Kerouac: *On The Road*
Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*
E.M. Forster: *A Passage to India*
Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe*
Jack London: *Call of the Wild*
Jon Krakauer: *Into Thin Air*, *Into the Wild*
Aron Ralston: *127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*

Genre: Life-writing

Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar*
Janet Frame: *An Angel at my Table*
Malcolm X: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*
Gertrude Stein: *The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas*
Winston Churchill: *My Early Life*
Nelson Mandela: *Long Walk to Freedom*
Francis Spufford: *The Child That Books Built*
George Orwell: *Down and Out in Paris and London*, *The Road to Wigan Pier*
Robert Graves: *Goodbye to All That*
Alice Walker: *The Same River Twice*
Siegfried Sassoon: *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*
Jeanette Winterson: *Why be Happy when You Could be Normal*
Azar Nafisi: *Reading Lolita in Tehran*
Michael Chabon: *Manhood for Amateurs*

Genre: Journalism

Introduction by Ian Jack: *The Granta Book of Reportage*
Ryszard Kapuscinski: *The Soccer War*
Martin Wainwright (ed.): *The Bedside Guardian 2013*
Eleanor Mills with Kira Cochrane (ed.): *Cupcakes and Kalashnikovs: 100 Years of the Best Journalism by Women*
John Pilger (ed.): *Tell Me No Lies*
Ian Jack: *The Country Formerly Known as Great Britain*
Andrew O'Hagan: *The Atlantic Ocean*
Barbara Ehrenreich: *Going to Extremes*

Genre: Travel

Bill Bryson (any travel writing)

Paul Theroux (any travel writing)

Robert Minhinnick: *Watching the Fire-Eater*

Mark Twain: *Innocents Abroad*

Jonathan Raban: *Passage To Juneau*

Elizabeth A. Bohls (Editor), Ian Duncan (Editor): *Travel Writing 1700-1830: An Anthology*

P.J.O'Rourke: *Holidays in Heck*

Salman Rushdie: *The Jaguar Smile: Nicaraguan Journey*

Ernesto "Che" Guevara: *The Motorcycle Diaries*

Tim Butcher: *Blood River*

Heinrich Harrer: *Seven Years in Tibet*

Katherine Boo: *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*

Genre: Identity/The Outsider

Margaret Atwood: *Surfacing*

Iain Banks: *The Wasp Factory*

J.D. Salinger: *The Catcher in the Rye*

James Joyce : *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Radclyffe Hall: *The Well of Loneliness*

Hari Kunzru: *The Impressionist*

Irvine Welsh: *Trainspotting*

Anne Tyler: *The Accidental Tourist*

Bruce Chatwin: *On The Black Hill*

DBC Pierre: *Vernon God Little*

William Golding: *Pincher Martin*

Robert Louis Stevenson: *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*