

Reciprocity...Reflectiveness...Resilience...Resourcefulness



Spalding High School

English Department

Year 12 Reading Journal

Name:

Form:

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Welcome to the study of English at AS level! The purpose of this document is to encourage you to read widely within the subject. In order to achieve high grades at AS, you cannot restrict your reading to the set class texts.

How to use this guide:

1. Don't limit yourself to the texts we recommend; our librarians, Kirsty and Vicky, are really fantastic at helping you to source texts of interest which may stretch your reading habits. (*RESOURCEFULNESS- research, investigate, explore*)
2. Ensure that you make a note of everything that you read with a few comments relating to what you like/didn't like about the text as well as notes from the activities suggested. We would recommend that you have EITHER a reading journal section in your main folder, or an exercise book to keep all of the info in the right place. (*REFLECTIVENESS-organise, plan, prepare*)
3. We will have lessons periodically which will enable you to share your experiences of reading with your peers and your teacher will browse through them too! This is compulsory. You will be sanctioned if you do not keep up to date with this journal. (*RECIPROCITY-communicate, co-operate, share. RESILIENCE-keep going, practice to improve, identify key points in texts*)
4. Reading will help you to meet the assessment objectives outlined by the exam board (AQA Literature B. WRITING WITH THESE IN MIND IS ESSENTIAL TO YOUR SUCCESS- LEARN WHAT THEY MEAN AND WRITE ACCORDINGLY):

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

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KEY MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR STUDY

1. Own copies of key texts - advisable, as you can annotate them. If you are serious about the study of English, look on them as an investment.
2. Here is a list:
 - Cambridge School's Shakespeare '*King Lear*'
 - *Death of a Salesman* (Arthur Miller)
 - *A copy of the poetry anthology (John Keats selected poems)*
3. A notebook (a Pukka Pad or similar) that you will keep throughout the two years of study which will act as a record of your learning. These will be shared and observed periodically and will be essential to crafting further and independent reading coursework in year 13.
4. We would recommend study guides to help you if funds allow. The *York Notes Advanced* series are very good indeed.
5. A well organised folder with dividers.

Wider Reading - The Literary Canon

1. The Literary Canon - what is it? '*The term "literary canon" refers to a classification of literature. It is a term used widely to refer to a group of literary works that are considered the most important of a particular time period or place. For example, there can be a literary canon comprised of works from a particular country, or works written within a specific set of years, or even a collection of works that were all written during a certain time period and within a certain region. In this way, a literary canon establishes a collection of similar or related literary works*'

Here is a simplified overview of chronological 'movements' within the canon.

- a) **Medieval (up to 1500)** Contrary to popular belief, the medieval period cannot be characterised as entirely barbaric. During this period, national literatures in the nation's traditional styles appeared. Due to their disparate influences, literature and culture in medieval Europe were very diverse, drawing from different, often conflicting sources.

Suggested texts - *The Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer), *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Don't feel that you have to persevere with the original texts; Simon Armitage has produced an excellent version of *Sir Gawain*. Also, if you prefer drama, the morality play *Everyman* would be a good starting point.

- b) **Renaissance/Early Modern (1500-1650)** During the Renaissance, notions of Europe's and of humankind's centrality in the world were challenged and partially discredited by advances in scientific theory, a rediscovery of Greco-Roman culture, and the so-called discovery of the Americas.

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Suggested writers/texts: *Volpone* (Ben Jonson), *Dr. Faustus* (Christopher Marlowe), *The Changeling* (Middleton and Rowley) and of course anything by Shakespeare! This can include his sonnets too. An extract from Milton's '*Paradise Lost*' could be advantageous to read for Judeo-Christian ideas.

- c) ***Enlightenment in Europe (1650-1800)*** In the midst of the massive - and often cataclysmic - social changes that violently reshaped Europe during the eighteenth century, philosophers and other thinkers championed reason and the power of the human mind, contributing to the somewhat misleading appellation of this prerevolutionary period as an "Age of Enlightenment." Things began to radically change in literature after the French Revolution in 1789.

Suggested writers/texts: William Congreve, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Johnson, Horace Walpole and *The Songs of Innocence and Experience* by William Blake. Horace Walpole is a really good writer to look at as you can see his work giving way to Romanticism and the Gothic elements contained within it.

- d) ***Romanticism (1800-1900)*** This time period also includes Victorian literature to keep it simple!

Emerging in the late eighteenth century and extending until the late nineteenth century, Romanticism broke with earlier models of thinking that were guided by rationalism and empiricism. After the American and French revolutions, faith in social institutions declined considerably; no longer were systems that were organized around hierarchy and the separation of classes considered superior.

Suggested texts/writers: Mary Shelley's '*The Last Man*'/*Frankenstein*, the poetry of Keats, Byron and Shelley, and *Jekyll and Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson. Look at William Wordsworth as an early Romantic, Jane Austen, William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, have a look too at Political Philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke. For key Victorian texts, think of the poetry of Robert and Elizabeth Browning, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Water Babies*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, Alfred Lord Tennyson's poetry and Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

- e) ***Modernism (1900s)*** This is often credited as the time period which instigated 'The Revolution of the Word'. Literary and linguistic systems were seen as games in which "pieces" (words) and "rules" (grammar, syntax, and other conventions) were combined with playfulness and sometimes with pathos to emphasize the instabilities of language as a reflection of an instable world- think of the major upheavals of the early 20th Century.

Suggested writers/texts: Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, Jerome K Jerome, Katherine Mansfield. Charles Baudelaire is great to explore the urban space of the city, James Joyce, TS Eliot's *The Wasteland*/ *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock*. Important film- Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

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- f) **Post - Modernism (post World War 2 - Modern day)** Postmodern literature is literature characterised by heavy reliance on techniques like fragmentation, paradox, and questionable narrators, and is often (though not exclusively) defined as a style or trend which emerged in the post-World War II era. Postmodern works are seen as a reaction against Enlightenment thinking and Modernist approaches to literature.

Suggested writers/texts: Brett Easton- Ellis - *American Psycho*, JG Ballard - *Crash*, Vladimir Nabokov - *Lolita*, William Burroughs - *Naked Lunch*, Margaret Atwood, Khaled Hosseini, Kazuo Ishiguro, Iain Banks, Salman Rushdie.

Summer holiday reading:

When you return after the summer, you will be studying 'Tragedy'

- Read *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, some poetry by John Keats (anthology handed out on induction day) and *King Lear* by William Shakespeare.

Summer holiday tasks:

- Pre-read the 3 texts you will be studying.
- Make some initial notes about the writers' crafts and their effects.
- Learn the literary terms in the glossary included in this booklet.
- Be certain that you understand the meaning of structure, tone and form.
- Try to define what tragedy is. Is there a formula? Write a 'recipe' for tragedy in your journal.
- Try to find any book/play reviews in the Sunday newspaper supplements and glue them into your reading journals; these may be texts to come back to for future work.

Extension activity: Try to track down and watch a performed version of one of the texts. How faithful is the adaptation? Justify your answer.

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Terms 1 and 2 tasks:

- Attempt to acquaint yourself with the library within your first week. Find the following:
 - Journals
 - English resource 'boxes'
 - The location of fiction and criticism
- Be sure that you research the writers and the societies they live in. Visit the library and look in the history section.

Christmas & terms 3 and 4 tasks:

- Re-read all the texts studied and prepare closed book examination notes.
- Make notes on the following: setting, identity, character and specifically tragic elements.

Terms 5 and 6 - we will keep this loose to enable that much needed revision time!

If you are eager, you can begin to explore

- Key texts (Atonement /Brighton Rock/Y13 Poetry anthology)
- Key figures
- Contextual factors
- Read the critical anthology

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EXPECTATIONS

The English Department has very high expectations of all of their pupils. Reading the texts studied more than once is a **non-negotiable expectation**.

The expectations we have of all students are reinforced by the effort descriptors in school:

- **O - Outstanding**. This is a student who always goes the extra mile (reads around the subject, drafts and re-drafts work etc), hands in work on time which is abundant with effort, and contributes widely in lessons and strives for excellence in all areas.
- **AE - Above Expected**. This is a student who is very good, one who is diligent and conscientious. They always endeavour to produce high quality work.
- **E - Expected**. This is a student who meets all deadlines and behaves in the cooperative way that is expected within our school community.
- **BE - Below Expected**. This is a student who is often late, arrives to lessons unprepared and in general, shows an apathy towards their learning. They will be reported to the Head of Year and will be placed on the late work policy or monitored for poor behaviour.
- **I - Inadequate**. This is a lazy student who makes no effort and will not last very long within 6th Form!

In addition to the above here are some 'English Essentials':

- English is advantaged immeasurably by discussion. **If you do not like discussion, this is possibly not the subject for you.**
- English is one of the toughest A levels and is not an 'easy fourth option'. Scholarship is rigorous and you will be expected to work hard.
- If you do not like reading, **DO NOT** study this subject! We will monitor your library borrowing records and your journals to scrutinise your engagement with the subject.
- If you struggle to write with clarity, again, think twice! This is an essay based subject and this is ultimately what your grade will be based on.
- **Do NOT** copy and paste - your teacher will know, you fail to progress and this is also called plagiarism, or cheating.
- **The department runs extra-curricular lectures and seminars; your attendance at these is monitored and if you do not do your utmost to attend, you will be challenged.**

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THE PRESENTATION OF WRITTEN WORK

In English, expression is essential and in critical writing, you will be expected to use PEEL as the basic skeleton form of expression.

Here is an example:

What does Percy Shelley say about the nature of power in 'Ozymandias'?

Within '*Ozymandias*', Shelley employs a variety of techniques to demonstrate that power is only temporary, and ultimately, it has the power to corrupt. (*This is my POINT as it immediately engages with the question*). This can be demonstrated by the desolate lexical field which includes the words 'decay [...], boundless [...], and bare'. (*This is my EVIDENCE. It is selected in the form of direct quotes to support my point*). By using the alliterative adjectives 'boundless' and 'bare', Shelley suggests that little of the once great ruler's empire remains; it is a world that is now empty, failing and desolate. There is very little to imply that time preserves power; it will decay along with our corporeal frames. The plosive quality of the 'b' sound also enables the tone to be perceived as harsh, linking to the equally harsh reality that power is only temporary and does not have the ability to stop time and death. (*This is my EXPLANATION and also a LINK. It unpicks the evidence and tries to explore the methods used by the writer and the effects these create. There is also a summative comment which LINKS back to the question*).

Here is a second example for your own references:

At the beginning of the play, Othello is presented as a true hero, celebrated by characters who hold high status such as the Duke of Venice who greet him reverentially as "Valiant Othello". However, the lower status characters of Roderigo and Iago negate this and refer to Othello with negativity in an attempt to shape audience opinion of him before his character appears on stage. Racial slurs, such as "thick lips [...], Black ram" invite the audience to view the character with scrutiny and fit with ideas of racism which may arguably have been inherent in Renaissance audiences.

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Introductions:

The examiner will always look for an intro that is sharp, precise and concise and which engages with the question, revealing your understanding. Here is an example:

‘He died a hero’. Is this how you view Othello by the end of Shakespeare’s play?

A hero can be defined as ‘a man distinguished by exceptional courage, nobility and strength’ (Greenblatt, 2013, p.235). Aristotle reinforced this idea, yet also recognised that imperfection was a key characteristic of the tragic hero. These seemingly conflicting ideas are reflected in ‘Othello’ by the protagonist of the same name in the sense that Othello exists in a state of perpetual uncertainty, wavering between his love for his wife and his misplaced loyalty to the Machiavel Iago, whose poisonous dealings find Othello torn between the antithetical emotions of love and hate, trust and jealousy. This changing dichotomy is reflected throughout the play, where audience perceptions of Othello as a hero rise and fall adding to the tragic qualities of the play.

What is strong about this introduction?

- Definition
- Engages with ideas of change
- It mentions a key critic and is referenced correctly
- It deals with the question
- It confidently mentions the plot/ideas around it
- It has the potential to add literary terminology
- It has an apt academic register without being too dense
- It is concise

Referencing:

When you find a quote that you wish to use, you must reference and not pass off another’s ideas as your own. There are 2 main ways to reference:

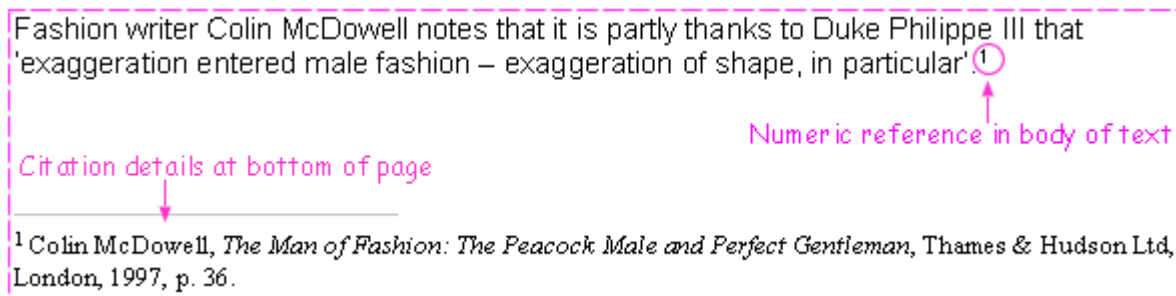
1: **Harvard.** This is within text referencing: A hero can be defined as ‘a man distinguished by exceptional courage, nobility and strength’ (Greenblatt, 2013, p.235). You must give the writer’s surname, the year the book was published and the page it came from.

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2: **Footnotes.** The footnote system of referencing uses a numeric reference to the citation in the body of the text, with the citation details at the bottom of the page.

Example:



How to insert footnotes using Word 2000

1. Place cursor where the footnote is to be inserted
2. From the menu bar, select 'Insert footnote' and select 'options'
3. The (next) numeric footnote will automatically be inserted and also placed at the bottom of the page

Your teacher will advise you of their preference, but either is acceptable.

Bibliography:

At the end of any piece of coursework, you **MUST** attach a bibliography. Quite simply, this is a list in alphabetical order of all of the works you have consulted or referenced whilst preparing and writing your assignment. It does not form part of the word count. It must be set out as follows. All of the info you need is contained on the opening pages of every text.

Surname, Initial. (Date of publication). Text title underlined. Place of publication:
Publisher

Example:

Stevens, D (2000) The Gothic Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Webography:

This is simply a list of websites that you use. List them with date accessed, in date order. It is easy to keep track as you go - you then won't have a horrid job at the end. Referencing stops you being accused of unintentional plagiarism. The library has multiple study skills guides. Please use them.

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LITERARY CRITICISM

- ⊙ **What is it?** Lit Crit explores texts from a variety of perspectives. It is like wearing different glasses and viewing a play through different eyes. Those of you who study sociology will be familiar with these ideas e.g. functionalism, Marxism etc.

Feminist and Gender Criticism

- ⊙ This approach "examines how sexual identity influences the creation and reception of literary works".
- ⊙ Originally an offshoot of feminist movements, gender criticism today includes a number of approaches, including the so-called "masculinist" approach.
- ⊙ Feminism's central idea is that the patriarchal attitudes that have dominated western thought have resulted, consciously or unconsciously, in literature "full of unexamined 'male-produced' assumptions."
- ⊙ Feminist criticism attempts to correct this imbalance by analysing and challenging such attitudes - by questioning, for example, why none of the characters in Othello ever challenge the right of a husband to murder a wife accused of adultery.
- ⊙ Other goals of feminist critics include exploring how literature reflects or rejects the social forces that have historically kept the sexes from achieving "total equality."

Psychological Criticism:

- ⊙ This approach reflects the effect that modern psychology has had upon both literature and literary criticism.
- ⊙ Fundamental figures in psychological criticism include Sigmund Freud - (Freudian) psychoanalytic theories: wish-fulfillment, sexuality, the unconscious, repression, language, dreams and symbols. Carl Jung, (Jungian) whose theories about the unconscious are also valuable to literature.

Marxist Criticism:

- ⊙ Focuses on the economic and political elements of literature.
- ⊙ Marxist criticism often argues that all literature is political.
- ⊙ It is frequently criticised as judgmental, but Marxist criticism "can illuminate political and economic dimensions of literature other approaches overlook."
- ⊙ There is a sense that text is separable from the literary times which produced it.

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