

english literature

A Level Preparation Pack



Overview

One of the great things about Literature is the way in which it draws from so many different disciplines: language, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, religious studies, art and science. But it is also a subject that is about you. Studying Literature asks you to think and feel more deeply about yourself and your world, and helps you to articulate your ideas with clarity and precision. It can be very demanding to ask and answer the questions prompted by reading Literature, but it really should be fascinating and fun. I hope, therefore, you will prepare by continuing to

study and enjoy the texts you've studied at GCSE, and by taking a look at some of the things suggested below. We look forward to meeting you!



Jon Thorpe
Head of English

Preparing for the Course

Once enrolled you will be able to buy the course texts from the College at a much reduced rate, and we like you to use specific editions. We don't, therefore, recommend buying them in advance. But it will help if you get to know the key authors and so there are some suggestions below. In the second year, you'll be studying Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and selected poems by Christina Rossetti, but in the first year, we'll be reading from the following authors:

Tennessee Williams

- You will be reading *A Streetcar Named Desire* and there's a famous and brilliant film version from 1951, starring Marlon Brando.
- American comedian Rich Hall made a great documentary on Williams, which can be viewed here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00p8dkb>

Carol Ann Duffy

- You are likely to have studied some of her work. We will be reading from her collection *Mean Time*, but take a look at her witty and politically charged collection *The World's Wife*.
- There's an interesting interview here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/entertainment-arts-16646622/meet-the-author-carol-ann-duffy>

Philip Larkin

- Dry, under-stated, witty and the perfect antidote to mindless optimism! We'll read Larkin's *Whitsun Weddings* but you'll get a good sense of his character from 'This be the verse', and 'Church Going'.
- A great documentary here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqa6L22m0rY>

F. Scott Fitzgerald

- We'll be reading his remarkable satire of 1920s America, *The Great Gatsby*, but to give you a flavour of his work, check out his short story collection, *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*.
- The 2013 film version of *The Great Gatsby* is, well, great. But you can get a humorous insight into the period through the film *Midnight in Paris*, an Owen Wilson comedy.

Khaled Hosseini

- Hosseini's emotive first novel *The Kite Runner* will form part of your course, but his subsequent novels, particularly *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, are very engaging.
- His novels are often rooted in Afghanistan. Find out something of the history of this fascinating and tragic country. The 2007 film version of *The Kite Runner* is good (get some tissues), and there's also an excellent two-part documentary on the country here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7uL4Q44ws>

Course Specifications 

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