

## Are you planning on doing A-Level English Literature next year?

### Would you like to do some reading/listening/watching in preparation for starting the course now that your GCSE study is over?

If the answer to the above is yes, then please find an extended reading and watching list to take account for this period of time when we are all staying home. These books are not the texts that you are going to study - they are books that will help you to have a wider understanding of the genre that you will be working through. The texts you will be studying are at the bottom but you will read these in class next year, so it would be good to use this time to read more widely. You will study two genres: Tragedy and Crime Writing. For each genre I've suggested 3 books, 3 films/plays and 3 podcasts.

### Tragedy: Books

#### **Gimson's Kings and Queens: Brief Lives of the Forty Monarchs since 1066 by Andrew Gimson**

Gimson's Kings and Queens is the most entertaining and instructive book on the English monarchy you will ever read. For lovers of history, the experienced and the novice, the serious and the silly.



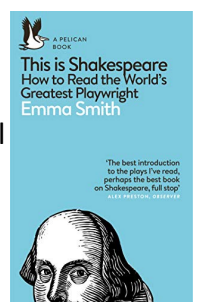
Gimson's Kings and Queens whirls us through the lives of our monarchs – from 1066 and William the Conqueror right up to Queen Elizabeth II and the present-day – to tell a tale of bastardy, courage, conquest, brutality, vanity, vulgarity, corruption, anarchy, absenteeism, piety, nobility, divorce, execution, civil war, madness, magnificence, profligacy, frugality, philately, abdication, dutifulness, family breakdown and family recovery.

Written in Andrew Gimson's inimitable style, and illustrated by Martin Rowson, Gimson's Kings and Queens is both a primer and a refresher for anyone who can't quite remember which were the good and bad Edwards or Henrys, or why so-and-so succeeded to the throne rather than his second cousin.

#### **This is Shakespeare by Emma Smith**

'The best introduction to the plays I've read, perhaps the best book on Shakespeare, full stop' Alex Preston, Observer

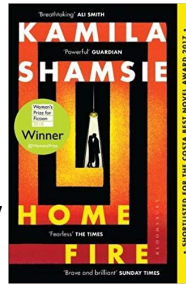
So much of what we say about Shakespeare is either not true, or just not relevant, deflecting us from investigating the challenges of his inconsistencies and flaws. This electrifying new book thrives on revealing, not resolving, the ambiguities of Shakespeare's plays and their changing topicality. It introduces an intellectually, theatrically and ethically exciting writer who engages with intersectionality as much as with Ovid, with economics as much as poetry: who writes in strikingly modern ways about individual agency, privacy, politics, celebrity and sex. It takes us into a world of politicking and copy-cattling, as we watch him emulating the blockbusters of Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd, the



Spielberg and Tarantino of their day; flirting with and skirting round the cut-throat issues of succession politics, religious upheaval and technological change. The Shakespeare in this book poses awkward questions rather than offering bland answers, always implicating us in working out what it might mean.

### Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie

Isma is free. After years spent raising her twin siblings in the wake of their mother’s death, she is finally studying in America, resuming a dream long deferred. But she can’t stop worrying about Aneeka, her beautiful, headstrong sister back in London – or their brother, Parvaiz, who’s disappeared in pursuit of his own dream: to prove himself to the dark legacy of the jihadist father he never knew.



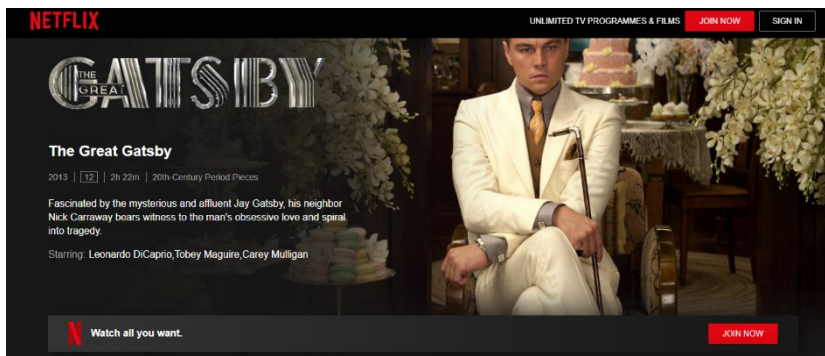
Then Eamonn enters the sisters’ lives. Handsome and privileged, he inhabits a London worlds away from theirs. As the son of a powerful British Muslim politician, Eamonn has his own birthright to live up to – or defy. Is he to be a chance at love? The means of Parvaiz’s salvation? Two families’ fates are inextricably, devastatingly entwined in this searing novel that asks: what sacrifices will we make in the name of love?

A contemporary reimagining of Sophocles’ Antigone, Home Fire is an urgent, fiercely compelling story of loyalties torn apart when love and politics collide – confirming Kamila Shamsie as a master storyteller of our times.

### Tragedy: Plays/Films

Go to this link for free viewing of RSC productions during the social isolation period and watch the two plays suggested below <https://www.marquee.tv/> (Each picture is a hyperlink direct to the production)



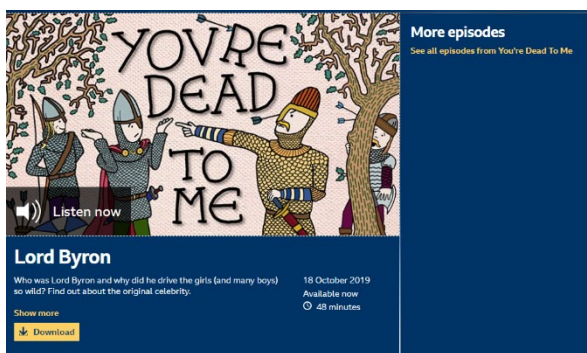


The Great Gatsby is available on Netflix.

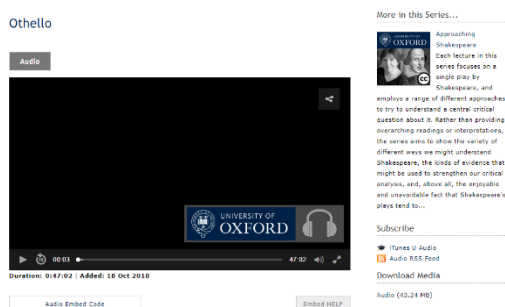
## Tragedy: Podcasts

The images below are hyperlinks. There are plenty more in each series to listen to. This one is for Lord Byron, but I would also recommend the Mary Shelley one.

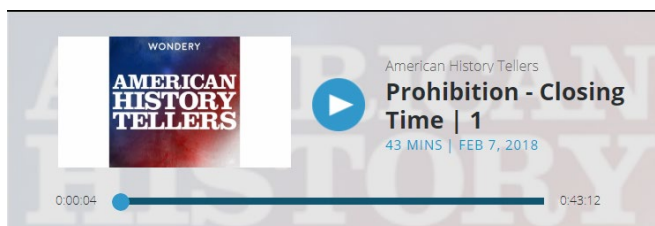
### You're Dead To Me



## University of Oxford: Approaching Shakespeare



## American History Tellers: Prohibition, Closing Time



In class you will be studying Othello, Death of a Salesman and the poetry of John Keats.