

ENGLISH LITERATURE A-LEVEL

READING LIST

Introductions and general interest:

Literary Movements

Anglo-Saxon – Beowulf, unknown (8th-11th century)
Medieval – Sir Gawain and The Green Knight, unknown (1300s)
The Age of Chaucer – The Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer (1475)
The Elizabethan Age – The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser (1590)
Jacobean Tragedy – The Duchess Of Malfi, John Webster (1614)
The Metaphysical Poets – John Donne (1610s-20s)
The Age Of Milton – Paradise Lost, John Milton (1667)
The Enlightenment – The Rape Of The Lock, Alexander Pope (1712)
Restoration Comedy – The Rivals, Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1775)
The Romantics – The Lyrical Ballads, William Wordsworth (1798)
The Regency Period – Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen (1813)
The Victorians – Middlemarch, George Eliot (1871)
Aestheticism – The Picture Of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde (1890)
Modernism – The Wasteland, TS Eliot (1922)
Postmodernism – The New York Trilogy, Paul Auster (1986)

Themes & Genres

Literature of War

Scars Upon My Heart, ed. Catherine Reilly
Never Such Innocence Again: Poems Of The first World War, ed. Martin Stephen
Journey's End, RC Sheriff
Half Of A Yellow Sun, Chimamanda Adichie
All Quiet On The Western Front, Erich Maria Remarque
Catch 22, Joseph Heller
The Great War And Modern Memory, Paul Fussell
Birdsong, Sebastian Faulks
The War Poems, Wilfred Owen

Science Fiction

War Of The Worlds, HG Wells
Oryx And Crake, Margaret Atwood
The Drowned World, JG Ballard

Neuromancer, William Gibson
In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination; Margaret Atwood
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, Philip K. Dick

Dystopian Fiction

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood
1984, George Orwell
Brave New World, Aldous Huxley
Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro
The Road, Cormac McCarthy

Irish Literature

WB Yeats, Selected Poems
Seamus Heaney, Selected Poems
The Playboy Of The Western World, JM Synge
A Long Day's Journey Into Night, Eugene O'Neill
The Secret Scripture, Sebastian Barry

European Drama

Waiting for Godot - Samuel Beckett
A Doll's House - Henrik Ibsen
Miss Julie - August Strindberg
The Cherry Orchard - Anton Chekhov

The Pastoral

A Midsummer Night's Dream, William Shakespeare
Jerusalem, Jez Butterworth
Selected Poems, Andrew Marvell
Tess Of The D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy
The Prelude, William Wordsworth
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446078/pastoral-literature>

Relationships

Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?, Edward Albee
Revolutionary Road, Richard Yates
Tender Is The Night, F Scott Fitzgerald
Snow Falling on Cedars, David Guterson
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2011/may/06/unhappy-marriage-literature>

Political Writing

Borstal Boy, Brendan Behan
Down and Out In Paris and London, George Orwell
A Room Of One's Own, Virginia Woolf

Crime

Brighton Rock, Graham Greene
Crime And Punishment, Fyodor Dostoyevsky
The Woman In White, Wilkie Collins
The Talented Mr Ripley, Patricia Highsmith

Colonial literature

The Heart Of Darkness, Joseph Conrad
A Passage To India, EM Forster
The Dubliners, James Joyce

Post-colonial literature

Midnight's Children - Salman Rushdie
Things Fall Apart - Chinua Achebe
Wide Sargasso Sea - Jean Rhys

Magic Realism

The Songs Of Eva Luna - Isabel Allende
One Hundred Years Of Solitude - Gabriel Garcia Marquez
The Magic Toyshop - Angela Carter

The City

The Wasteland, TS Eliot
Serious Money, Caryl Churchill
High-Rise, JG Ballard

Bildungsroman

Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man, James Joyce
Great Expectations, Charles Dickens
The Catcher In The Rye, JD Salinger

The Mill On The Floss, George Eliot
The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath
Purple Hibiscus, Chimamanda Adichie
Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte

The Bible for English Literature scholars

Earlier periods of English literature are deeply rooted in the Christian Bible:
Northrop Frye's lecture series:

<http://www.openculture.com/2014/09/critic-northrop-frye-teaches-the-bible-and-english-literature.html>

The 'Very Short Introductions' series has three titles:

Linafelt, Tod - The Hebrew Bible as Literature

Coogan, Michael D. - The Old Testament - good on the core ideas and theology

Keefer, Kyle - The New Testament - ditto

Jasper and Prickett's 'The Bible and Literature: A Reader'

The Gothic

The Bloody Chamber, Angela Carter

Dracula, Bram Stoker

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

The Monk, Matthew Lewis

The Castle of Otranto, Horace Walpole

The Mysteries of Udolpho, Ann Radcliffe

Gothic Short Stories, Charles Dickens

The Turn of the Screw, Henry James

The Tell-Tale Heart, Edgar Allen Poe

A Haunted House, Virginia Woolf

The Body Snatcher, Robert Louis Stevenson

Ghost Stories - M.R. James

Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte

The Great God Pan - Arthur Machen

The King in Yellow - Robert Chambers

Landscape

Tess Of The D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy

Waterland, Graham Swift

High-Rise, JG Ballard

'V', Tony Harrison

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/literland/>

Religion In Literature

Selected Poems, William Blake

His Dark Materials, Philip Pullman
Selected Poems, John Donne
Paradise Lost, John Milton

Re-working The Classics

Beowulf, Seamus Heaney
Omeros, Derek Walcott
Sir Gawain And The Green Knight, Simon Armitage
Tales from Ovid, Ted Hughes

Gender

Orlando, Virginia Woolf
Middlesex, Jeffrey Eugenides
The Left Hand Of Darkness, Ursula Le Guin
Literature and Gender, Lizbeth Goodman

The Female Experience

The Yellow Wallpaper, Charlotte Perkins Gillman
The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath
Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Rhys
The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980; Elaine Showalter

Disillusion In America

Death Of A Salesman, Arthur Miller
The Grapes Of Wrath, John Steinbeck
Howl, Allen Ginsberg
On The Road, Jack Kerouac

Tragedy

Hamlet, William Shakespeare
King Lear, William Shakespeare
All My Sons, Arthur Miller
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

Literary Criticism

General

The Ode Less Travelled, Stephen Fry
How Novels Work, John Mullan
The Art Of Fiction, David Lodge

Literary Theory

Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory; Peter Barry
Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction; Jonathan Culler
Literary Theory: An Introduction; Terry Eagleton

Marxist Criticism

Communism: A Very Short Introduction; Leslie Holmes
Contemporary Marxist Literary Criticism; ed. Francis Mulhern
The Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Feminist Criticism

Feminist Literary Criticism: A Reader, ed. Mary Eagleton
The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary
Imagination; Sandra Gilbert
The Second Sex; Simone De Beauvoir
A Room Of One's Own, Virginia Woolf
A Vindication Of The Rights Of Woman, Mary Wollstonecraft