

## English Literature GCSE to A level Transition Tasks

**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.

*Things you could do now:*

- Watch as many productions as you can while you can get them for free! The BBC's 'Culture in Quarantine' includes some excellent productions from the RSC and The Globe (including our core text 'Othello', but I would also highly recommend watching 'Much Ado About Nothing')

You can also access the National Theatre's schools catalogue

<https://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/series/national-theatre-collection-iid-190464>

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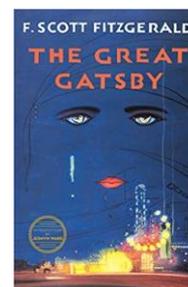
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- Work through the 'Making the Leap' resources. These are an excellent starting point to develop the independence, thinking and critical skills necessary for success at A-level.

### ***Wider Recommendations***

#### ***The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald***

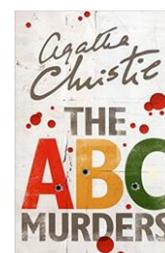
First published in 1925, this quintessential novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story of the mysteriously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when The New York Times noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s.



#### ***The ABC Murders, by Agatha Christie***

There's a serial killer on the loose, bent on working his way through the alphabet. And as a macabre calling card he leaves beside each victim's corpse the ABC Railway Guide open at the name of the town where the murder has taken place.

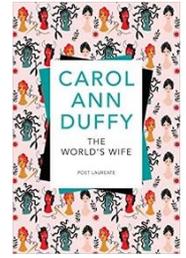
Having begun with Andover, Bexhill and then Churston, there seems little chance of the murderer being caught – until he makes the crucial and vain mistake of challenging Hercule Poirot to frustrate his plans...



## ***The World's Wife*, by Carol Ann Duffy**

Behind every famous man is a great woman - and from the quick-tongued Mrs Darwin to the lascivious Frau Freud, from the adoring Queen Kong to the long-suffering wife of the Devil himself, each one steps from her counterpart's shadow to tell her side of the story in this irresistible collection.

Original, subversive, full of imagination and quicksilver wit, *The World's Wife* is Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy at her beguiling best.



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

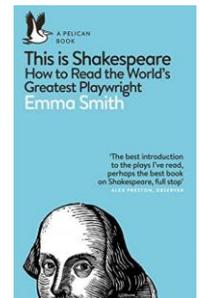
Gimson's Kings and Queens is the most entertaining and instructive book on the English monarchy you will ever read. For lovers of history, the experienced and the novice, the serious and the silly.

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.



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

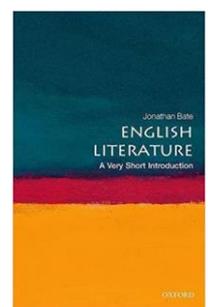
So much of what we say about Shakespeare is either not true, or just not relevant, deflecting us from investigating the challenges of his inconsistencies and flaws. This electrifying new book thrives on revealing, not resolving, the ambiguities of Shakespeare's plays and their changing topicality. It 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-catting, 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.



## ***English Literature: A Very Short Introduction***

Sweeping across two millennia and every literary genre, acclaimed scholar and biographer Jonathan Bate provides a dazzling introduction to English Literature. The focus is wide, shifting from the birth of the novel and the brilliance of English comedy to the deep Englishness of landscape poetry and the ethnic diversity of Britain's Nobel literature laureates. It goes on to provide a more in-depth analysis, with close readings from an extraordinary scene in King Lear to a war poem by Carol Ann Duffy, and a series of striking examples of how literary texts change as they are transmitted from writer to reader.

The narrative embraces not only the major literary movements such as Romanticism and Modernism, together with the most influential authors including Chaucer, Donne, Johnson, Wordsworth, Austen, Dickens and Woolf, but also little-known stories such as the identity of the first English woman poet to be honoured with a collected edition of her works. Written with the flair and passion for which Jonathan Bate has become renowned, this book is the perfect *Very Short Introduction* for all readers and students of the incomparable literary heritage of these islands.



**OR** pick something from this list:

*\*Starred items are crime novels – this is an excellent opportunity to do plenty of reading for this component!*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
<i>1984</i>	George Orwell
<i>A Clockwork Orange</i>	Anthony Burgess
<i>A Doll's House</i>	Henrik Ibsen
<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>	Ernest Hemmingway
<i>A Room with a View</i>	E. M. Forster
<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> <i>The Glass Menagerie</i>	Tennessee Williams
<i>Atonement</i>	Ian McEwan
<i>Birdsong</i>	Sebastian Faulkes
<i>Brave New World</i>	Aldous Huxley
<i>Brighton Rock</i> *	Graham Greene
<i>Dracula</i>	Bram Stoker
<i>Educating Rita</i>	Willy Russell
<i>Emma</i> <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	Jane Austen
<i>Enduring Love</i>	Ian McEwan
<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	Ray Bradbury
<i>Fingersmith</i> *	Sarah Walters
<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	Joseph Conrad
<i>His Dark Materials</i>	Philip Pullman
<i>In Cold Blood</i> *	Truman Capote
<i>Jane Eyre</i>	Charlotte Bronte
<i>Middlemarch</i>	George Eliot
<i>Misery</i> *	Stephen King
<i>Money</i>	Martin Amis
<i>Oliver Twist</i> * <i>Great Expectations</i> *	Charles Dickens
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>	Ken Kesey
<i>Oranges are not the only fruit</i>	Jeanette Winterson
<i>Rebecca</i> *	Daphne du Maurier
<i>Slaughterhouse 5</i>	Kurt Vonnegut
<i>Strangers on a Train</i> *	Patricia Highsmith
<i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>	Thomas Hardy
<i>The Big Sleep</i> *	Raymond Chandler
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	J. D. Salinger
<i>The Collector</i>	John Fowles
<i>The Colour Purple</i>	Alice Walker
<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	F. Scott Fitzgerald
<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	Margaret Atwood
<i>The Help</i>	Kathryn Stockett
<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>	Oscar Wilde
<i>The Kite Runner</i>	Khaled Hosseini
<i>The Murder of Roger Ackroyd</i> *	Agatha Christie
<i>The Name of the Rose</i> *	Umberto Eco
<i>The Nine Tailors</i> *	Dorothy L. Sayers
<i>The Remains of the Day</i> <i>Never Let Me Go</i>	Kazuo Ishiguro
<i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i> *	Samuel Taylor Coleridge
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	Nathaniel Hawthorne
<i>The Woman in White</i> *	Wilkie Collins
<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe
<i>Trainspotting</i>	Irvine Welsh
<i>When Will There be Good News?</i> *	Kate Atkinson
<i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	Jean Rhys
<i>Wise Children</i>	Angela Carter
<i>Wuthering Heights</i>	Emily Bronte
<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>	Arthur Conan Doyle

## Podcasts

### You're Dead To Me

*I would particularly recommend the episodes on Lord Byron and Mary Shelley*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07mdbhg/episodes/downloads>

### University of Oxford: Approaching Shakespeare

<https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/approaching-shakespeare>

### Such Stuff: A podcast from Shakespeare's Globe

<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/backstage/such-stuff-podcast/>

### The History of Literature

<https://historyofliterature.com/>

## Course texts

Over the two-year course we will study:

### *Tragedy*

- 'Othello' by William Shakespeare (a recent RSC production is currently available on the BBC iPlayer)
- 'Death of a Salesman' by Arthur Miller
- Keats' poetry: 'Isabella', 'The Eve of St Agnes', 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and 'Lamia'

### *Crime*

- 'Atonement' by Ian McEwan
- 'The Murder of Roger Ackroyd' by Agatha Christie
- Poetry: 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' by Oscar Wilde, 'Peter Grimes' by George Crabbe and 'My Last Duchess', 'Porphyria's Lover', 'The Laboratory'
- A range of crime extracts for the unseen component of the exam

[Course Specification can be found here](#)