

A-level English Literature Reading List



The list below contains a selection of worthwhile texts, although is by no means exhaustive. There are no guarantees that you will enjoy all the books included, not liking a particular author or style of writing provides interesting discussion! You should perhaps aim to read at least one book from each section, plus a selection from the Tragedy reading list.

Private reading is essential if you wish to do well at A-level level English. It is not an optional extra. You will be expected to read regularly, to give an account of that reading from time to time, and to keep a list of your chosen reading – use the A-Level Reading Record for this.

The school library holds copies of many of the books on the recommended list. Others may be found in public libraries, or you may even find them on the bookshelves at home...enjoy!

Contemporary Fiction

Ackroyd, P - The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde
Amis, K – Lucky Jim
Atkinson, K – Behind the Scenes at the Museum
Atwood, M - Cat's Eye
Bainbridge, B – An Awfully Big Adventure
Banks, I - The Wasp Factory
Beckett, S – Waiting for Godot
Burgess, A – A Clockwork Orange
Burn, A - Milkman
Byatt, A.S – Possession
Carter, A – The Passion of New Eve, The Bloody Chamber, etc
De Bernieres, L – Captain Corelli's Mandolin
Doyle, R - Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha
Du Maurier, D – Rebecca
Drabble, M – A Summer Bird-Cage
Gaarder, J – Sophie's World
Greene, G - Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory
Golding, W – Rites of Passage, Lord of the Flies
Graves, R – I, Claudius
Heller, J – Catch 22
Hornby, N - Fever Pitch
Keneally, T – Schindler's Ark
Kureishi, H - The Buddha of Suburbia
Miller, A – The Crucible
Morrison, T – Beloved, Song of Solomon, The Bluest Eye
Murdock, I – The Bell, The Sandcastle, etc
Okri, B - The Famished Road

Ondaatje, M – The English Patient
Orwell, G – 1984, Animal Farm
Pinter, H - The Caretaker
Rhys, J - Wide Sargasso Sea
Roy, A - The God of Small Things
Rushdie, S - Midnight's Children
Scott, P – Jewel in the Crown
Tartt, D – The Secret History
Waugh, E – Brideshead Revisited, Decline and Fall
Weldon, F - The Shrapnel Academy, Moon over Minneapolis, etc
Welsh, I – Trainspotting
Woodhouse, P.G – Laughing Gas

Other 'Englishes'

Achebe, C – Anthills of Savannah
Angelou, M - I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (Biography)
Fitzgerald, S - The Great Gatsby
Fowles, J - The French Lieutenant's Woman
Hawthorne, N – The Scarlet Letter
Hemingway, E – For Whom the Bell Tolls, A Farewell to Arms
Ishiguro, K – The Remains of the Day, An Artist of the Floating Ward, A Pale View of Hills
James, H - Portrait of a Lady
Joyce, J – Dubliners
Lee, H – To Kill a Mocking Bird
Lee, L – Cider with Rosie
Lessing, D – The Good Terrorist, The Summer Before Death
Naipaul, V.S – A House for Mr Biswas, Miguel Street, A Turn in the South
Salinger, J.D - Catcher in the Rye
Steinbeck, J - The Grapes of Wrath
Walker, A - The Colour Purple

Poetry

Larkin, P/ Betjeman, J/ Hughes,
Plath, S - The poems of Sylvia Plath

The First World War and its Aftermath

Forster, E.M - Howard's End
Lawrence, D.H – Sons and Lovers, Women in Love
Remarque, E – All Quiet on the Western Front
Woolf, V - To the Lighthouse, Mrs Dalloway

Poetry

Elliot, T.S - Poems
Owen, W/ Sassoon, S/ Graves, R

'Fin de Siecle'

Conrad, J - Heart of Darkness
Hardy, T - Tess of the D'Urbervilles
Hardy, T - Jude the Obscure
Wells, H.G - The War of the Worlds
Wilde, O - The Picture of Dorian Gray

Europeans

Tolstoy, L - War and Peace, Anna Karenina
Kafka, F - Metamorphosis
Kundera, M - The Incredible Lightness of Being

Shakespeare and his Contemporaries

Jonson, B - The Alchemist
Marlowe, C - Doctor Faustus
Shakespeare, W - Any play
Webster, J - The Duchess of Malfi

The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century

Fielding, H - Tom Jones
Swift, J - Gulliver's Travels

The Romantic Period

Poetry

Coleridge, S.T - The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Blake, W - Songs of Innocence and Experience
Keats, Shelley, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron - Poetry

The Gothic Novel

Shelley, M - Frankenstein
Stoker, B - Dracula

The Nineteenth Century

Austen, J - Emma, Pride and Prejudice
Bronte, C - Jane Eyre
Bronte, E - Wuthering Heights
Dickens, C - Great Expectations, Hard Times, David Copperfield
Eliot, G - The Mill on the Floss, Silas Marner
Galsworthy, J - Forsyte Saga
Gaskell, E - Mary Barton
Thackeray, W.M - Vanity Fair