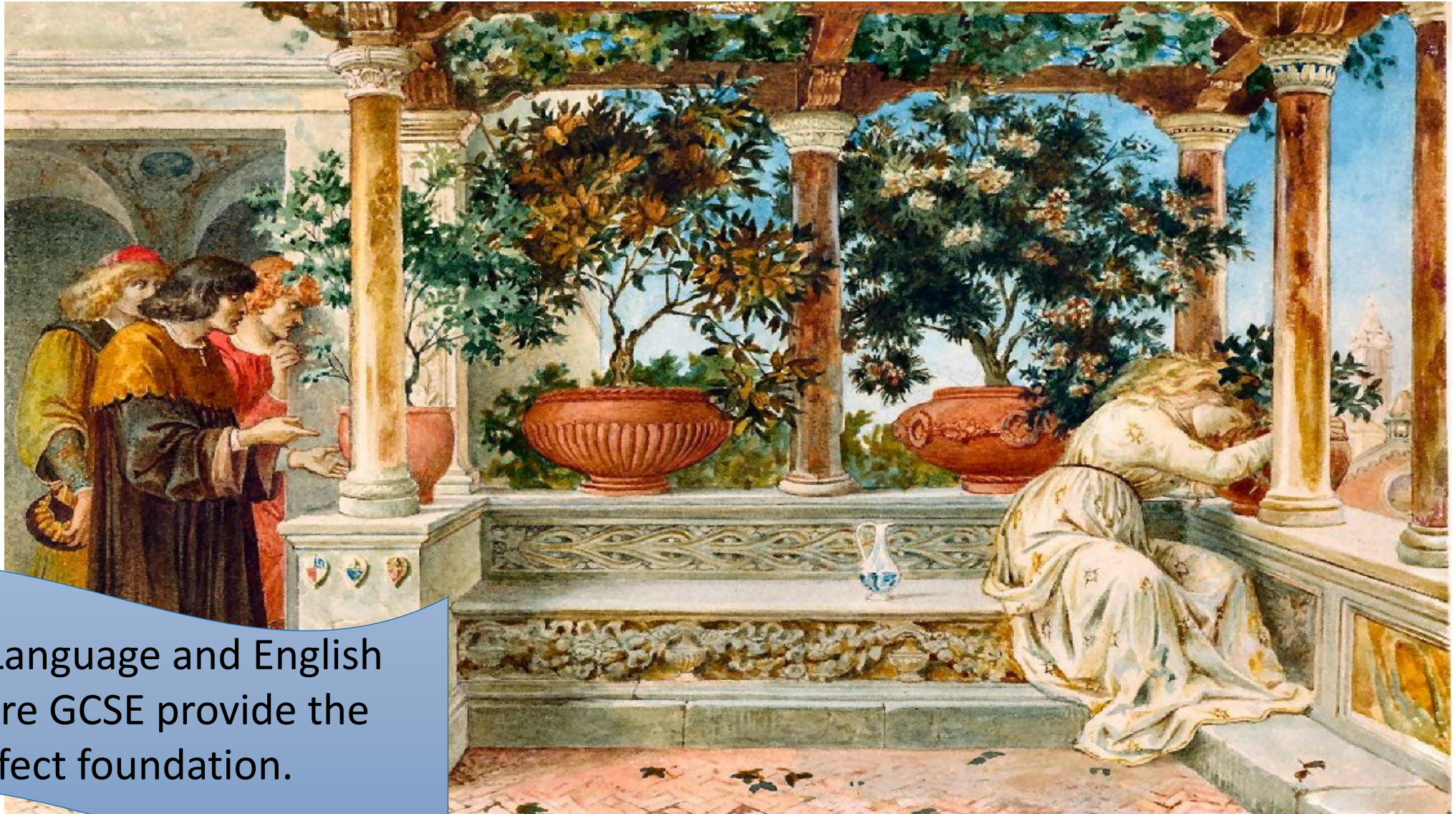


Welcome to A-Level English Literature



English Language and English Literature GCSE provide the perfect foundation.

The background is a collage of three images. On the left is the cover of Keats' 'Selected Poems'. In the center is a black and white photo of a typewriter. On the right is a film still of a man in a military uniform sitting at a desk. Three colored boxes (green, blue, and light blue) are overlaid on the collage, each containing text.

Tragedy

Political and
Social Protest
Writing

Critical
Approaches

Exploring a Poem

- [Reading by Ben Wishaw](#)

How are the characters presented in these images?



O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.
I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true'.

She took me to her Elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!'

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Starting Point

- How are Macbeth and the Knight presented at the beginning?
(*What do they have going for them?*)

The Supernatural Encounter

- What happens when they meet the witches / La Belle Dame?
- What is similar about these encounters?

Desire & Change

- How do Macbeth and the Knight change after this moment?
- What do they start to want?

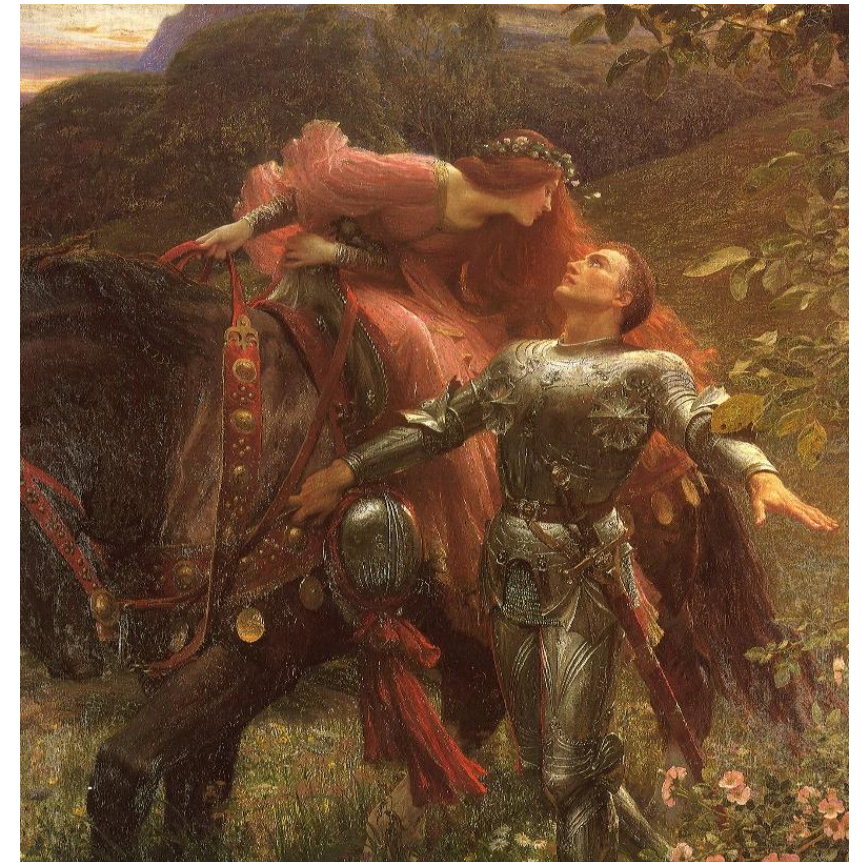
Turning Point

- When do things begin to go wrong for each character?

Final State

- Where do they end up?
- What has each character lost?

La Belle Dame Sans Merci



Comparing Tragic Stories

Focus	Macbeth	The Knight (La Belle Dame Sans Merci)
Starting Point (How are they presented at the beginning of their story?)		
Encounter with the Supernatural		
Desire / Motivation After the Encounter		
Turning Point (When things begin to go wrong)		
Final State (What are they like at the end?)		

Now think about how this poem fits the features of a tragedy.

Hamartia

- What is the knight's fatal flaw?

Hubris

- Is there any pride or overconfidence in the knight's behaviour?

Peripeteia

- Where is the moment of reversal or downfall?

Anagnorisis

- Is there a moment of realisation or truth?

Catharsis

- Do we feel pity or fear for the knight's fate? Why?



Interpretations

1. The poem is about drug addiction—the knight is hallucinating, and the woman is a metaphor for opium.

2. The poem is about lust, not love—the knight is driven by physical desire and gets punished for it.

3. The knight is a tragic hero. His downfall comes from idealising a woman who turns out to be more powerful than he expected.

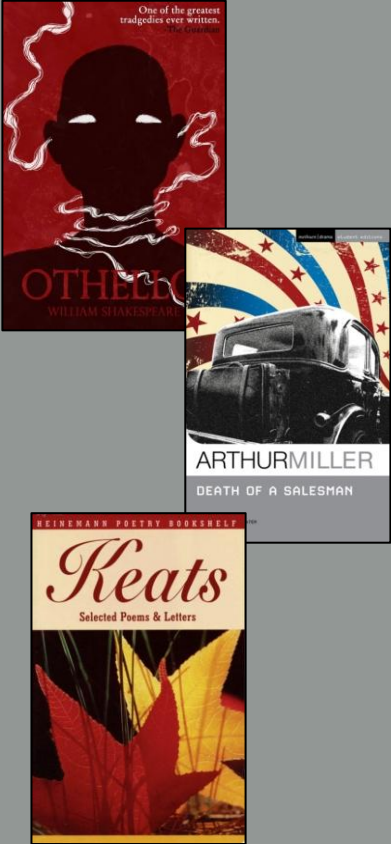
4. Keats is warning against female power and presenting women as dangerous.

Reflection

How is this different from the ways you have studied poetry at GCSE?

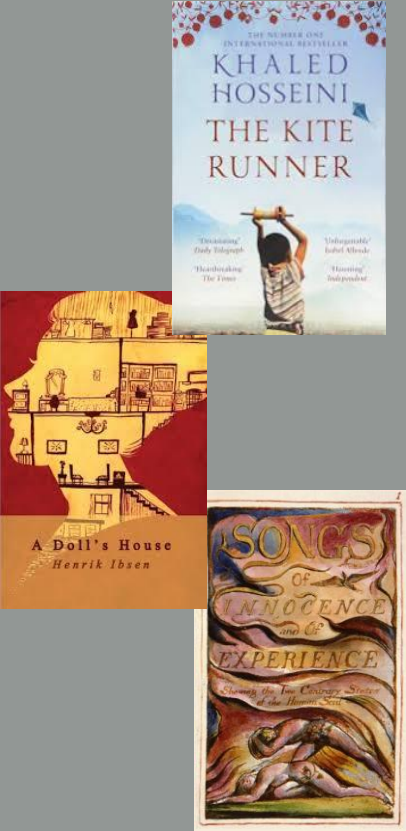
An overview of the course:

AQA English Literature A Level: Specification B

Course Content:	Texts:	Assessment:
Year 12  The image shows three book covers. The top cover is 'Othello' by William Shakespeare, featuring a silhouette of a man's head against a red background with white lightning bolts. The middle cover is 'Death of a Salesman' by Arthur Miller, showing a vintage car in front of an American flag. The bottom cover is 'Keats' Selected Poems & Letters, featuring a close-up of autumn leaves.	<u>Paper One - Aspects of Tragedy</u> 40% of final A level award Study of three texts: • One Shakespeare text • A second drama text • One further text, one of which must be written pre-1900 Chosen texts: • Othello (William Shakespeare) • Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller) • John Keats Poetry	<u>Aspects of Tragedy</u> Assessment: • One final written exam - 2 hours 30 minutes • Closed book (no book allowed) • 75 marks • 40% of A-level marks The exam is separated into three sections: Section A: One passage-based question on set Shakespeare text (25 marks) Section B: One essay question on set Shakespeare text (25 marks) Section C: One essay question linking two texts (Death of a Salesman and Keats Poetry) (25 marks)

An overview of the course:

AQA English Literature A Level: Specification B

Course Content:	Texts:	Assessment:
Year 13 	<u>Paper Two - Elements of political and social protest writing</u> 40% of final A level award Study of three texts: • One post-2000 prose text • One poetry • One further text, one of which must be written pre-1900 Chosen texts: • The Kite Runner (Khaled Hosseini) • Songs of Innocence and Experience (William Blake) OR Tony Harrison: Selected Poems • A Doll's House (Henrik Ibsen)	<u>Elements of political and social protest writing</u> Assessment: • One final written exam - 2 hours 30 minutes • 75 marks • 40% of A-level marks The exam is separated into three sections: Section A: One compulsory question on an unseen passage (25 marks) Section B: One essay question on set texts (25 marks) Section C: One essay question which connects two texts (25 marks)

An overview of the course:

AQA English Literature A Level: Specification B

Course Content:	Texts:	Assessment:
Year 12 / 13 Non Examination Assessment Work on the NEA will typically start in the summer term of Year 12. For these tasks you will be expected to read your texts outside of class and prepare your essay titles independently. (You will have the opportunity to discuss and agree them with your teacher.)	Two essays of 1250–1500 words, each responding to a different text and linking to a different aspect of a Critical Anthology. Within this anthology are several different theoretical perspectives which you can choose to apply to any text, including feminism, Marxism and ideas relating to the literary canon. Study of two texts: one poetry and one prose text, informed by study of the Critical Anthology This truly is an open task (although you can't use any texts that are one the examination set texts lists.) In recent years students have chosen to write about Rossetti's poetry, Larkin's, a selection of World War Two poetry and more. The choice of prose texts is extremely varied with novels as diverse as The Wasp Factory, The Color Purple, Clockwork Orange and a Thousand Splendid Suns all having been studied. The final choice of texts and the accompanying essay titles are agreed with the class teacher.	25 marks for each essay, 50 marks in total 20% of A-level Coursework essays are first assessed and graded by teachers in school. Coursework essays are then moderated by external AQA moderators

Aiming High in English Literature



To succeed in English Literature, you need to enjoy reading, stay curious, and be willing to explore new ideas.

- The course will develop your critical thinking, analytical skills, and ability to communicate clearly.

English Literature is a well regarded A Level.

- This qualification supports many university and career pathways, but success requires consistent effort. You should expect to complete at least four hours of independent study each week and keep on top of deadlines.

Good organisation is essential.

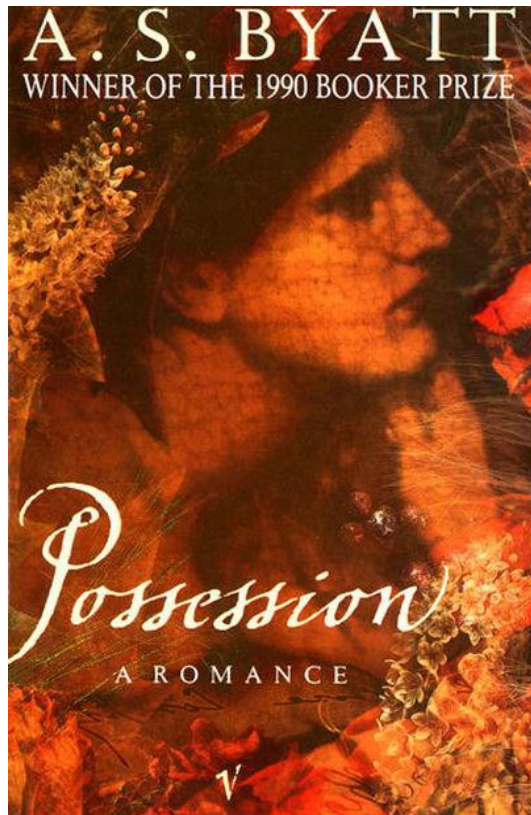
- Keep a lever-arch folder for lesson materials and create clearly labelled sections for each text. Most importantly, know your texts well by reading them several times and building a confident understanding of them.

Summer Tasks

to be handed in at the
start of Year 12:

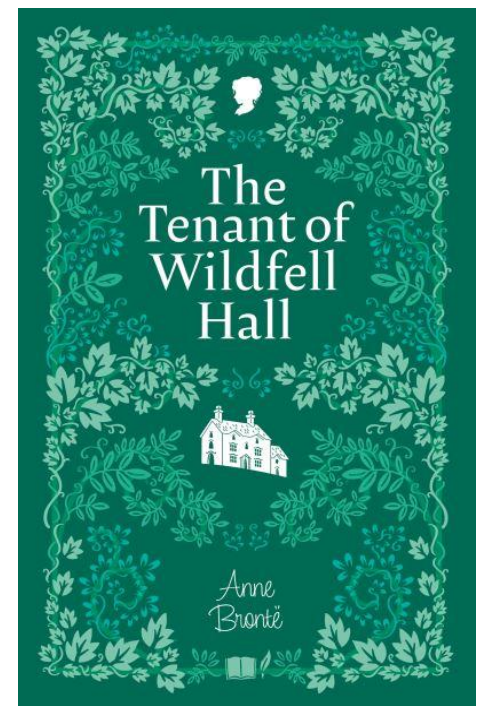
Introducing Myself as a Reader

I've chosen two books that have really stayed with me. They are very different in style and story, but both remind me why I love reading and why literature matters.



The first is *Possession* by A.S. Byatt. It's a novel about two modern academics who discover a secret connection between two Victorian poets. That part of the plot is enjoyable on its own, but what I really love is the way Byatt creates the actual voices of the poets. She doesn't just tell us about them, she writes their letters and their poetry so convincingly that you start to believe they were real. The poems feel like they belong in a real anthology, each with its own distinct tone and style. It made me realise how much skill and imagination goes into writing across different forms. It also made me think differently about how writers can craft narratives and different voices.

The second book is *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Brontë, which has an interesting use of narrative voice and feminist ideas. It is sometimes overlooked because of her more famous sisters, but it's a novel that tells the story of a woman who leaves her husband to protect herself and her child, and how society reacts to that choice. It feels surprisingly modern in the way it deals with ideas like personal freedom, morality and judgment. I admired how calm and steady Helen's voice is throughout the novel, even when everything around her is chaotic or unfair. Brontë explores interesting ideas about who has power in relationships and society in general, and how women's voices are shaped or silenced in literature.



Both of these books remind me that reading is about listening as much as it is about thinking. I look for books that challenge me or change the way I see something, even slightly.

Task 2. The Elements of Tragedy

Instructions:

Research each of the following key terms linked to tragedy. Write a clear, concise definition in your own words.

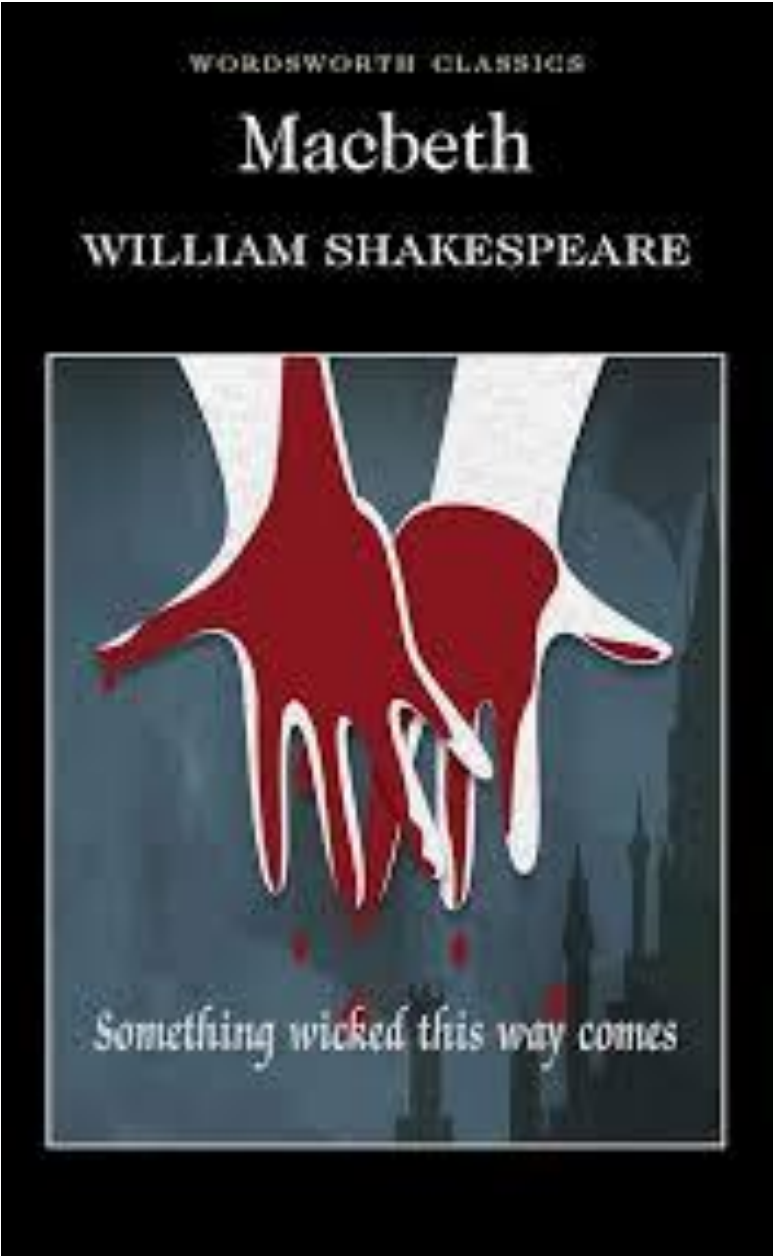
Key Term	Your Definition
Tragic Hero	
Hamartia	
Hubris	
Peripeteia	
Anagnorisis	
Catharsis	
Fate and free will	
Tragic Villain	
Tragic Victim	
Suffering	
Downfall	
Supernatural	

Task 3: Macbeth as Tragedy

You have already researched the key elements of tragedy.
Now apply this knowledge to **Shakespeare’s *Macbeth***.
Identify and explain how *Macbeth* fits the tragic genre.

Use the table below to organise your ideas. For each element of tragedy, explain **how it appears in *Macbeth***.

Element of Tragedy	How is this shown in Macbeth?
Tragic Hero	
Hamartia (fatal flaw)	
Hubris	
Peripeteia (turning point)	
Anagnorisis (realisation)	
Catharsis (effect on audience)	
Fate vs Free Will	
Supernatural	
Suffering	
Downfall	





Othello is the Shakespeare text that we will study in Year 12.

Your Task: Make sure you have a good understanding of the story of Othello. Write character summaries for Othello, Iago, Desdemona



Wider Reading

- **There is an extract from an article about tragedy. Please read it carefully and answer the questions in your booklet.**

Books that you will need to buy:

Before we begin the course you will need to buy the following books. You will use these during lessons for reading and annotating.

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

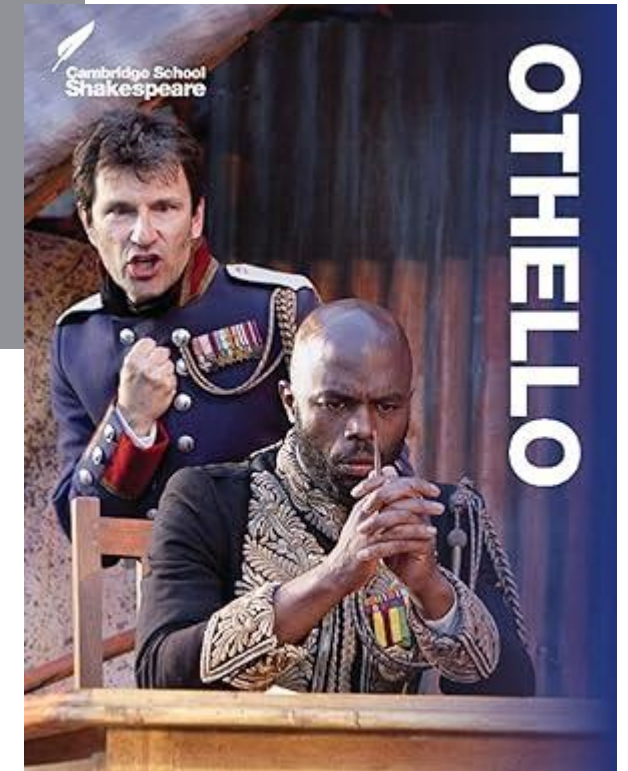
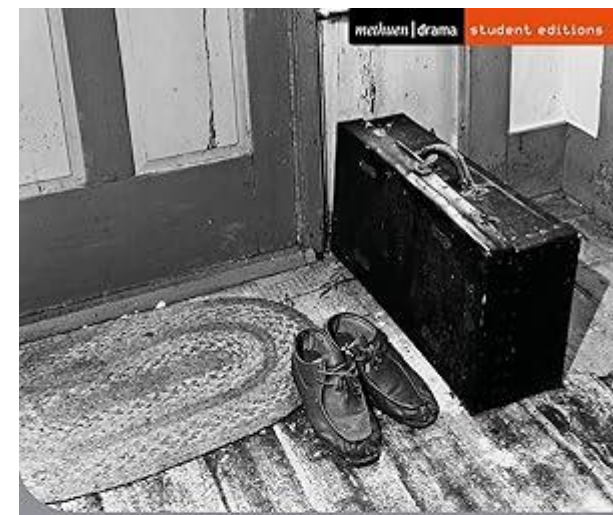
We recommend the Modern Drama Student Edition edited by Claire Conceison and published by Bloomsbury as it has study guide material in the introduction.

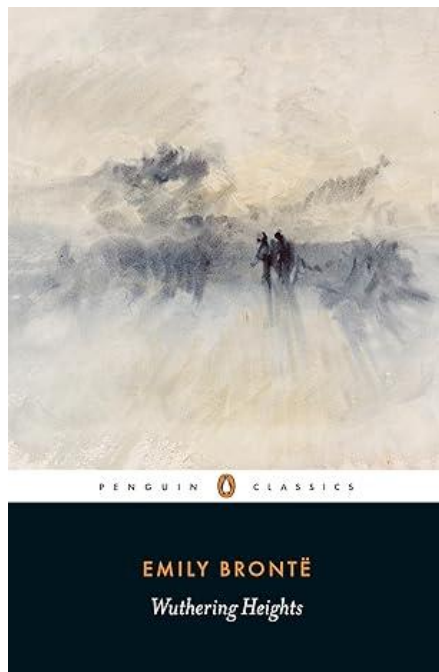
Othello by William Shakespeare

We recommend Othello (Cambridge School Shakespeare) Paperback. Again, this has helpful student notes throughout.

It is very important that you bring your texts to all of your lessons.

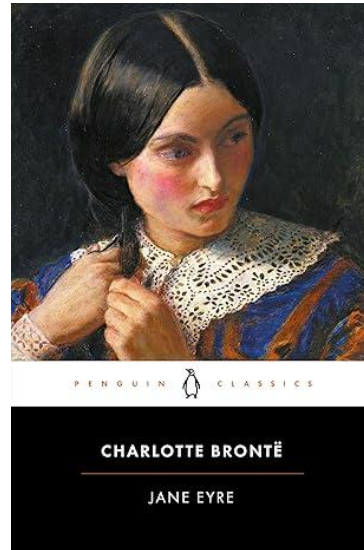
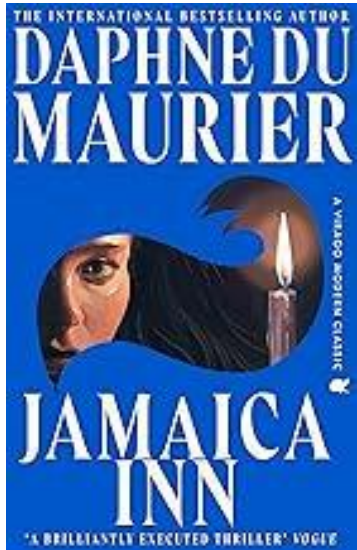
Please contact us if you need to discuss purchase of the texts.





Reading For Pleasure

- **Required Reading:** We will be using *Jamaica Inn* by Daphne Du Maurier as a core text for our Critical Theory Unit.
- **For greater depth,** you would benefit from reading *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.



- Independent Reading is a crucial aspect of A Level literature as you will need to choose your own texts for your NEA essays.
- We have provided a list of texts to give you a starting point for your own independent reading in preparation for your NEA. Many of them have been used for NEA by previous students.

English Literature
A Level
AQA Specification B

Please contact
sixthform@bourneacademy.org
if you have any further
questions about this
course.

Make revision
resources as you
go along

Read! Start
reading NEA
choices early

Keep your
folder well
organised

One of the biggest differences
between GCSE and A-Level English
is the change in focus for analysis –
you don't have to 'zoom in' on
individual words any more – the
form and structure of texts is much
more important" *Year 12 Student*

Make sure your
notes and
annotations are
clear