



## HOW TO PREPARE FOR A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

In order to prepare for the A level course, it would be advisable to become familiar with the themes of tragedy and Political and Social Protest. With this in mind, the tasks below could be completed before the autumn term begins.

1. **The most important thing for a literature student to do is read.** Read as much as possible over the summer. (Great reads: The Great Gatsby, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Catcher in The Rye, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Great Expectations, poetry by Carol Anne Duffy or Simon Armitage and Romantic Poets' work such as Keats, Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth and Coleridge).

2. Write a short story of around 1500 words. To think like a writer, sometimes it's helpful to be a writer! In order to do this, research how writers go about writing short stories. YouTube is rich with helpful videos on this subject. Podcasts made by The New Yorker are great sources of free excellent short stories.

**Note: This is a compulsory summer task! Please bring this to your first lesson.**

3. Research Tragic literature. Create a list of texts that might be described as tragic. Identify the features common to these texts and read what other people have said about them. Research and read critical theory on these texts: the internet is fantastic for this; particularly essays about other texts.

4. Research what Political and Social Protest Writing is. Make a list of texts that might be considered relatable to these themes. Again research critical theory: this is an important part of the subject for coursework (NEA) in the future.

5. Most of you have studied 'An Inspector Calls' for GCSE Literature. In which ways could this be considered a social and political text? Which political points was Priestley making? Which social points was Priestley making? Make a list of which characters represented social and political views (for example: Mr Birling is a Capitalist and represents greed).



6. Most of you have studied a Tragedy at GCSE too: Macbeth. Why is it classed as a tragedy? Research Greek tragedy: what features does it share with Shakespeare's play? Why did Shakespeare write it (you may have to research this if you can't remember)?

7. Research William Blake. He wrote the poem 'London' which was in the AQA GCSE Literature Anthology. Read some of his poetry poetry and create an anthology of twelve of their poems that you think are particularly good.

8. Research a particular era: what life was like in Victorian times or Elizabethan times. Explore the differences between males and females in Victorian Europe and how they were perceived. Find out about the Napoleonic code. Or research attitudes towards race in Elizabethan England.

9. Look at poems, from the Anthology, that you didn't study as part of your GCSEs. Annotate them and try to work out what they are about.

10. Finally, research an \_\_\_ism. Elitism, feminism, Racism, Marxism etc. Try to understand what these terms mean and what they represent.