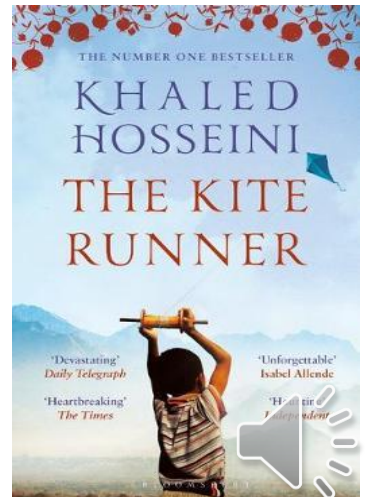
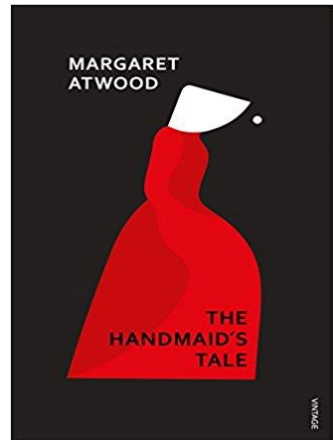


A level Literature



Why study A' level Literature

- “Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of a larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.”



What will I be studying?



- **Paper 1 Aspects of Tragedy**

Othello

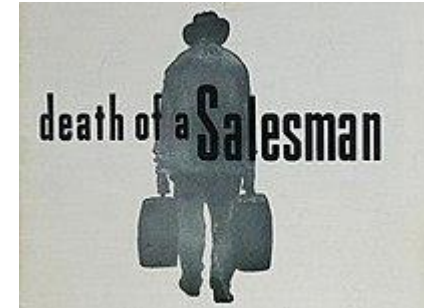
Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

Section A: Shakespeare extract question (25 marks) A longer extract than at GCSE. This still requires knowledge of the whole text.

Section B: Shakespeare question on dramatic methods (25 marks)

Section C: Comparative question on the nature of tragedy



What are 'Aspects of Tragedy'?



- the type of the tragic text itself,
- the settings for the tragedy, both places and time
- the journey towards death of the protagonists
- the role of the tragic villain or opponent,
- the presence of fate, how the hero's end is inevitable
- how the behaviour of the hero affects the world around him,
- the significance of violence and revenge, humour and moments of happiness
- the structure and language used to heighten tragedy
- how tragedy affects the audience, acting as a commentary on the real world



What will I be studying?



- **Paper 2 Social and Political Protest Writing (open book exam 3 hours)**
- **Section A:** Unseen fiction analysis (25 marks) Texts will be provided by Mrs Slack but you need to read lots of political/dystopian fiction to improve your knowledge of key ideas/elements
- **Section B:** Choice of text – presentation of social/political ideas (25 marks)
- **Section C:** Remaining two texts comparison – generic question on ideas of social/political ideas (25 marks)

Texts for B and C: The Handmaid's Tale (Margaret Atwood)

The Kite Runner (Khaled Hosseini)

Songs of Innocence and Experience (William Blake)

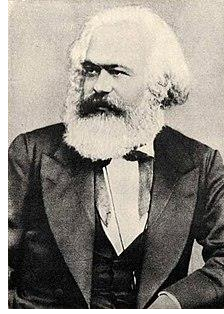


What are elements of social and political protest writing?

- the specific nature of the power struggle, the behaviours of those with power and those without, those who have their hands on the levers of power
- the pursuit of power itself, rebellion against those with power, warfare
- the workings of the ruling political classes
- corruption, conspiracy, control
- the connection of the smaller world to the larger world
- the focus on human organisation: the structural patterning of the text, how political tensions are heightened and perhaps resolved
- the way that language is used in the worlds that are created
- the way that political and social protest writing is used to comment on society, particularly the representation of society at particular historical periods
- ultimately how political and social protest writing affects audiences and readers, inviting reflection on our own world.



Critical Theory



- Literary Criticism is a new element of study for A level and in higher education.
- Critical theory allows the reader to view a text through a particular lens.
- The key theories studied are feminism, Marxism, post-colonialism and eco-criticism. To further develop their own knowledge students may also wish to study historicism and queer theory.
- Students will view a variety of texts such as children's literature as well as Victorian and modern texts when examining these theories.

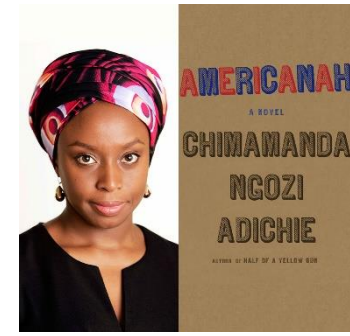


Coursework (The NEA)

- For the NEA students are required to write two essays (one prose and one poetry). Each one will involve using a different critical theory
- E.g. Jane Eyre from a post-colonial viewpoint or Great Expectations as a Marxist critic would view it.
- Each essay is 1250 to 1500 words and must be seen as a text worthy of academic study. Students read and analyse a variety of critical essays as they prepare their response.
- The coursework tasks are an opportunity to study texts of personal interest and must have academic merit.



Texts Covered for NEA (Essay 1)



- Jane Eyre -Charlotte Bronte (Post-colonialism)
- Americanah - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Post-colonialism/Feminism)
- Grimm's Fairy Tales (Feminism)
- Oranges are not the only fruit – Jeanette Winterton (Feminism)
- The Bell Jar – Sylvia Plath (Feminism)
- Great Expectations – Charles Dickens (Marxism)
- Rebecca – Du Maurier (Feminism)



Texts covered for the NEA 2020 (Essay 2)

- Gwendolyn Brooks – The Bean Eaters (Marxism)
- Kamala Das – Selected Poetry (Feminism)
- Audre Lorde – The Black Unicorn (Feminism)
- John Agard – Selected Poems (Post- colonialism)
- Grace Nichols – ‘The Fat Black Woman’ (Post-colonialism)
- Douglas Dunn – ‘Terry Street’ (Marxism)
- Carol Anne Duffy – Selected Poems (Feminism)
- Seamus Heaney – Selected Poems (Colonialism)



Thinking about Tragedy

- Aristotle defined **tragedy** as a form of drama whose plot is centred on human suffering for the **purpose** of evoking feelings of pity and fear in the audience.
- Think about the plays you have seen/studied or novels/poetry you have read or films you have watched. How true is this statement?
- How do tragic characters behave? Do they deserve their ending?



FAQs

- Do I need to read lots to study English Literature?
- Will I be expected to read other books about the texts I am studying?
- What happens if I don't like one of the texts?
- Who will be teaching me?
- Will I need to use the university library for my coursework?
- Is there a reading list?
- Any other questions email: pslack@eastleake-ac.org.uk or kferguson@eastleake-ac.org.uk

