Top Tips for A Level English Literature Exam Preparation

With the summer exams fast approaching, here are some of our top tips and ideas to aid A Level English Literature exam preparation and help students to get the most from their revision time.

Successful exam preparation - Assessment recap

How am I assessed?

AO1: a) Articulating an informed, personal and creative response to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology.
1. Close Reading
2. Creating and Sustaining a Line of Argument (LOA)/Thesis
3. Supported Interpretations
AO1: b) Writing coherently using accurate written expression
4. Writing in an academic register
5. Planning and organising your essay
6. Clear, accurate and concise writing style
AO2: Analysing the ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
7. Analysing authorial methods of language, structure and form and how they combine to make meaning
AO3: Demonstrating understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.
8. Evaluating the influence of literary and historical context
AO4: Exploring connections across literary texts
9. Comparing, contrasting and cross-referencing
AO5: Exploring literary texts informed by different interpretations
10. Alternative readings
11. Applying literary theory

Paper 1 – Literary Genres – Option 1A: Aspects of Tragedy

2 hours 30 minutes written examination (closed book) in June of Y13

40% of A Level 75 marks

Study of three texts: one Shakespeare text (*Othello*); a second drama text (*Death of a Salesman*) and one further text (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*), of which one must be written pre-1900.

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: Comparing texts: one essay question linking two texts (*Death of a Salesman and Tess of the D'Urbervilles*) (25 marks)

Paper 2 – Texts and Genres - Elements of Political and Social Protest Writing

3 hours written examination (open book)

40% of A-Level

75 marks

Study of three texts: one post-2000 prose text; one poetry and one further text, of which one must be written pre-1900

Exam will include an unseen passage.

Section A: One compulsory question on an unseen passage (25 marks)

Section B: One essay question on your set text (*Songs of Innocence and of Experience*) (25 marks)

 Section C: One essay question which connects two set texts (*The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Kite Runner*) (25 marks)

Non-Exam Assessment Spec B

- Students produce **two** pieces of work, each on a different literary text.
- **One** of the texts must be poetry and **one** must be prose.
- Each text must be linked to a different section of the AQA Critical Anthology (Narrative Theory, Feminist criticism, Marxist criticism, Post-colonialism criticism, Eco-criticism, Literary Value and the Canon).
- Word count for each piece of work: 1250-1500.
- One response will be a conventional essay, the other could be re-creative or a further conventional essay.
- **Students may not choose texts from any of the examination set text**

Successful exam preparation

Students have been issued with booklets for each component/question of the exams which contain a range of revision resources, exam questions and exemplars.

There are also very useful revision and wider reading sections for students to actively use on Google Classroom.

Additional Revision Advice

How to succeed in English Literature

The tips below will give you a baseline idea of how to write an academic A Level Literature essay.
1. **Write formally:** avoid imprecise language, use clearly defined paragraphs and subject specific vocabulary.
2. **Guide the reader through the essay:** use connectives to help you with this. One rule of thumb is that whenever you switch topics, you should try to provide a verbal clue that you are doing so, using transition discourse markers like "However, ...", "As a result, ...", "By

comparison, ", etc. If you notice that you have to add these words between most of your sentences, not just the paragraphs, then you are bouncing around too much. In that case you need to reorganize your document to group related thoughts together, switching topics only when necessary. Once the organization is good, all you can do is read and reread what you write, rewording it until each new item follows easily from those before it.

3. **Use tentative language:** try to phrase your ideas in the subjunctive to demonstrate that your ideas are malleable and interpretative i.e. 'I*t could be* inferred that…'/ 'It seems that…'

4. **Use third person:** in the main bulk of your essay, it is better to write in third person i.e. '*It could be argued*' rather than 'I would argue'. However, this is not a steadfast rule and some students use first person in conclusions to great effect i.e. 'O*verall, I am convinced that Duff*y…'

5. **Avoid contractions** such as 'you're'; write 'you are' instead.

6. **Use surnames** for authors, poets and playwrights.

7. **Quote with accuracy and always try to embed quotations.** Ensure you always use the correct punctuation around quotations.

8. **Be concise**: when two words will do, there is no need to write an entire paragraph. Keep your writing concise so you can get more high-quality ideas written in the timeframe.

9. **Organise your writing**: you should group and order your ideas logically, integrating counterargument and linking ideas together using discourse markers and connectives. You should support interpretations with quotations and regularly return to your line of argument. If you are asked to compare texts you should do so side by side, avoid writing long sections on one text after another and integrate analysis

TRIAL EXAM 2: weeks beginning 23.1.23 PAPER 2: **Elements of Political and Social Protest Writing** 3 Hours	CONFIRMED DATES OF ACTUAL EXAMS: PAPER 1: Aspects of the Tragedy 7717/1A Wednesday 24th May: 2h 30mins PAPER 2: Elements of Political and Social Protest Writing 7717/2B Thursday 8th June: 3 Hours

REVISION CLASSES Every Tuesday in EN8