ENGLISH LITERATURE

**AQA English Literature B A Level**

This qualification is linear which means that students will sit all the A-level exams at the end of their A- level course. Genre study is at the heart of the AQA Specification B and the four broad genres available for study are tragedy, comedy, crime writing and political writing.

This is a course for students who are curious, independent readers. Our students enjoy reading a wide range of texts; they also love discussing their opinions about anything and everything. Conveying arguments and critical analysis in clear, focused writing is at the heart of the assessment method – to assist with this, we would like our prospective students to begin thinking about their texts well before studies begin in September and to complete some academic preparation tasks. Strong, independent thinkers write compelling and illuminating essays.

Tragedy

This is the new dramatic genre we have chosen for paper 1. We will be studying Othello, The Great Gatsby, Richard II and possibly one other text . At the core of all the set texts is a tragic hero or heroine who is flawed in some way, who suffers and causes suffering to others and in all texts there is an interplay between what might be seen as villains and victims, protagonists and antagonists. You could prepare for this by pre-reading novels by Thomas Hardy and F. Scott Fitzgerald.
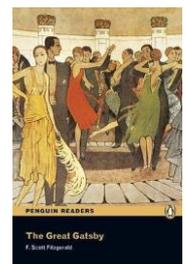
Crime Writing

In the case of Elements of Crime Writing paper 2, many of the texts pre-date the Crime Fiction genre that emerged as a recognisable literary genre in the mid-19th century. However, in all the texts a significant crime drives the narrative and the execution and consequences of the crime are

fundamentally important to the way the text is structured. All set texts are narratives which focus on transgressions against established order and the specific breaking of either national, social, religious or moral laws. We will study Kate Atkinson's novel The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Coleridge, When Will There Be Good News? By Kate Atkinson, and possibly an Agatha Christie classic Poirot novel. Immersing yourself in a sticky web of deceptive crime narratives will be invaluable preparation for the course.

NEA

This specification has kept an element of Course Work essays – now known as non-examined assessment.

Here you will be free to choose two different texts and interpret them from a critical perspective –an opportunity to build a section of the course around your own tastes in reading.

Read the paper at least twice a week - a broadsheet or quality paper, not a redtop - this will give you a richer vocabulary and offer good models for concise writing styles.

Any reading is better than no reading – keep up your private reading but try to start thinking more about the reasons why some types of books appeal to you more than others... an open, enquiring mind will be your best weapon on this lively and challenging course.

The Set Tasks for 2020

Crime
1. Find the following short stories online and read them carefully,
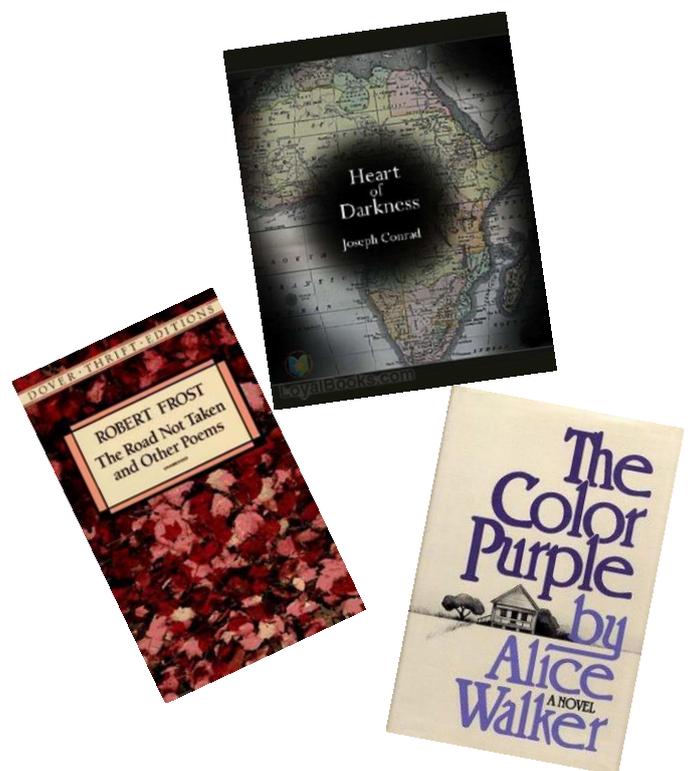
paying particular attention to the central figure in each text, the classic detective figure. Make detailed notes about these character and their specific features as you read

The Murders in the Rue Morgue
https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2147/2147-h/2147-h.htm

The Hound of the Baskervilles
http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3070

Hercule Poirot short stories
http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/61262

2. Having read the texts and compiled your notes, now complete this analytical task:
Explore the ways crime writers present their central protagonist. Which seem to you the most significant elements of these characterizations? What evidence have you found of common threads, or authors borrowing from each other's creations? Include in your answer detailed evidence from the texts you have read.
You should aim to write at least 1200 words, excluding quotations.

Tragedy
Task 1 - Research. What defines a tragedy?

As you watch the videos below, make notes on the key features of the tragic genre. While some of them are focused on theatrical tragedies, the themes are transferable to every form.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSr6mP-zxUc&list=PLJgBmjHpqgs59hmAjlAsX_vh0vGYv_3Jm&index=4 (National Theatre - Introduction to Greek Theatre)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGlQkaoIfBI (Crash Course - Tragedy Lessons from Aristotle)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVRU5MVYNiw (TedEd - Why Tragedies are Alluring)

Task 2 - Reading

1. Choose a text that interests you, either from the list linked below, or from your own knowledge of the tragic genre. It could be a play or a novel, but not one you have previously studied, or are due to study on the A Level course. Try to challenge yourself, but choose a text that you think you will enjoy.
2. Read the text and make notes on anything you notice that links to the tragic genre. Try to identify examples of the key features that you identified in task 1.

List of tragic plays and novels:
https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/tragedy

Task 3 - Presentation

In September, you will be asked to present your research to your new year 12 class. The purpose is to demonstrate to what extent your text can be considered a tragedy. You can include a maximum of five slides. Your presentation should include:

- A clear outline of the plot (no spoilers!)
- An outline of the characters that you would consider to be tragic heroes and villains, and why they fit into these categories (e.g. tragic flaw, etc.)
- How the audience / readers feel pity and catharsis. What causes this?
- Which experiences of the characters fit into the tragic genre e.g. do any of them experience a downfall?
- A final concluding summary of your argument: what makes this text a tragedy?

Political Protest Writing

Task 1   Choose and read one of the following texts:

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad
The World's Wife by Carol Ann Duffy
Task 2

Having read your choice of novella or poem, do some research about the author and this famous text. Find out as much as you can about the author's intentions and beliefs; start to think about how you might connect the texts to the author's life.

Task 3

Write a 1000 word article for a sixth form magazine in which you try to persuade other students to read your chosen text, arguing for the merits

GRADE	MARKING CRITERIA
Distinction	Critical, perceptive comments on genre-specific tropes. Subject specific terminology is accurate and judiciously applied.
Merit	Clear comments on genre-specific tropes. Subject specific terminology is mostly accurate and well applied.
Pass	Some commThe Wents on genre-specific tropes. Some subject specific terminology is present, but not always accurate.
Incomplete/Ungraded	Not handed in. Reading of the text and exploration of genre-specific tropes is non-existent or poor.

of the work and the insights it might give students to a significant political topic.