

# ENGLISH LITERATURE

## AQA English Literature B A Level

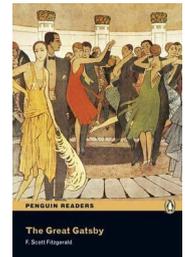
This qualification is linear which means that students will sit all the A-level exams at the end of their A-level course. Genre study is at the heart of the AQA Specification B and the four broad genres available for study are tragedy, comedy, crime writing and political writing.

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.



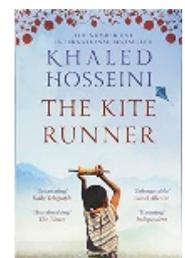
## Tragedy

This is the new dramatic genre we have chosen for paper 1. We will be studying Othello, The Great Gatsby, Richard II. 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.



## Political and Social Protest Writing

Although it could be claimed that all texts are political, what defines the texts on this part of the course is that they have issues of power and powerlessness at their core, with political and social protest issues central to each text's structure. The political and social protest genre foregrounds oppression and domination, examining the cultures we live in and have lived in over time. We will be studying The Handmaid's Tale, The Kite Runner, and Songs of Innocence and Experience. You could prepare for this by reading texts by Tony Harrison and Khaled Hosseini.

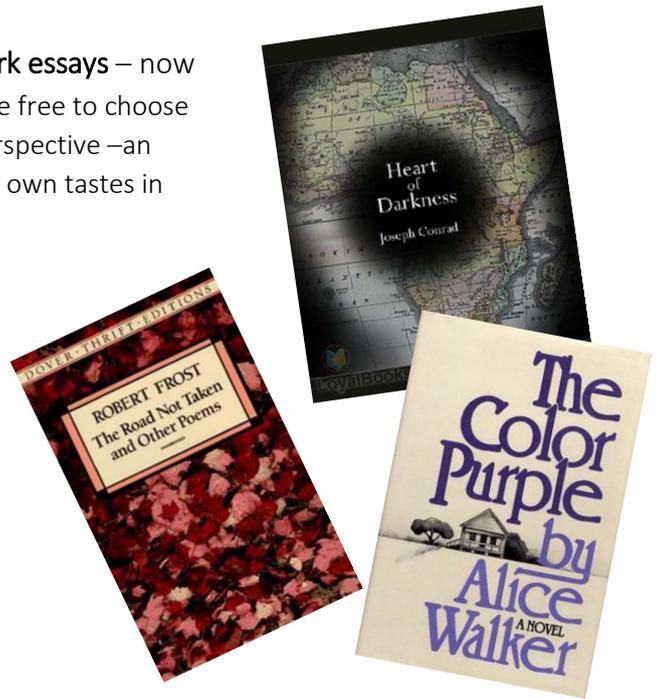


## NEA

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.



## SUMMER TASKS

### Tragedy

#### Task 1 - Research.

What defines a tragedy? What are the main tropes of the tragic genre?

#### 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 and Social Protest Writing

Task 1: Read the texts below and make notes on the political or social issue being explored in each of them. What are the writers of each text trying to achieve?

1. Wordsworth Book IX The Prelude: Involvement in the French Revolution, along with this article: <https://www.marxist.com/british-poets-french-revolution-1.htm#:~:text=Perhaps%20the%20most%20remarkable%20poetic%20tribute%20to%20the,strike.%20Of%20passion%20and%20opinion%2C%20filled%20the%20walls>

### Wordsworth Book IX The Prelude

#### *Involvement in the French Revolution*

And when we chanced  
One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,  
Who crept along fitting her languid gait  
Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord  
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane  
Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands  
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood  
Of solitude, and at the sight my friend  
In agitation said, "'Tis against 'that'  
*That we are fighting,*" I with him believed  
That a benignant spirit was abroad  
Which might not be withstood, that poverty  
Abject as this would in a little time  
Be found no more, that we should see the earth  
Unthwarted in her wish to recompense  
The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,  
All institutes for ever blotted out  
That legalised exclusion, empty pomp  
Abolished, sensual state and cruel power,  
Whether by edict of the one or few;  
And finally, as sum and crown of all,  
Should see the people having a strong hand  
In framing their own laws; whence better days  
To all mankind.

2. 3 poems of your choice by Tony Harrison.
3. The American Embassy, a short story by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie (PDF available here: <https://www.tlu.ee/sites/default/files/Instituudid/T%C3%9CHI/%C3%B5ppekavad/Liberal%20Arts%20in%20Humanities%20tekstid/Adichie-short%20story%20The%20American%20Embassy.pdf>)

Choose one of the above texts and write 500 words in response to this question:

**Explore the ways writers present political and social issues.**