



Altrincham College
English Department KS5
English Literature Course Handbook
&
Key Vocabulary English Literature

Helping our students to express their understanding with depth, clarity and creativity

The elements you need to succeed!

Drama & Prose

KEY VOCABULARY	Dramatic Structure	Stagecraft
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conventions of structure in both traditional and modern drama e.g. a classic five-act Shakespearian play includes: introduction, exposition, complication, crisis, resolution and denouement; a classic three-act 'well-made play' can be in real time (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof) • the division of the play into acts and scenes • the use of features such as sub-plot, frame, the 'Green World' etc. • linearity, chronological events, flashbacks, climax, anti-climax, cyclical effect, repetition, aside, soliloquy • how the drama is set up and resolved in the opening and ending of the play • conflict and change • naturalistic, non-naturalistic • dramatic effect • choice of setting • use of an allegory • inclusion of protagonist, antagonist and catalyst. • Freytag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stage directions eg asides • lighting • music/sound/sound effects • set • costume • disguise • status • contrast • act opening/ending • scene opening/ending • entrance/exit with opening and closing lines • dramatic irony • Pace • Tension/suspense/ • surprise • twist • comic relief

KEY VOCABULARY	Characterisation	Dramatic Speech and Language
<p style="text-align: center;">Drama & Prose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how characters are established • how characters are presented: physical appearance or suggestions about this; actions and motives for them; what they say and think; how they interact with others; what others say and think about them • how far the characters conform to or subvert stereotypes • the function of minor characters • relationships between characters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dialogue • use of monologues • soliloquy • asides • functional and literal • metaphorical, poetic, symbolic (e.g. 'there is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes, that suggests a moth' A Streetcar Named Desire) • Shakespearian conventions of verse and prose • the use of character to act as a mouthpiece for the playwright – authorial intrusion • a character's personal vocabulary and syntactic patterns that project a certain way of seeing the world, which fits with/subverts stereotypes.

KEY VOCABULARY	Poetic Structure	Poetic Imagery
<p style="text-align: center;">Poetry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stanza length (e.g. couplet, tercet, quatrain, sestet, octave etc.), shape, regularity • line length, shape, regularity • end-stopped lines, caesura, enjambment • contrast • motif • cumulative effect (e.g. development of an argument, telling of a story) • climax and anti-climax • shift in mood or tone • linear structure, cyclical structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • image • simile • metaphor • symbol • use of colours • concrete images • abstract images • personification • pathetic fallacy • natural imagery, pastoral imagery • symbol, motif • conceit • diction, military diction, biblical diction.

Poetry key words and definitions

KEY VOCABULARY	DEFINITION
Alliteration	The same letter at the beginning of a two or more of words close together. Usually used to stress something.
Assonance	The repetition of two or more vowel sounds or of two or more consonant sounds, close together. Usually in a poem.
Ballad	A long poem that tells a story, and usually has a fast pace, with repetition a common feature.
Caesura	A pause that breaks the rhythm or pace in a line of poetry (can be created by a comma, semi-colon, a full stop or a dash).
Conceit	An extended an ingenious simile.
Emotive language	Words that have strong emotional intensity/create an emotion.
End-stopped line	A line of poetry that ends in a full stop or has a natural pause.
Enjambment	When the sense of a poem runs over the line breaks.
Heroic couplets	A verse form found in epic poetry, where the lines are in rhyming pairs.
Hyperbole	Extreme exaggeration.
Iambic pentameter	Stress and length of a line of poetry. The 'iamb' part refers to pairs of syllables that are stressed/unstressed and the 'pent' part refers to the five pairs of syllables in each line.
Metaphor	Comparison of two things where one thing is said to be another. Powerful imagery tool, to make you imagine something.
Onomatopoeia	Words which sound like the word they are describing e.g. buzz, crack.
Oxymoron	A phrase in which the words contradict each other, usually for effect. e.g. "cold fire" or "sick health"
Personification	Using a metaphor to make something seem human.
Repetition	A word said more than once. Usually used to stress it.
Rhetorical question	A question that does not require an answer, designed to make people think. Example: "Do we want to pay more taxes?"
Rhyme	Word with endings that sounds similar to each other. Usually used to connect words.
Rhythm	The beat of a poem.
Simile	Comparing two things, but saying one is like another.
Stanza	A group of lines in a poem organised into a group (i.e. a verse).
Structure	The organisation of a poem including how many stanzas it has.
Theme	The central idea of the poem; what it is about.

Tone	The way the writer creates a mood or atmosphere in their writing.
Other Key Words	A word that describes a noun.
Adjective	
Adverbs	A word that describes a verb.
Allusion	Reference to a person, place, event or literary work that the writer assumes the reader will recognise.
Connotation	Associations or ideas attached to words.
Ellipsis	Deliberate omission or a word or words using ellipsis points (...)
Figurative Language	Writing, or dialogue in drama, that makes the writer's ideas more meaningful, descriptive or memorable. Includes metaphors, similes, hyperbole, personification, onomatopoeia and oxymoron.
Foreshadowing	Clues suggesting the outcome of a story (but not when the outcome is deliberately revealed through the use of a narrator or flashback).
Homophones	Words that sound the same but have different meanings e.g. made/maid, there/their/they're, two/too/to
Imagery	When words are used to paint a picture in the reader's mind.
Noun	A person, place or thing.
Pronoun	A word that stands in place of a noun e.g. he, she, they, both.
Symbolism	The use of specific objects or images to represent abstract ideas.
Theme	The main idea or message conveyed by the writing e.g. love, loyalty, power.
Mood	A feeling created in the text to conjure reader's emotions.
Volta	A change in mood or focus in a poem

OTHER KEY LITERARY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Aesthetic	Relating to the appreciation or consideration of beauty.
Agency	The capacity or power to act, rather than be passive.
Allusion	Reference to a person, place, event or literary work that the writer assumes the reader will recognise.
American Dream	The idea that everyone has opportunities, in the comparatively new country of America to achieve material success and financial rewards.
Anadiplosis	Is a form of repetition in which the last word of one clause or sentence is repeated as the first word of the following clause or sentence.
Analepsis	Flashback.
Antagonist	The counterpart to the main character (protagonist) in a work of fiction.
Aristotelian Drama	A drama which appeals to our emotions and satisfies our psychological needs.
Characterisation	How an author presents or conveys a character's personality.
Connotation	Associations or ideas attached to words.
Decadence	A process of decay in moral standards, revealed in undignified and wasteful behaviour.
Denouement	The final scene or chapter of a story, when all the loose ends of a plot are tied up.
Destiny	The path one takes in life, and its eventual destination, which often seem mysteriously assigned to us.
Dialogue	Words spoken by characters in prose or drama.
Dramatic Irony	When the audience or reader knows something the characters in the story do not.
Ellipsis	Deliberate omission or a word or words using ellipsis points (...)
Extradiegetic	A narrator who occupies a position above the story.
Genre	Type of literature, drama, film or play e.g. tragedy, romance, fantasy etc.
Intertextuality	The relationship a text may have with other texts
intradiegetic	An intradiegetic narrator operates on the same level as the characters in the story.
Narrative	A story.
Narrator	The person telling the story who is not necessarily the author.
Omniscient	From the Latin 'all knowing', an omniscient narrator operates from 'above' the story and seems to have a higher narratorial authority.

Motif	Repeated elements that usually have a symbolic function.
Pathos	The depiction of suffering, an appeal to the reader's emotions.
Patriarchy	A social system run by men for the benefit of men.
Plot	The chain of causes and circumstances that connect the various events and place them with some sort of relationship with one another.
Primogeniture	The right of the first-born son of the monarch to succeed to the throne.
Prolepsis	A 'flash forward. ' Here the narrative is taken forward in time to show events that are expected to occur, or have already occurred in the future, even though the main part of the narrative is further back in the past.
Protagonist	The main character in a story
Rhetoric	The art of speaking to impress and/or persuade an audience.
Semiotics	The study of signs and how they work. Signs can be visual (a red light means stop or verbal / a Cigar equals social class and wealth). Semiotics, then, is the significance of connotations.
Significance	Involves weighing up all the potential contributions to how a text can be analysed and then finding potential meanings and interpretations.
Zoomorphism	Having or representing animal forms or gods of animal form.

CONVENTIONS OF GENRE

PAPER 1 TRAGEDY

Elements of the Tragedy Genre

- the type of the tragic text itself, whether it is classical and about public figures, like Lear, or domestic and about representations of ordinary people, like Tess
- the settings for the tragedy, both places and times
- the journey towards death of the protagonists, their flaws, pride and folly, their blindness and insight, their discovery and learning, their being a mix of good and evil
- the role of the tragic villain or opponent, who directly affects the fortune of the hero, who engages in a contest of power and is partly responsible for the hero's demise
- the presence of fate, how the hero's end is inevitable
- how the behaviour of the hero affects the world around him, creating chaos and affecting the lives of others
- the significance of violence and revenge, humour and moments of happiness
- the structural pattern of the text as it moves through complication to catastrophe, from order to disorder, through climax to resolution, from the prosperity and happiness of the hero to the tragic end
- the use of plots and sub-plots
- the way that language is used to heighten the tragedy
- ultimately how the tragedy affects the audience, acting as a commentary on the real world, moving the audience through pity and fear to an understanding of the human condition.

CONVENTIONS OF GENRE

PAPER 2 CRIME

Elements of Crime Fiction

- the type of the crime text itself, whether it is detective fiction, a post-modern novel, a revenge tragedy, an account of a life lost to crime
- the settings that are created as backdrops for criminal action and for the pursuit of the perpetrators of crime: both places and times will be significant here
- the nature of the crimes and the criminals, the criminals' motives and actions
- the inclusion of violence, murder, theft, betrayal
- the detection of the criminal and the investigation that leads to his or her capture or punishment
- how far there is a moral purpose and restoration of order
- guilt and remorse, confession and the desire for forgiveness
- the creation of the criminal and their nemesis, the typical detective hero
- the sense that there will be a resolution and the criminal will be punished
- the victims of crime and the inclusion of suffering
- the central motifs of love, money, danger and death
- punishment, justice, retribution, injustice, accusation, the legal system, criminal trials and courtroom dramas, imprisonment, death
- the structural patterning of the text as it moves through a series of crises to some sense of order
- the specific focus on plotting
- the way that language is used in the world that is created; there may be use of a criminal register, legal register, police register, erudite language
- the way that crime writing is used to comment on society, particularly the representation of society at particular historical periods
- ultimately, how crime stories affect audiences and readers, creating suspense, repugnance, excitement and relief.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Paper 1

What's assessed

Option 1A: Aspects of tragedy

Study of three texts: one Shakespeare text; a second drama text and one further text, of which one must be written pre-1900

Othello

Richard II

The Great Gatsby

Assessed

written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes

closed book

75 marks

40% of A-level

Questions

Section A: one passage-based question on set Shakespeare text 'Othello' (25 marks)

Section B: one essay question on set Shakespeare text 'Othello' (25 marks)

Section C: one essay question linking two texts (25 marks)



Paper 2

What's assessed

Option 2A: Elements of crime writing

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

When Will There Be Good News

Brighton Rock

Poetry: Browning, Crabbe, Wilde

Examination will include an unseen passage.

Assessed

written exam: 3 hours

open book

75 marks

40% of A-level

Questions

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

Section B: one essay question on set text (25 marks)

Section C: one essay question which connects two texts (25 marks)

+ 2 x NEA – Non Examination Assessment**What's assessed**

Study of two texts: one poetry and one prose text, informed by study of the Critical Anthology

Two essays of 1250–1500 words, each responding to a different text and linking to a different aspect of the Critical anthology

One essay can be re-creative. The re-creative piece will be accompanied by a commentary.

Assessed

50 marks

20% of A-level

assessed by teachers

moderated by AQA

Reading List

Obviously, you will have your set texts to read, but it would be beneficial and enjoyable for you to read around these. You could read more written by the author or written in the same genre.

Other novels:

- Solar, Enduring Love, Saturday by Ian McEwan
- Spies by Michael Frayn
- Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger
- Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks
- A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon
- Outcast by Sadie Jones
- Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy
- A Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
- Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
- The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath
- The Big Sleep by Raymond Chandler
- The Colour Purple by Alice Walker
- Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
- A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman
- Dracula by Bram Stoker
- The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy
- Captain Corelli's Mandolin by Louis de Bernieres
- Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick
- Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
- The Hound of the Baskervilles by Arthur Conan Doyle
- Life of Pi by Yann Martel
- The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
- The Reader by Bernhard Schlink
- Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson
- Trainspotting by Irvine Welsh

Other

- Try to read material from the 'prizes' e.g. The Man Booker prize or the Orange prize
- Try to get into reading a broadsheet newspaper weekly
- Try to read a range of non-fiction writing such as travel writing (Bryson, Palin), autobiography (Long Walk to Freedom by Nelson Mandela), biography etc.

Reference Books

- *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* by Martin Gray
- *AQA A Level English Literature B: student book* by Adrian Beard
- *Doing English* by Robert Eaglestone
- *How to Write Better Essays* by Bryan Greetham
- *Oxford concise companion to English Literature* by Margaret Drabble and Jenny Stringer
- *Pastoral* by Terry Gifford
- *The Ode Less Travelled* by Stephen Fry
- *The Poet's Craft* by Sandy Brownjohn

Magazines/Journals

- *The Times Literary Supplement* – a weekly literary review

HOWTO WRITE AN ESSAY

1. Introduction

- Use the opening paragraph to **frame** the project, i.e. what you intend to prove/analyse in this essay to show your individual and original perspective on the text.
- Introduce the text as a **construct** making comments about **why** the text has been written and the **context** in which it has been produced.
- Include, in a succinct manner, the following: names of text and author and dates of publication/performance, some **brief** explanation of text's reception and its context and a concise consideration of the **relevant** themes of the text.
- The key to a successful introduction is **brevity**, establishing the basic facts of the text whilst employing a clear **critical** voice: this will immediately establish an academic register in your writing.

2. Thesis/main argument i.e. what you are going to prove

- In this section you **outline** your argument in response to the title question, clearly **sign posting** to the reader what you intend to do in the essay.
- Acknowledge the **terms** of the question to discuss what the **implications** of the question are in terms of how you are going to write your response.
- Use this section to introduce your own **interpretation** of the question, adopting an individual critical voice to show your **engagement** with the text by expressing yourself **imaginatively** and **creatively** in your writing.
- As with the introduction, the thesis should be **brief** and **succinct**, giving the reader a general but engaging **summary** of what you intend to argue throughout your essay.

3. Main Body Paragraphs

- This will make up the majority of your essay and is where you explore each point of your argument. You want to ensure that each paragraph has one significant point which is **supported** with evidence from the text which you then unpack, explain and explore in relation to your **thesis**. Ensure that the point you make in each paragraph is **relevant** to the argument in your thesis and **sustainable** through textual evidence.
- The following outline is a useful guideline for structuring each body paragraph:
 - (a) Point – opening the paragraph by stating the **point** you intend to make. This needs to be one of the **ideas** that is contributing to your overall **thesis**.
 - (b) Evidence from text – this can either be an **embedded quotation** that enhances or examples the point you are making about the text OR a brief description of something from the text that **supports** your idea. Your evidence should be carefully chosen to **clearly** and **efficiently** back up the point that you are trying to prove.
 - (c) Exploration of evidence and idea – this element of the paragraph is crucial as you are trying to **prove** an argument by bringing your point and textual evidence together to **explore** your idea. Explain **how** your chosen quotation demonstrates

your idea and **comment** on the quotation in its context, e.g. relevant remarks about how the language used by the writer shows how they are trying to achieve a particular effect. **Justify** the credibility of your argument through a **convincing** exploration of your ideas.

(d) Refer back to the thesis – having acknowledged the terms of the question and established what your argument will be in the thesis section, you need to show **how** what you have written in the body paragraph is **relevant** to your argument. A couple of sentences on this is effective for showing how the **analysis** you have just made is **proving** the argument of your essay.

- This section is where you lay out your argument, moving from **observation** to **analysis** to write an intelligent and convincing response to the question. Be **efficient** in your choice of quotations and textual evidence; using only what you **need** shows a succinct and thought-out response. Within these paragraphs always **signpost** where you are going with your argument to **guide** the reader through your ideas for a clear and concise writing style.

4. Conclusion

- The conclusion of an essay is an opportunity for you to give a final, **original** perspective on the text. It should not be a re-iteration of the introduction or a repetition of the points of your argument. Instead, you should briefly summarise **how** the ideas you have written about overall agree or disagree with the title question and provide your **own** definitive response to the title question.
- The conclusion is where you can demonstrate your **engagement** with the text on a personal, as well as intellectual, level; it is an opportunity to be **creative** and **inventive** in your writing by offering the reader a final **insight** that they might not have thought about. You should ensure that what you say about the text in the conclusion is something that you haven't had the opportunity to write about in the rest of the essay. However, keep the conclusion in **proportion** and avoid tangents that might obscure the positive points you have made previously: be original, yet concise.
- Some ways that you can conclude an essay might be:
 - (a)** Commenting on your **personal** reaction to the text.
 - (b)** Commenting on **how** the text still holds relevance for readers in the present day.
 - (c)** Commenting on **why** the text is successful as a work of literature in terms of its characters, themes or structure.

Overall, excellent essay-writing must be logical, persuasive and creative, teaming your personal engagement with the text with the ability to observe, analyse and argue a series of coherent and concise points. A well-written essay demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text as well as a unique perspective on a range of ideas presented in the text. Logical argument, close knowledge of the text and an individual response will make your essay stand out from the crowd.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- **A01**: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- **A02**: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
- **A03**: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.
- **A04**: Explore connections across literary texts.
- **A05**: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations