**English Literature**

**A Level Preparation Pack**

You have expressed an interest in pursuing A Level English Literature. This is the Google Classroom that we will use ahead of the commencement of the course in September. I will post tasks on here and give you ideas about what you should be doing to prepare for the A Level. This preparation is something that you would be given in a normal year in June or July. In this special, weird year, you have an extra month to prepare.

So here are the details:

You will be studying the OCR A-Level in English Literature H472. At the end of Year 13, you will sit two exams, each worth 40% of the A-Level and you will also submit a coursework portfolio worth 20%:

Paper One - Shakespeare and Poetry pre-1900

Texts: Hamlet, The Merchant’s Prologue & Tale + A Doll’s House

Paper Two - Dystopia Texts

Texts: 1984 + The Handmaid’s Tale

Coursework 1. Close Reading – an analysis of a poem within a collection.

2. Comparative essay – comparing a play and a novel.

Texts for coursework: You have free choice here. All three texts must be post-1900. One must be post 2000. However, we will teach Jerusalem by Jez Butterworth as a possible choice for the play text and A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess as a possible choice for the novel.

You will study a total of 8 texts. Final choices of the Year 13 texts will be made during Year 12.

**Year 12**

In Year 12, you will study 4 texts:

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

The Merchant’s Prologue and Tale by Geoffrey Chaucer

1984 by George Orwell

Jerusalem by Jez Butterworth as a possible text for the comparative coursework.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE:** May through to SUMMER 2020

To get ahead and be prepared for the start of the course in September, you need to do the following:

1. Read! Read anything by anybody. There is list of suggested texts on the VLE Reading Lists page which you could use to broaden your knowledge of literature, but you should choose anything you like – the more widely you read, the more secure you will be in your knowledge of literature and the more confident in making comparisons across texts. Understanding of literature is greatly enhanced by being able to cross-reference texts, ideas and styles.

2. READ 1984 BY GEORGE ORWELL – this is a set text. (Read other texts by Orwell – Down and Out in Paris and London, Animal Farm & The Road to Wigan Pier are perhaps the most relevant to our study).

3. Read other ‘Dystopian’ texts to supplement your understanding of 1984, for example: Children of Men, A Handmaid’s Tale, Brave New World, The Road . . .

4. WATCH A PERFORMANCE OF HAMLET. Ideally, watch a 'live' production. Otherwise, watch a DVD film of the play. Kenneth Brannagh’s version is good and is one that we shall use in class. There is also a good version starring Mel Gibson and a David Tennant RSC production easily available.

5. READ SOME POETRY. Find a post-1900 poet you could introduce to the class and present your analysis of one particular poem in the very first lesson of the year. This will be invaluable preparation for your coursework. Some possible poets to consider: Sylvia Plath, Carol Ann Duffy, e. e. cummings, Owen Shears, Wilfred Owen, Simon Armitage, Daljit Nagra.

It is important that we all study from the same texts so make sure that you buy the following editions for our set texts:

Hamlet - William Shakespeare - New Cambridge edition, edited by Philip Edwards

1984 - George Orwell - Penguin

The Merchant's Tale - Chaucer - Cambridge School Chaucer

The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood - Vintage

A Doll's House - Henrik Ibsen - Bloomsbury Methuen

A Clockwork Orange - Anthony Burgess - Restored Penguin

Jerusalem - Jez Butterworth - Nick Herne Books

In time, I may set a specific assignment on here and perhaps we can have a ZOOM meeting to discuss what everyone is reading. In the meantime, you have all this suggested reading that you can get on with. Any questions, please ask.

**A Crash Course in English Literature:**

If you want to consider why we read and write, this is a quick (quite blistering) synopsis of why we study Literature: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSYw502dJNY>