



Specification: AQA English Literature Specification B:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-literature-b-7716-7717>

*Of the books/ activities listed below, you need to choose **at least two**. Immediately after each of these (before you forget), you should complete the Sixth Form Induction Tasks Worksheet.*

If you are unsure of what to go for, look for those marked with an asterix * (or two **).

Books

It is **compulsory for you to read **Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*** before the course starts in September. Please note that if you are going to buy a copy, you should purchase the Oxford World's Classics edition: ISBN-10 : 9780199537051; ISBN-13 : 978-0199537051

- ****David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction***
Thoroughly recommended as an excellent and easy-to-read introduction to understanding the author's craft. A series of very short and accessible chapters, using short extracts from a wide range of texts to explore key aspects of the art of fiction writing (including narrative voice, a sense of place, symbolism, lists, allegory, stream of consciousness etc). An excellent way of increasing your alertness to the authorial methods you will be analysing during the A level course.
- **Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure***
You will be studying Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* at A level, and so reading another tragic novel by Hardy will be useful in getting to grips with the genre.
- **George Orwell, *1984***
A classic of the dystopian genre – a sub-set of the Social and Political Protest genre you will be studying for Paper 2.
- **Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go***
And another one!
- ***Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*** (And there's a sequel, *The Testaments*, if you enjoy it!)
A modern classic (recently televised – although with some deviation from the original novel). One of the texts on the specification for Paper 2.
- **Kamila Shamsie, *Home Fire***
Excellent recent novel, exploring the factors that go into making a fundamentalist – both personal and political. Engaging and relatively 'easy' read. Useful as an example of the Political and Social Protest Genre for Paper 2.
- **Naomi Alderman, *The Power***



Another dystopian novel in which women have all the power. It's likely you will not just be shocked by the novel, but by your reaction to it as well. Again, an engaging and 'easy' read, and an example of the Political and Social Protest genre.

- ***Dickens, *Hard Times*** (and *Oliver Twist* is a good one to read as well)
Dickens is well known for the social criticism embedded within his novels. This is one of his easier novels to read, and a good example of how he uses fiction for the purposes of 'social protest' – again useful for building up an understanding of this genre. One of the texts on the specification for Paper 2.
- **Madeline Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing***
Published in 2016 and short listed for the Man Booker Prize, this is a brilliantly constructed, incredibly moving, and deeply disturbing novel. It almost reads like a dystopian novel, but it is set very firmly in the real events of the 20th century's Cultural Revolution in China. It is a fantastic book, and, again, very useful for increasing your understanding of the Political and Social Protest genre.
- **Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein***
Clearly a 'classic', and, again, could be read as part of the Political and Social Protest genre. Worth reading too for its potential as a text for coursework – a rich text for feminist readings. It could also be seen as part of the tragic genre, so has potential as a 'multi-purpose' text.
- **Bram Stoker, *Dracula***
A great read, and may well be a possible text when it comes to the coursework as there is potential for reading this from both a feminist and a Marxist perspective.

Activities

- ****King Lear***: You will be studying *King Lear* and it is one of Shakespeare's more challenging plays, so try to get hold of as many DVDs/ productions of the play as you can and watch it – the more the better! There is [one on the Globe Player](#), although it will cost you £9.99 to watch.
- **Theatre**: Keep an eye out for any tragedies playing in London theatres over the Summer (Shakespearean or otherwise). Paper 1 focuses on tragedy and, in particular, dramatic tragedy so this will help give you a sense of the genre.
- **EMC (English and Media Centre) 'Making the Leap' activities**: There are a range of activities (and accompanying resources) available in [these PDFs](#) available from the Sixth Form Induction Materials section of our website. Have a go at working through as many of these as take your interest.