

The key features of Pearson Edexcel A level English Literature

For our A level English Literature qualification, we've created courses to engage and enrich students' learning, providing them with the expertise to actively explore the world around them. We've consulted with those that know the most about the subjects: teachers, subject

associations and our partners in Higher Education, in order to produce specifications that will prepare students for the research and study skills required of them in higher education and the workplace.



The literary text is at the heart of the qualification

For many of us, our relationship with our own A level texts was the catalyst for our choice of university course and subsequent career. Therefore, the literary text is at the heart of our A level English Literature qualifications. **We have selected literature we know works well with students**, as well as offering fresh new options that have been recommended by teachers and academics.

There is a clear focus on the three main genres

Each examined component focuses on one of three main genres: **poetry, prose or drama**. This gives students the time and space to develop their knowledge and confidence through breadth and depth of study.

Meaningful comparisons

- There is no cross-genre comparison in any of the examined components. This avoids forced or artificial comparison between disparate texts.
- Comparison is only ever based upon two equally important texts, with no supplementary texts, or requirement to refer to multiple texts in a superficial way.

Maximising choice

Within each component, **a wide range of text options are offered**, allowing you to select texts that will best appeal to your students.

- There is the flexibility to choose **tragedy, comedy, or one text from each genre** (see pages 6 and 7).
- It's also possible to **teach the work of a named poet**, or instead, a range of poetry within a movement.
- Thematic study of prose** allows not only a choice of theme, but also a choice of texts within the theme.
- For the coursework component, students choose two texts to analyse, allowing students plenty of opportunity to pursue their own interests.

A clear and distinctive approach to criticism

The study of literary criticism is rooted firmly during the study of the A level texts. Students will have the opportunity to read critical essays on either the genre of tragedy or comedy, as well as essays on their studied Shakespeare play. This allows students to engage with the text, perhaps considering:

- What has been said about my play at different times?
- Which other perspectives could I bring to bear?
- How do these readings differ from, or support my own?

Produced in collaboration with University College London, **free Shakespeare Critical Anthology teaching resources** will be provided to all students at the start of the course.

Co-teachable AS and A level

- The AS specification has been **designed to be entirely co-teachable** with the first year of a two-year A level course.
- All the AS set texts appear in the A level** specification, so there is no requirement to make decisions around AS and A level routes prior to the start of the course.

Holistic assessment

- Holistic mark schemes** allow examiners to mark the students' work in the same way as it was written - as a single cohesive piece of writing, with the response to each Assessment Objective integrated throughout.
- We want students to be able to focus on giving their best response to their exam question, not on trying to remember how many marks are attributed to each Assessment Objective.

A level assessment at a glance

A level (first assessment: summer 2017)

Component 1: Drama

✓ 60 marks

⚖️ 30% Weighting

🕒 2 hours 15 mins

Students study:

- ✍️ **one** Shakespeare play from the categories of either tragedy OR comedy
- ✍️ **one** other drama text from the categories of either tragedy OR comedy
- ✍️ essays and critical commentary related to their selected Shakespeare play.

Section A: Shakespeare (35 marks)

One essay question from a choice of two on the studied Shakespeare text.

Section B: Other drama (25 marks)

One essay question from a choice of two on the studied drama text.

Drama texts

Provided texts: Shakespeare: *A Critical Anthology* (see page 8).

Tragedy

Shakespeare: *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*.

Other drama: *The Duchess of Malfi*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Home Place*.

Comedy

Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night*.

Other drama: *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Pitmen Painters*, *The Rover*, *Waiting for Godot*.

Texts may be selected from within or across sub-categories, selecting one tragedy and one comedy or two texts from the same category.

Component 2: Prose

✓ 40 marks

⚖️ 20% weighting

🕒 1 hour 15 mins

Students study:

Two prose texts from a chosen theme, including at least one pre-1900 text.

One comparative essay question from a choice of two on the studied prose texts (includes at least one pre-1900 text).

Prose themes

Childhood

Pre-1900: *What Maisie Knew*, Henry James; *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens.

Post-1900: *Atonement*, Ian McEwan; *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker.

Colonisation and its Aftermath

Pre-1900: *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain.

Post-1900: *A Passage to India*, E M Forster; *The Lonely Londoners*, Sam Selvon.

Crime and Detection

Pre-1900: *Lady Audley's Secret*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon; *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins.

Post-1900: *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote; *The Murder Room*, P D James.

Science and Society

Pre-1900: *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley; *The War of the Worlds*, H G Wells.

Post-1900: *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro; *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood.

The Supernatural

Pre-1900: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde; *Dracula*, Bram Stoker.

Post-1900: *The Little Stranger*, Sarah Waters; *Beloved*, Toni Morrison.

Women and Society

Pre-1900: *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy.

Post-1900: *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf; *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini.

Component 3: Poetry

✓ 60 marks

⚖️ 30% weighting

🕒 2 hours 15 mins

Students study:

- ✍️ a selection of poetry from a post-2000 collection AND EITHER
- ✍️ a range of poetry from a literary period OR
- ✍️ a range of poetry by a named poet from within a literary period.

Section A: Contemporary Poetry (30 marks)

One comparative essay from a choice of two on an unseen poem written post-2000 and a named poem from the studied collection.

Section B: Poetry Collections (30 marks)

One essay question from a choice of two on the studied poetry period or poet.

Poetry texts

Selection of modern poetry from *Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002-2011*.

Select EITHER the named collection OR the named poet within the chosen period below.

The Medieval Period (1350–1500)

Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, editor A C Cawley (Everyman, 1993).

This edition has normalised spelling but these poetic dramas can also be read with the original spelling in *English Mystery Plays: A Selection*, editor Peter Happe (Penguin Classics, 1975). Either edition is permissible.

OR

Geoffrey Chaucer

The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, editor J Winny (Cambridge, 1994).

The Metaphysical Poets (1600–1690)

Metaphysical Poetry, editor C Burrow and C Ricks (Penguin, 2006).

OR

John Donne

John Donne Selected Poems (Penguin Classics, 2006).

The Romantics (1780–1830)

English Romantic Verse, editor D Wright (Penguin Classics, 1973).

OR

John Keats

Selected Poems: John Keats, editor J Barnard (Penguin Classics, 2007).

The Victorians (1837–1900)

The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse, editor C Ricks (OUP, 2008).

OR

Christina Rossetti

Christina Rossetti Selected Poems, editor D Roe (Penguin, 2008).

Modernism (1900–1939)

The Great Modern Poets, editor M Schmidt (Quercus, 2014).

OR

T. S. Eliot

T. S. Eliot Selected Poems (Faber, 2009).

The Movement (1950–1970)

The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse, editor Philip Larkin with foreword by A Motion (OUP, 1973).

OR

Philip Larkin

The Less Deceived (Faber, 2011).

See Appendix 5 of the A level specification for the list of poems to be studied.

Component 4: Coursework

✓ 60 marks

⚖️ 20% weighting

2500 – 3000 words

One extended comparative essay referring to two texts.

Students study a free choice of two texts linked by theme, movement, author or period. Chosen texts may be selected from poetry, drama, prose or literary non-fiction.

Mapping documents from your current exam board

To help make the transition from your current exam board as easy and straightforward as possible, we have created three mapping documents for you to download:

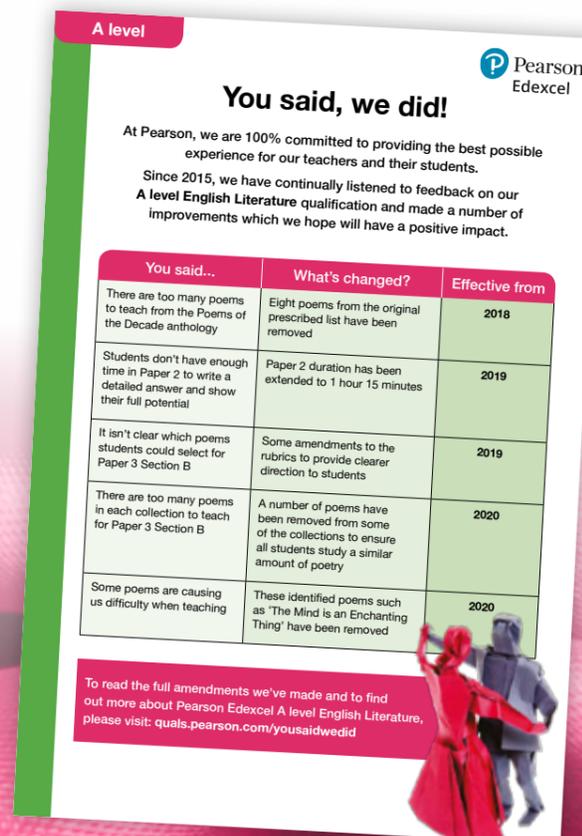
AQA mapping chart

OCR mapping chart

You said, we did

Since 2015, we have continually listened to feedback on our A level English Literature qualification and made a number of improvements which we hope will have a positive impact.

Take a look



A level 

You said, we did!

At Pearson, we are 100% committed to providing the best possible experience for our teachers and their students. Since 2015, we have continually listened to feedback on our A level English Literature qualification and made a number of improvements which we hope will have a positive impact.

You said...	What's changed?	Effective from
There are too many poems to teach from the Poems of the Decade anthology	Eight poems from the original prescribed list have been removed	2018
Students don't have enough time in Paper 2 to write a detailed answer and show their full potential	Paper 2 duration has been extended to 1 hour 15 minutes	2019
It isn't clear which poems students could select for Paper 3 Section B	Some amendments to the rubrics to provide clearer direction to students	2019
There are too many poems in each collection to teach for Paper 3 Section B	A number of poems have been removed from some of the collections to ensure all students study a similar amount of poetry	2020
Some poems are causing us difficulty when teaching	These identified poems such as 'The Mind is an Enchanting Thing' have been removed	2020

To read the full amendments we've made and to find out more about Pearson Edexcel A level English Literature, please visit: quals.pearson.com/yousaidwedid



Past exam papers and mark schemes

We know how important it is to see examples of exam papers, questions and mark schemes when looking at switching exam boards.

You can download our most recent past papers and mark schemes below:



June 2018 Paper 1



June 2018 Paper 1 Mark Scheme



June 2018 Paper 2



June 2018 Paper 2 Mark Scheme



June 2018 Paper 3



June 2018 Paper 3 Mark Scheme

Download all of our past live papers, mark schemes and examiner reports here

