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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 1: Drama</th>
<th>Component 3: Poetry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ 60 marks</td>
<td>✓ 60 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ 30% Weighting</td>
<td>✔ 30% Weighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 hours 15 mins</td>
<td>2 hours 15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- **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**

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

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**

- **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.

- **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.

- **Crimes and Detection**
  - Pre-1900: The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde; Dracula, Bram Stoker.
  - Post-1900: The Little Stranger, Sarah Waters; Beloved, Toni Morrison; Tess of the D’Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy.

- **Women and Society**
  - Pre-1900: Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte; The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde.
  - Post-1900: Mrs Dalloway, Virginia Woolf; A Thousand Splendid Suns, Khaled Hosseini.

Component 4: Coursework

✓ 60 marks

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.

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

Component 3: Poetry

✓ 60 marks

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.

Poetry texts


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

- **The Medieval Period (1066-1500)**
  - 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 Hapgood (Penguin Classics, 1975). Either edition is permissible.
  - OR
  - **Geoffrey Chaucer**

- **The Victorian Period (1837-1900)**
  - OR
  - **Christina Rossetti**

- **The Metaphysical Poets (1600-1690)**
  - OR
  - **John Donne**

- **The Romantic Period (1780-1830)**
  - OR
  - **Christina Rossetti**

- **Modernism (1900-1939)**
  - OR
  - **T. S. Eliot**
    - T. S. Eliot Selected Poems (Faber, 2009).

  - The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse, editor T. S. Eliot (Faber, 2011).
  - OR
  - **Philip Larkin**
    - The Less Deceived (Faber, 2011).

Component 4: Coursework

✓ 60 marks

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.

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

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