



ENGLISH LITERATURE



- Watch a Shakespeare performance. Home to The Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare's company performed many of his plays in the 16th and 17th century, London is a great place to go and watch a Shakespearean tragedy, comedy or history play. Don't just look to The Globe Theatre for Shakespearean performances though. More innovative and serious performances of his plays can often be found elsewhere, in particular at The National Theatre.
- Take a Globe theatre tour. The original venue where Shakespeare performed his plays in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, The Globe is an amazing location. Taking a tour around The Globe can help you to develop a better understanding of the original performance conditions that actors and directors had to deal with.
- Attend the Y12 Literature Trip
Visit the British Library to see, amongst other things, the first Shakespeare Folio and Virginia Woolf's notebooks. Take a walking tour of Bloomsbury, before visiting the national gallery to travel the artistic timeline from Renaissance neo-Classicism all the way through to post-modernism. Learn how this art has informed the writing of our texts.
- Read up on what critics have written about your text
A Reader's Guide to essential criticism are fantastic resources that can give you a degree level understanding of how critics' responses to texts have changed over time. Many of these can be found on Amazon. Norton Critical Editions of texts are also worth buying because they include critical essays after the novel.
- Read a biography of your author/ poet
There are many great biographies to read. Reading a biography provides you with a wealth of contextual information that allows you to better understand an author's work. 'Learning Not To Be The First' is a fantastic biography of Cristina Rossetti. 'The Super-Infinite' is a very good biography of John Donne. Both texts narrate the life of the author in chronological order, together with copies of their poems in the order that they appear. For a Shakespeare biography, try Will In The World or Shakespeare: The World As Stage.
- Read some of the other texts written by the authors of your prose texts
Thomas Hardy Texts: Far From The Madding Crowd, The Return Of The Native, The Woodlanders, The Mayor Of Casterbridge, Jude The Obscure.
Bronte texts: Jane Eyre, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Villette
Shelley texts: The Last Man, Valperga, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck
Atwood texts: Oryx and Crake, Alias Grace, The Blind Assassin
Virginia Woolf texts: The Waves, To The Lighthouse, A Room Of One's Own
- Read other novels written in the genre of your prose text
For Hardy, try pastoral texts, such as Hesiod and Ovid, as well as novels by Orwell and McCarthy.
For Bronte, try gothic texts, such as Dracula, The Castle of Otranto, Rebecca and The Turn Of The Screw.
For Shelley, try gothic texts: see above.
For Atwood, try dystopian texts, such as 1984, The Road, Fahrenheit 451 and Brave New World.
For Woolf, try stream of consciousness texts, such as Catcher in the Rye, The Sound and the Fury, Ulysses and The Stranger
- Go to a special event at The British Library
For instance, there was an exhibition on Cristina Rossetti in 2023 and an exhibition about fairy tales recently.
- Sign up to the BBC Literary archives
This gives you access to all of BBC's resources and you can search it by author, gaining you access to videos, radio programmes and articles.
- Watch and listen to adaptations of your core texts: theatre adaptations, film adaptations, radio plays etc. Summarise how these adaptations alter the source text and consider why this might be.
- Oxford University – Tower Poetry Competition for 16-18 year olds
- Read widely, particularly from the canon:
Below are just some examples of books that are generally considered part of the literary canon:
The Odyssey by Homer (750 BC)
The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri (1320)
The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer (1400)
Macbeth by William Shakespeare (1606)
Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (1813)
Frankenstein by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1818)
The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1850)
War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy (1869)
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain (1884)
Ulysses by James Joyce (1920)
The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925)
The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck (1939)
1984 by George Orwell (1949)
The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger (1951)
Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov (1955)
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (1960)