

# English Literature

## AQA A Level English Literature A: Course Overview

### **Paper 1: Love through the Ages (40% of A Level)**

3 hours – 3 questions each 25 marks = 75 marks in total

#### **Section A: Shakespeare (Closed Book) 25 marks**

Answer one question about a Shakespeare play.  
Extract provided. Answer based on extract **and** whole play.

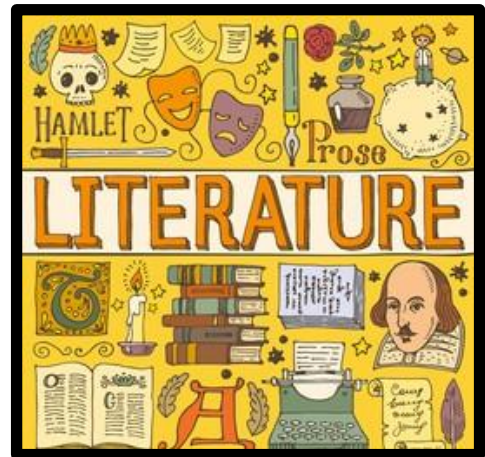
- *Measure for Measure*

#### **Section B: Unseen Poetry 25 marks**

Answer one question comparing two unseen poems.

#### **Section C: Comparing two studied texts (Open Book) 25 marks**

Answer one question comparing two studied texts: one poetry and one prose.  
One text must be pre-1900.



<u>Pre-1900</u>	<u>Post-1900</u>
AQA Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages: Pre-1900	F Scott Fitzgerald 'The Great Gatsby'

### **Paper 2: Texts in Shared Contexts. Option 2A: WWI and its aftermath (40% of A Level)**

2 hours 30 minutes – 3 questions each 25 marks = 75 marks in total

One prose text, one poetry text and one drama text must be studied. One of these must be post-2000.

#### **Section A: Set Text Analysis (Open Book) 25 marks**

Choose one text from a list of core texts to study in preparation for close analysis.

<u>Prose</u>	<u>Poetry</u>
Sebastian Faulks 'Birdsong'	Ed. Brian Gardner: <i>Up the Line to Death</i>

#### **Section B: Drama and Prose Contextual Linking**

##### **Section B Part 1: Extract 25 marks**

Respond to a question based on an unseen extract.

**Section B Part 2: Comparison of two studied texts (Open Book) 25 marks** 'The Wipers Times' by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman compared with **either** 'Up the Line to Death' or 'Birdsong'.

#### **Independent Critical Study: Texts Across Time (20% of A Level)**

2500 words – 50 marks

Students write a comparative critical study of **two** texts on a theme of their choice.  
One text must have been written pre-1900. Two different authors must be studied.

## Assessment Objectives

All Assessment Objectives are assessed in all questions.

AO1 has a weighting of 28% in every question (**worth 7 marks**).

AO2 and AO3 have a weighting of 24% in every question (**worth 6 marks each**).

AO4 and AO5 have a weighting of 12% in every question (**worth 3 marks each**).

The exams and non-exam assessment will measure to what extent students have achieved the following AOs:

- AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
- AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.
- AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.
- AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

### Success Criteria:

**AO1:** Create a **sharply focused** argument with a carefully selected **range of interpretations**, consistently supported by fluently **embedded quotations** and **literary terminology**.

**AO1:** Construct a **well-structured** essay with a comparative introduction and an evaluative conclusion. **Topic sentences make links** between texts. The essay is written with **accurate written expression**.

**AO2:** **Analyse significant aspects** of the texts in relation to the question. Explore **methods used** (e.g. imagery, symbolism, narrator, sequence of events, etc) to create nuances and subtleties of meaning. **Short quotations** are analysed and explicitly connected to the key themes of the texts.

**AO3:** Explore and evaluate the **significance of contextual factors**. Make **sophisticated links** between the texts and their contexts.

**AO4:** Identify **significant comparisons** in terms of the **presentation of themes** within the texts. You could explore both **similarities and differences**.

**AO5:** Perceptive and confident ability to **debate** the argument proposed.

**A\* Criteria:** **Evaluate** interpretations and methods by determining the value of ideas, examining and **judging carefully**, showing the ability to stand back and assess. You could achieve this by **connecting** your ideas to **alternative or additional interpretations**.

## Tasks to Complete

**Task 1: Read** Get hold of the core set texts and read these over the summer.

*Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks (Vintage)

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott. Fitzgerald (Penguin Modern Classics)

Aim to buy the editions specified above if you can. As you read, make some notes on key characters and a summary of key events. This will be very useful when studying the novel in depth in September.

**Task 2: Listen** WW1 Context

Listen to one of the radio shows below on BBC Sounds and discover some of the context for the WWI literature you will be studying. Make notes on some of the key points that interest you.

Voices of the First World War: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0001qtq>

In Our Time –Wilfred Owen: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001df48>

In Our Time – Siegfried Sassoon: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007mvl9>

**Task 3: Write Close Analysis – The Great Gatsby**

Read the extract below from *The Great Gatsby* describing one of Gatsby's infamous parties.

Write a response of no **more than 500 words** exploring the question: ***How is language used to present the party?***

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city, between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants including an extra gardener toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived—no thin five-piece affair but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors and hair shorn in strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names.

**Extra Research Challenge:** Research life in America during the 'Roaring Twenties.'

# Wider Reading

## World War One and its Aftermath

### Wider Reading:

#### Prose:

The 'Regeneration' trilogy, by Pat Barker  
'Toby's Room' by Pat Barker  
'The Return of the Soldier', by Rebecca West  
'Mrs Dalloway', by Virginia Woolf  
'A Farewell to Arms', by Ernest Hemingway  
'All Quiet on the Western Front', by Erich Maria Remarque  
'Strange Meeting', Susan Hill  
'The Roses of No-Man's Land', Lyn Macdonald  
'A Long, Long Way' by Sebastian Barry

#### Non-Fiction:

'Goodbye to All That', Robert Graves  
'A Testament of Youth', Vera Brittain  
'Forgotten Voices of the Great War', Max Arthur  
'In Flanders Fields: A Hundred Years'  
'Letters from the Trenches'

#### Drama:

'Journey's End', by R.C Sherriff  
'The Accrington Pals', by Peter Whelan  
'Oh! What a Lovely War!'  
'The Wipers Times', Ian Hislop  
Blackadder Goes Forth (BBC Comedy Series)

#### Poetry:

'The Poems of Wilfred Owen'  
'The Oxford Book of War Poetry', Jon Stallworthy  
'Scars Upon My Heart'

## Love Through the Ages Wider Reading

#### Prose:

'Wuthering Heights', Emily Bronte  
'Cold Comfort Farm', Stella Gibbons  
'Sense and Sensibility'/'Pride and Prejudice', Jane Austen  
'Atonement'/'Enduring Love', Ian McEwan  
'Tender is the Night', F Scott Fitzgerald  
'Jane Eyre', Charlotte Bronte  
'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', Thomas Hardy  
'1000 Splendid Suns'/'The Kite Runner', Khaled Hosseini  
'Waterland', Graham Swift  
'The Picture of Dorian Gray' Oscar Wilde  
'Anna Karenina', Leo Tolstoy

#### Drama:

'A Streetcar Named Desire'/'The Glass Menagerie'/'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof', Tennessee Williams  
'A Woman of No Importance'/'An Ideal Husband'/'The Importance of Being Earnest', Oscar Wilde  
'Betrayal', Harold Pinter  
'All My Sons'/'The View From the Bridge', Arthur Miller  
'Othello', 'Hamlet', 'Antony and Cleopatra', 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Twelfth Night', William Shakespeare  
'That Face', Polly Stenham

#### Poetry:

The Sonnets of William Shakespeare  
'The World's Wife', Carol Ann Duffy  
'Book of Matches', Simon Armitage  
'The Good Morrow', John Donne  
'To My Brothers', John Keats  
'Selected Poems', Sylvia Plath  
'Birthday Letters', Ted Hughes  
'Katrin', Gillian Clarke