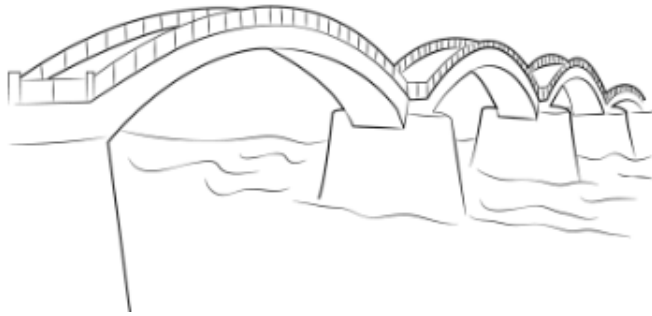


# Summer Bridging Work

## A Level Literature



Congratulations on choosing English Literature as one of your A Levels this coming academic year! Literature A Level covers a range of classic texts from the canon of literature as well as access to more contemporary texts that reflect our modern society. It is a demanding course, which means you need to be ready for learning in September.

You will be covering the plays of *Othello* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the novels of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The War of the Worlds*, as well as contemporary poetry and the poetry of Christina Rossetti. These are challenging texts and unlike GCSE, they will not always be read in lesson. You must be able to read **on your own** to be successful in this course.

To help you prepare for the start of your new academic course we have compiled a range of tasks that you will find useful to aid your preparation over the summer.

TASK		
1. Literature through time	Compulsory	
2. The British Library	Optional	
3. Medieval Literature	Optional	Challenging
4. Early Modern	Compulsory	
5. Renaissance	Compulsory	
6. John Donne	Compulsory	Challenging
7. The Enlightenment	Optional	Challenging
8. Romanticism	Optional	
9. Victorian Literature	Compulsory	
10. Modernism	Optional	

**Bring your completed tasks to class in September.**

**Your first assessment will be based on an aspect of one of the compulsory tasks in the first few weeks of term.**

## TASK 1

Literature reflects the time period in which it was written. Writers are inspired by what is happening in their society and writing develops as society changes and makes progress.

1. Look at the extracts. All are openings to seminal works of literature. Can you order them from oldest to newest?
2. All extracts have been 'translated' to modern English. Annotate your justifications on the paper.
3. What does each extract tell us about the society in which it was written? Annotate your ideas.

## EXTRACTS

- A. LO, praise of the prowess of people-kings  
of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,  
we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!  
Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,  
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,  
awing the earls. Since erst he lay  
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:  
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,  
till before him the folk, both far and near,  
who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate,  
gave him gifts: a good king he!  
To him an heir was afterward born,  
a son in his halls, whom heaven sent  
to favor the folk, feeling their woe  
that erst they had lacked an earl for leader  
so long a while; the Lord endowed him,  
the Wielder of Wonder, with world's renown.
- B. It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters.
- C. It was the first day of my humiliation. Put on a plane, sent back home, to England, set up with a temporary rental in St John's Wood. The flat was on the eighth floor, the windows looked over the cricket ground. It had been chosen, I think, because of the doorman, who blocked all enquiries. I stayed indoors. The phone on the kitchen wall rang and rang, but I was warned not to answer it and to keep my own phone switched off. I watched the cricket being played, a game I don't understand, it offered no real distraction, but still it was better than looking at the interior of that apartment, a luxury condo, in which everything had been designed to be perfectly neu-tral, with all significant corners rounded, like an iPhone. When the cricket finished I stared at the sleek coffee machine embedded in the wall, and at two photos of the Buddha –

one a brass Buddha, the other wood – and at a photo of an elephant kneeling next to a little Indian boy, who was also kneeling. The rooms were tasteful and grey, linked by a pristine hallway of tan wool cord. I stared at the ridges in the cord. Two days passed like that. On the third day, the doorman called up and said the lobby was clear. I looked at my phone, it was sitting on the counter in airplane mode. I had been offline for seventy-two hours and can remember feeling that this should be counted among the great examples of personal stoicism and moral endurance of our times.

D. It is vain to expect virtue from women till they are, in some degree, independent of men; nay, it is vain to expect that strength of natural affection, which would make them good wives and mothers. Whilst they are absolutely dependent on their husbands they will be cunning, mean, and selfish, and the men who can be gratified by the fawning fondness of spaniel-like affection, have not much delicacy, for love is not to be bought, in any sense of the words, its silken wings are instantly shrivelled up when any thing beside a return in kind is sought.

E. DELIO. You are welcome to your country, dear Antonio;  
You have been long in France, and you return  
A very formal Frenchman in your habit:  
How do you like the French court?

ANTONIO. I admire it:  
In seeking to reduce both state and people  
To a fix'd order, their judicious king  
Begins at home; quits first his royal palace  
Of flattering sycophants, of dissolute  
And infamous persons,—which he sweetly terms  
His master's master-piece, the work of heaven;  
Considering duly that a prince's court  
Is like a common fountain, whence should flow  
Pure silver drops in general, but if 't chance  
Some curs'd example poison 't near the head,  
Death and diseases through the whole land spread.

F. They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks. The Jamaican ladies had never approved of my mother, 'because she pretty like pretty self,' Christophine said. She was my father's second wife, far too young for him they thought, and, worse still, a Martinique girl. When I asked her why so few people came to see us, she told me that the road from Spanish Town to Coulibri Estate where we lived was very bad and that road repairing was now a thing of the past. (My father, visitors, horses, feeling safe in bed – all belonged to the past.)

G. The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac,

or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn. From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as was his custom, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flamelike as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid, jade-faced painters of Tokyo who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion.

## **TASK 2**

1. Visit the British Library and see one of the permanent exhibitions or attend one of the free workshops.

## **TASK 3**

**Medieval Literature** was written in Middle English. Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* about a group of pilgrims who meet at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, South London, and are planning to go on a religious pilgrimage to Canterbury. Some of them are genuinely religious. Others are more interested in getting away, flirting or making money....Each pilgrim agrees to tell a tale.

1. Read the extracts and look up any words you don't understand and make a note of the meaning on the extracts.
2. Make notes on your ideas about the extracts under the following headings: subject/themes, how are the different characters described and Chaucer's typical tone and style.

## **EXTRACTS from *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (1387-1400)**

### **A. from *The Prologue: About the Prioress***

For courtliness she had a special zest,  
And she would wipe her upper lip so clean  
That not a trace of grease was to be seen  
Upon the cup when she had drunk; to eat,  
She reached a hand sedately for the meat.

### **B. from *The Prologue: About the Doctor***

Yet he was rather close as to expenses  
And kept the gold he won in pestilences.  
Gold stimulates the heart, or so we're told.  
He therefore had a special love of gold.

### **C. from *The Prologue: About the Summoner***

There was a Summoner with us at that Inn,  
His face on fire, like a cherubin,  
For he had carbuncles. His eyes were narrow,

He was as hot and lecherous as a sparrow.  
Black scabby brows he had, and a thin beard.  
Children were afraid when he appeared.

**D. from The Pardoner's Tale**

There is, in Avicenna's long relation  
Concerning poison and its operation,  
Trust me, no ghastlier section to transcend  
What these two wretches suffered at their end.  
Thus these two murderers received their due,  
So did the treacherous young poisoner too.

**E. from The Wife of Bath's Tale**

Others assert [women] are thought dependable, discreet  
And secret, firm of purpose and controlled,  
Never betraying things that we are told.  
But that's not worth the handle of a rake;  
Women conceal a thing? For Heaven's sake!

**TASK 4:**

1. Read the **Early Modern** extracts. Look up any words / phrases you don't understand and annotate them on your sheet.
2. Make notes on the following topics: Ideas / themes covered and notes on language / style

**Extract from Doctor Faustus, by Christopher Marlowe**

*In this extract, Faustus is planning to learn the art of black magic. He imagines what he will get evil spirits to do for him.*

FAUSTUS.

How am I glutted with conceit of this!  
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,  
Resolve me of all ambiguities,  
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?  
I'll have them fly to India for gold,  
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,  
And search all corners of the new-found world  
For pleasant fruits and princely delicacies;  
I'll have them read me strange philosophy,  
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;  
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,  
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wertenberg;  
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,  
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad;  
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,  
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land,  
And reign sole king of all the provinces;

Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war,  
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge,  
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

### **Extract from Hamlet, by Shakespeare**

Act 2, Scene 2

*In this extract, Hamlet is conversing with two old acquaintances.*

HAMLET:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals - and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me - no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

### **TASK 5**

What do you understand by the term '**Renaissance**'? Research the era and the following terms: Humanism, New' worlds, Reformation and Metaphysical Poetry.

### **TASK 6**

1. Read and annotate 'The Flea' by John Donne.
2. Who is the poem addressed to?
3. What does he want to persuade them of?
4. How does he use the extended image (conceit) of the flea
5. How does he use religious terms and images?
6. How does he use logic and argument

*The Flea (approx. 1590)*

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,  
How little that which thou deniest me is;  
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,  
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;  
Thou know'st that this cannot be said  
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,  
Yet this enjoys before it woo,  
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,  
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,  
Where we almost, nay more than married are.  
This flea is you and I, and this  
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;  
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,  
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.

Though use make you apt to kill me,  
Let not to that, self-murder added be,  
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since  
Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?  
Wherein could this flea guilty be,  
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?  
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou  
Find'st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;  
'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:  
Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me,  
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee

Glossary:

Maidenhead = virginity

Thou = you

Sacrilege = offending religious rules

Verbs – often have an ending we don't use anymore eg deny/deniest

#### TASK 7

**The Enlightenment** was a sprawling intellectual, philosophical, cultural, and social movement that spread through Europe during the 18th century. Enabled by the Scientific Revolution, which had begun as early as 1500, the Enlightenment represented about as big of a departure as possible from the Middle Ages—the period in European history lasting from roughly the fifth century to the fifteenth. It was a time of huge expansions in progress and development and is often referred to as the 'Age of Philosophy'.

1. Read the following extracts from Enlightenment Era writers and make notes about the **key themes** that arise as well as ideas about how you would describe the **style of writing** during this period.

#### Enlightenment Era Extracts

- A. Since it is understanding that sets man above the rest of sensible beings, and gives him all the advantage and dominion, which he has over them; it is certainly a subject, even for its nobleness, worth our labour to inquire into. The understanding, like the eye, whilst it makes us see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself; and it requires art and pains to set it at a distance, and make it its own object. **from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) by John Locke**
- B. Some years ago I was struck by how many false things I had believed, and by how doubtful was the structure of beliefs that I had based on them. I realised that if I wanted to establish anything in the sciences that was stable and likely to last, I needed – just once in my life – to demolish everything completely and start again from the foundations. It looked like an enormous task, and I decided to wait until I was old enough to be sure that there was nothing

to be gained from putting it off any longer. So today I have set all my worries aside and arranged for myself a clear stretch of free time. I am here quite alone, and at last I will devote myself, sincerely and without holding back, to demolishing my opinions.

Whatever I have accepted until now as most true has come to me through my senses. But occasionally I have found that they have deceived me, and it is unwise to trust completely those who have deceived us even once. **from *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) by Rene Descartes**

C. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government...**from *The Declaration of Independence* (1776) by various writers**

D. ...the neglected education of my fellow creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that women in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove, that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers that are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity. One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men, who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than rational wives **from *A Vindication for the Rights of Women* (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft**

#### TASK 8:

- What is **Romanticism**?
- Watch the clip and make notes on this influential literary movement  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=OiRWBI0JTYQ>

# HISTORY: ROMANTICISM



## TASK 9:

1. Watch the British Library video on gender in the 19<sup>th</sup> century make your own notes [Gender in 19th Century Britain - Bing video](#)
2. Research the following female archetypes in **Victorian Literature**; The Angel of the House, The nurturing female, The innocent/helpless female, The melodramatic female, The fallen woman, The crone and The Femme Fatale.
3. Which archetypes does Dickens adhere to in the extract from *Great Expectations*? Collect evidence for your ideas and explain how your evidence develops the archetype.

## EXTRACT from *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens

At last we came to the door of a room, and she said, "Go in."

I answered, more in shyness than politeness, "After you, miss."

To this she returned: "Don't be ridiculous, boy; I am not going in." And scornfully walked away, and—what was worse—took the candle with her.

This was very uncomfortable, and I was half afraid. However, the only thing to be done being to knock at the door, I knocked, and was told from within to enter. I entered, therefore, and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles. No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I supposed from the furniture, though much of it was of forms and uses then quite unknown to me. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I made out at first sight to be a fine lady's dressing-table.

Whether I should have made out this object so soon if there had been no fine lady sitting at it, I cannot say. In an arm-chair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

[Miss Havisham] was dressed in rich materials - satins, and lace, and silks - all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on - the other was on the table near her hand - her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a prayer-book, all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass.

It was not in the first few moments that I saw all these things, though I saw more of them in the first moments than might be supposed. But, I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

“Who is it?” said the lady at the table.

“Pip, ma'am.”

“Pip?”

“Mr. Pumblechook's boy, ma'am. Come—to play.”

“Come nearer; let me look at you. Come close.”

It was when I stood before her, avoiding her eyes, that I took note of the surrounding objects in detail, and saw that her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine, and that a clock in the room had stopped at twenty minutes to nine.

“Look at me,” said Miss Havisham. “You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?”

I regret to state that I was not afraid of telling the enormous lie comprehended in the answer “No.”

“Do you know what I touch here?” she said, laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.

“Yes, ma'am.” (It made me think of the young man.)

“What do I touch?”

“Your heart.”

“Broken!”

She uttered the word with an eager look, and with strong emphasis, and with a weird smile that had a kind of boast in it. Afterwards she kept her hands there for a little while, and slowly took them away as if they were heavy.

“I am tired,” said Miss Havisham. “I want diversion, and I have done with men and women. Play.”

I think it will be conceded by my most disputatious reader, that she could hardly have directed an unfortunate boy to do anything in the wide world more difficult to be done under the circumstances.

“I sometimes have sick fancies,” she went on, “and I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. There, there!” with an impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand; “play, play, play!”

For a moment, with the fear of my sister's working me before my eyes, I had a desperate idea of starting round the room in the assumed character of Mr. Pumblechook's chaise-cart. But I felt myself so unequal to the performance that I gave it up, and stood looking at Miss Havisham in what I suppose she took for a dogged manner, inasmuch as she said, when we had taken a good look at each other,—

“Are you sullen and obstinate?”

“No, ma'am, I am very sorry for you, and very sorry I can't play just now. If you complain of me I shall get into trouble with my sister, so I would do it if I could; but it's so new here, and so strange, and so fine,—and melancholy—.” I stopped, fearing I might say too much, or had already said it, and we took another look at each other.

Before she spoke again, she turned her eyes from me, and looked at the dress she wore, and at the dressing-table, and finally at herself in the looking-glass.

“So new to him,” she muttered, “so old to me; so strange to him, so familiar to me; so melancholy to both of us! Call Estella.”

As she was still looking at the reflection of herself, I thought she was still talking to herself, and kept quiet.

“Call Estella,” she repeated, flashing a look at me. “You can do that. Call Estella. At the door.”

To stand in the dark in a mysterious passage of an unknown house, bawling Estella to a scornful young lady neither visible nor responsive, and feeling it a dreadful liberty so to roar out her name, was almost as bad as playing to order. But she answered at last, and her light came along the dark passage like a star.

Miss Havisham beckoned her to come close, and took up a jewel from the table, and tried its effect upon her fair young bosom and against her pretty brown hair. “Your own, one day, my dear, and you will use it well. Let me see you play cards with this boy.”

“With this boy? Why, he is a common laboring boy!”

I thought I overheard Miss Havisham answer,—only it seemed so unlikely,—“Well? You can break his heart.”

“What do you play, boy?” asked Estella of myself, with the greatest disdain.

“Nothing but beggar my neighbor, miss.”

“Beggar him,” said Miss Havisham to Estella. So we sat down to cards.

It was then I began to understand that everything in the room had stopped, like the watch and the clock, a long time ago. I noticed that Miss Havisham put down the jewel exactly on the spot from

which she had taken it up. As Estella dealt the cards, I glanced at the dressing-table again, and saw that the shoe upon it, once white, now yellow, had never been worn. I glanced down at the foot from which the shoe was absent, and saw that the silk stocking on it, once white, now yellow, had been trodden ragged. Without this arrest of everything, this standing still of all the pale decayed objects, not even the withered bridal dress on the collapsed form could have looked so like grave-clothes, or the long veil so like a shroud.

So she sat, corpse-like, as we played at cards; the frillings and trimmings on her bridal dress, looking like earthy paper. I knew nothing then of the discoveries that are occasionally made of bodies buried in ancient times, which fall to powder in the moment of being distinctly seen; but, I have often thought since, that she must have looked as if the admission of the natural light of day would have struck her to dust.

### **TASK 10:**

1. Read the extract.
2. What does it define as the key features of modernism and what way it was new?
3. What does it suggest were the causes of this change in outlook?
4. What do you understand by the comment that “a central preoccupation of Modernism is with the inner self and consciousness”?

### **EXTRACT**

The **Modernist Period** in English Literature occupied the years from shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century through roughly 1965. In broad terms, the period was marked by sudden and unexpected breaks with traditional ways of viewing and interacting with the world. Experimentation and individualism became virtues, where in the past they were often heartily discouraged. Modernism was set in motion, in one sense, through a series of cultural shocks. The first of these great shocks was the Great War, which ravaged Europe from 1914 through 1918, known now as World War One. At the time, this “War to End All Wars” was looked upon with such ghastly horror that many people simply could not imagine what the world seemed to be plunging towards. The first hints of that particular way of thinking called Modernism stretch back into the nineteenth century. As literary periods go, Modernism displays a relatively strong sense of cohesion and similarity across genres and locales. Furthermore, writers who adopted the Modern point of view often did so quite deliberately and self-consciously. Indeed, a central preoccupation of Modernism is with the inner self and consciousness. In contrast to the Romantic world view, the Modernist cares rather little for Nature, Being, or the overarching structures of history. Instead of progress and growth, the Modernist intelligentsia sees decay and a growing alienation of the individual. The machinery of modern society is perceived as impersonal, capitalist, and antagonistic to the artistic impulse. War most certainly had a great deal of influence on such ways of approaching the world. Two World Wars in the span of a generation effectively shell-shocked all of Western civilization.