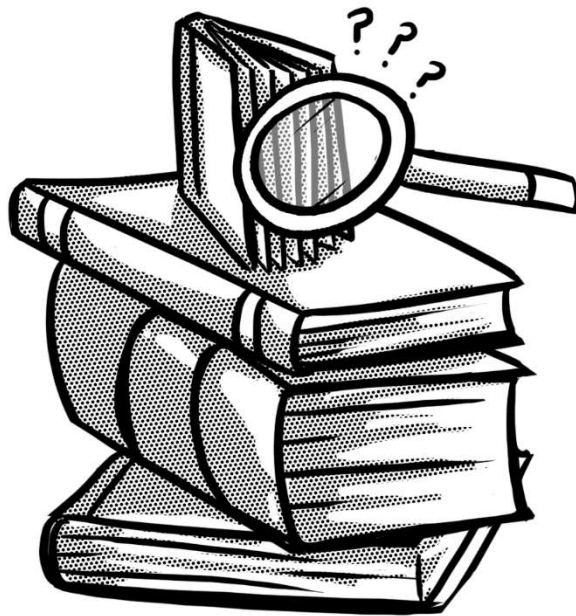# A Level English Literature / Language

So, you are considering Language and Literature at A Level?

This pack contains a varied programme of activities and resources to help you prepare to start an A Level in Language and Literature in September. It is aimed to be used after you complete your GCSE and throughout the remainder of the Summer Holidays to ensure you are ready to start the course, fully prepared, in September.

The resources include:

1) *Suggested reading and associated activities to prepare you for the types of texts you may encounter from September*
2) *Links with activities to five websites where you can explore texts and ideas which you will come across during the course*
3) *Glossary and activities which will help you become familiar with new terminology, key for the course*
4) *A diagnostic assessment that will test your knowledge and understanding of the critical approach needed to succeed on this course*
5) *Suggested visits and other activities which will enthuse, interest and sustain engagement*

Where appropriate the tasks are linked to the course's Assessment Objectives, which are listed below:

AO1 Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received

AO4 Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods

AO5 Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways

1. Suggested Summer Course Pre-Reading

ACTIVITY 1

Our novel is *The Great Gatsby* by **F Scott-Fitzgerald**.
Make a first read of the novel.   Get to know the characters and plot.   This is your new favourite book and will be ever within an arm's length from your side.

Make an online folder of study resources for the novel, research and populate your folder with interesting ideas connected with the novel, the writer, and their time-period.   Here is a starting point: The Great Gatsby I Summary, Context, Reception, & Analysis | Britannica

Grab a bag of popcorn and watch the film!

ACTIVITY 2

We will study a range of non-fiction texts.   Find the extract from, *'Notes on a Small Island'* by Bill Bryson which starts: *'My first sight of England was on a foggy March night in 1973'* to *'wasn't so much walking as being dragged along on three legs'*. The extract can be located online, for example: The Bookseller - Spotlight - Notes From a Small Island: Extract

Consider the way Bryson's writing mimics a conversational tone and how this shapes our understanding of his viewpoint. Share this with a friend and discuss this style of writing and how it might be appealing to the target audience (AO2)

ACTIVITY 3

Welcome to your new BPF.   We will be studying poetry by **William Blake**.   Choose two poems by **Blake**. Produce a Venn diagram looking at similarities and differences between the two poems. You should consider literary terms as well as linguistic terms, use the glossary included to help you (AO1 & AO4).

ACTIVITY 4

Oscar Wilde is a literary genius, although he famously said of himself:
'I put all my genius into my life, I put only my talent into my books'. In honour of his genius / talent we will study his play *The Important of Being Earnest*. The is a comedy and will contrast the other genres studied for our literature component.

Make a first read of our play.   The Importance of Being Earnest (Play) Full Text Script | StageAgent

Wilde was considered a controversial man in his time.   Make an online folder of study resources for the play and playwright. Include interesting research connected with the comedy genre, the play and our playwright, and the t which it was written.

2. Glossary and activities which will help you become familiar with new terminology, key for the course.

Lexis and Semantics:

- **Denotative and connotational meanings:** the literal (denotative) and associated (connotational) meanings of words and phrases.
- **Figurative language:** language used in a non-literal way to describe something in another's terms (e.g. simile or metaphor).
- **Semantic fields:** groups of words connected by a common meaning.
- **Synonyms:** words that have equivalent meanings.
- **Antonyms:** words that have contrasting meanings.
- **Hypernyms:** words whose meanings contain other words, (e.g. *animal* contains *dog*, *cat* and *fish*).
- **Hyponyms:** words that can be included in a larger, more general category (e.g. the hyponyms *car*, *bus*, *aeroplane* as a form of the hypernym *transport*).
- **Levels of formality:** vocabulary styles including slang, colloquial, taboo and formal.
- **Jargon:** a technical vocabulary associated with a particular occupation or activity.
- **Sociolect:** a language style associated with a particular social group.
- **Dialect:** a language style associated with a particular geographical region.
- **Neology:** the process of new word formation, including the following: blends, compounds, acronyms, initialisms, eponyms.
- **Semantic change**: the process of words changing meaning, including the following: narrowing, broadening, amelioration, pejoration, semantic reclamation.

ACTIVITY

i) List three colours and their connotational meanings.
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

ii) Can you give 3 examples of antonyms to the word 'kind'?
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

iii) What neologisms can you think of from popular culture?
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

Grammar:

- **Phrase**: a group of words centred around a head word.
- **Head word**: the central word in a phrase which gives the phrase its name (e.g. noun phrase, adjective phrase) and may be modified by other words.
- **Modification**: the adding of additional words to provide more detail to a head word in a phrase either before it (pre-modification) or after it (post-modification).
- **Clause**: a group of words centred around a verb, which may be either grammatically complete (main clause) or incomplete (subordinate clause).
- **Active voice**: a clause where the agent (doer) of an action is the subject.
- **Passive voice**: a clause where the patient (the entity affected by an action) is in the subject position, and the agent either follows or is left out.
- **Tense**: how the time of an event is marked (usually through verb inflection): past, present and future.
- **Coordination**: the joining of two or more independent clauses via co-ordinating conjunctions. Single words and longer phrases can also be co-ordinated.
- **Subordination**: the joining of two or more clauses where only one is independent (the main clause) and the others dependent (subordinate clause/clauses).
- **Sentence**: a larger unit of meaning, which may be formed of a single clause (simple sentence) or several clauses (compound or complex sentences).
- **Sentence function**: the purpose a sentence fulfils in communication: as a statement, question, command or exclamation. These are also referred to in many grammar books as (respectively): declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives and exclamatives.
- **Word class**: the grammatical category into which words can be placed, including noun, adjective, verb, adverb, determiner, pronoun, preposition, conjunction.

ACTIVITY

i) Write a sentence which has a main and a subordinate clause, below:

_____

_____

_____

ii) Considering sentence function, give an example of the following:

Interrogative: _____

Declarative: _____

Imperative: _____

iii) Give an example of each of the following:

Pronoun: _____

Preposition: _____

Conjunction: _____

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Some New Key Terms:

- **Audience**: the receivers or intended receivers of a text (written, spoken, multimodal). The concept of an *ideal audience/reader* is often found in critical discourse. Texts might also have multiple audiences.

- **Discourses**: used in many different (and sometime contradictory) ways in language study. Can be used to refer to a mode of language (e.g. spoken or written discourse), a register (e.g. medical or legal discourse), a way of thinking about and presenting something (e.g. representing language using a discourse of decay).

- **Foregrounding**: the way in which texts emphasise key events or ideas through the use of attention-seeking devices (in terms of lexis, semantics, phonology or grammar) that either repeat content (*parallelism*) or break established patterns (*deviation)*. Deviation may be:

    - *external*: breaking from the normal conventions of language use, for example in the use of nonsense words or ungrammatical constructions
    - *internal*: breaking from a pattern that has previously been set up in the text for a striking effect.

- **Genre**: the way of categorising and classifying different types of texts according to their features or expected shared conventions. Genres come into being as the result of people agreeing about perceived similar characteristics in terms of content or style. Genres are fluid and dynamic and new genres continually evolve as a result of new technologies and cultural practices.

- **Mode**: the way in which language is communicated between text producer and text receiver and the physical channel through which this is carried out. At its simplest, this could be spoken or written (*visual* or *auditory* channel). Mode also encompasses ideas around planning and spontaneity, distance between text producer and receiver, how transitory or long-lasting a text is. Mode is more than a binary opposition, is sometimes visualised as a continuum and is constantly changing as new communication technologies blur the lines between older forms.

- **Narrative**: a type of text or discourse that functions to tell a series of events. A narrative is the organisation of experience told by a *narrator* to any number of *narratees*. A narrative has two distinctive parts:

    - *the story*: the events, places, characters and time of action that act as the building blocks of the narrative
    - *the narrative discourse*: the particular shaping of those building blocks into something worth telling through specific choices in language and structure.

3. A diagnostic assessment that will assess your knowledge and understanding of the critical approach needed to succeed on this course.

Based on the opening of, *'The Handmaid's Tale'*, the extract can be found online, here:
https://icmotrospaises.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/the-handmaids-tale-margaret-atwood.pdf

Read the opening paragraph of, *'The Handmaid's Tale'* by Margaret Attwood, which starts *'We slept in what had once been the gymnasium'* to *'powdering the dancers with a snow of light'*.

Consider how Attwood presents setting in this extract.

You should write between around 500 words. Once finished, you should annotate your response with Assessment Objectives 1 and 2:

AO1   Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

AO2   Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts

This is your main piece of work to be handed in at the start of our course in September.

Suggested visits and other activities which will enthuse, interest and sustain engagement.

- **Go to a gallery** take a photo of painting or print which you feels 'tells a story'. Write a **plan** of the story (in a genre of your choice) as a first-person recount (AO5) with a **bank of phrases and effective vocabulary**. Next, use the glossary, can you write an evaluation of choices you made, using some of these terms (AO1 & AO2)?

  Whilst you are at the gallery buy a postcard of a piece of artwork which you think has a meaning or story behind it. Stick it down and identify key aspects of its arrangement: colour, contrasts, symbolism, interaction between subjects etc. (AO1). Next, for each of your 'AO1' points try and show a development in your understanding of how this adds to our interpretation and understanding (the effect it has on the audience and why) (AO2).

- Use your **Twitter** account to develop your understanding of the course. Search for 'hashtags' which may be useful, such as: #OCRLangLit, and accounts which you can follow, such as: or @SJHSEnglishLL. Favourite or retweet any links which you think may be useful for your Language and Literature studies (AO1-5).

Complete the signposting table below (AO1).

To indicate similarities	To indicate differences
Similarly	Conversely

- Next, find two pictures of celebrities, use signposts which compare and contrast to evaluate differences and similarities of how our perception has been shaped (AO1, AO2 & AO4).

- Transcribe a discussion between you and a friend which you have recorded on your phone, ensure you use the key below (AO1):

Transcript contents	Feature	Indicated by
Organisation	Layout	Script form Identification for speaker in left-hand margin.
Turn-taking	Overlaps Latching Simultaneous speech	Brackets [or lines I = //
Non-fluency	Pauses	(.) micropause (3.0) Length of pause in seconds
Non-verbal communication & external contexts	Body language	((smiles)) ((door opens)) or [door opens]
Prosody	Stress on words Lengthened syllables Speech at a higher pitch	Underlining or capitals Double colons :: Up arrows ^

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