



Coloma Sixth Form

ENGLISH LITERATURE



“Reading...is a full-contact sport; we crash up against the wave of words with all of our intellectual, imaginative, and emotional resources.” Thomas C. Foster (*Understanding Novels*)

Make the most of the summer to get ahead at A Level

How? By getting underway with your reading and research for the coursework texts.

Normally we start with the toughest texts which really require studying together as a class such as *Mrs Dalloway*, Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. You are provided with work to do in the next few pages to prepare for those, but this year we're going to start with texts which will be more immediately accessible working by yourselves. **We'll begin with the coursework.**

You will study 3 texts:

In Search of Equilibrium by Theresa Lola

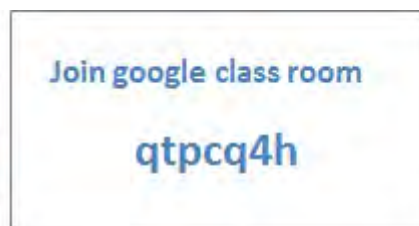
The Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood

By the Bog of Cats by Marina Carr

Please get hold of these texts. Read and annotate the poems, researching the context for each (I'll be making an excellent study guide available on Google Classroom and you might find the lectures on the poems on Massolit useful). I'll be setting work on our Google Classroom. Make sure you join it!

Read ***The Penelopiad***: it's based on The Odyssey so research it here initially <http://www.mythweb.com/odyssey/> Read the short version, then the more detailed one. If you're inspired, **read the real thing**. I'd particularly recommend the recent translation by **Emily Wilson**. I personally loved a brilliant book about The Odyssey called *An Odyssey* by Daniel Mendelsohn which gives some fascinating insights.

By the Bog of Cats is an Irish play by Marina Carr (research her other plays). It's based on Euripides' *Medea*. Research and read it. You can find a good play version of *The Medea* on Youtube. It's also alluding to The Troubles in Ireland. I'd recommend a brilliant book called ***Say Nothing*** by Patrick Radden Keefe. But you could also explore The Troubles for yourselves. I'll give more details on the google classroom.



Specification ENGLISH LITERATURE OCR H472

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171200-specification-accredited-a-level-gce-english-literature-h472.pdf>

Learners must complete all components (01, 02 and 03) to be awarded the A Level in English Literature.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
Component 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shakespeare Drama and poetry pre-1900 	Drama and poetry pre-1900 (01)* Written paper 60 marks Closed text 2 hours 30 minutes	40% of total A level
Component 02 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close reading in chosen topic area Comparative and contextual study from chosen topic area 	Comparative and contextual study (02)* Written paper 60 marks Closed text 2 hours 30 minutes	40% of total A level
Component 03 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close reading OR re-creative writing piece with commentary. Comparative essay* 	Literature post-1900 (03)* 40 marks Non examined assessment	20% of total A level

* Indicates synoptic assessment.

Texts studied

Paper 01

Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale* and Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Paper 02

Mrs Dalloway by Virginia Woolf and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

Coursework 03: this year's students will be studying the following

Close reading: *In Search of Equilibrium* by Theresa Lola

The comparative essay: *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood and *By the Bog of Cats* by Marina Carr

How to achieve an A* in English Literature

While there is no formula for achieving the top marks in English Literature (indeed the hallmarks of a top calibre essay are individuality and independence) there are some common characteristics. The best essays

- define and/or challenge the terms of the question
- establish a clear argument/ thesis in their introduction
- incorporate all the relevant Assessment Objectives to an impressive level
- adopt an academic register, are fluently expressed and written in technically accurate English
- show consistently excellent knowledge of the texts under discussion
- cite all their sources in footnotes and provide a comprehensive bibliography (for coursework)

An example of an excellent introduction for a coursework essay:

AA Gill said that Thomas “saw the countryside with an intense emotional realism”. Compare and contrast the extent to which this view applies to both Thomas and Cowen

Between both Edward Thomas, in his poems, and in Rob Cowen’s non-fiction book ‘Common Ground’, it is possible to identify similarities and differences in the way they view and appreciate the countryside. An ‘intense emotional realism’ can be interpreted differently with both men: Thomas largely focusing on the powerful connections nature has, such as with the war, for example; Cowen on the other hand, uses the countryside as a way of relating to life events, such as the journey through his wife’s pregnancy. The word ‘intense’ on its own can be seen to mean powerful, with ‘emotional’ suggesting a wealth of different emotions, such as anger and sorrow and ‘realism’ highlighting either the reality or even the illogicality of the situation. In saying that Thomas “saw the countryside with an intense emotional realism”, AA Gill is alluding to Wordsworth’s preface to Lyrical Ballads where he states ‘**for all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.**’¹ This idea of feelings in connection with literature can be explored within the works of both Thomas and Cowen and the quote also argues that both men are writing in the tradition of the Romantics. Furthermore, the expression of emotion differs in both Thomas and Cowen with the idea of sophrosyne – a concept which focuses on the ability of verbal self-control within a person – holding substance in both of their writings.

The following site might be of use for essay writing advice:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/fulllist/second/en228/how_to_write_an_essay

If your technical accuracy needs improving, go to

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/page_01.htm

And work through the exercise

What could this qualification lead to?

Research shows there are a huge range of jobs on offer for those with an academic background in English.

English graduates find opportunities with many different employers. Public and private sector organisations such as the National Health Service, educational institutions, local and national government, financial and legal firms, and voluntary and charitable organisations employ English graduates in a range of roles, including:

- administration
- finance
- general management
- research

English graduates often enter

- advertising marketing and public relations agencies
- media organisations
- publishing companies

The retail, leisure and tourism sectors also typically recruit English graduates. Many go into teaching at both Primary and Secondary levels while others enter acting, film and creative media environments or politics.

The combination of analytical ability, written and oral communication skills and the empathy gained from studying others' lives also make English A Level a sought after qualification for those considering a medical degree.

Relevant Links to Websites

<https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/cpd-and-consultancy/our-projects/what-jobs-do-people-with-an-english-degree-end-up-doing>

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/courses/english/top-10-celebrities-with-an-english-degree/?entry=1>

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree/english>

<https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/careers-advice/what-can-you-do-english-literature-degree>

One advantage of studying English at Coloma is our involvement with the superb Massolit lectures- see below for further details.

SUMMER WORK

If you want to take English next year, you MUST

Read The Penelopiad

Research Medea and The Odyssey (context for The Penelopiad and The Bog of Cats...)

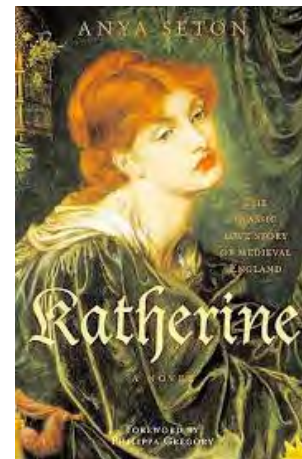
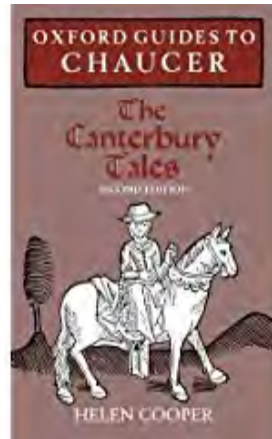
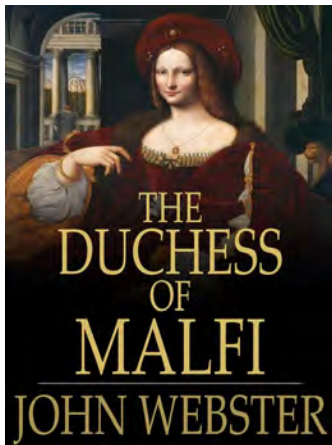
Research The Troubles

Research other works by Marina Carr and Margaret Atwood

Read Theresa Lola's anthology of poems, choose one and prepare a response to it.

You could:

- **Write an essay analysing it**
- **Write a personal response as a poem of your own**
- **Make a PowerPoint or Prezzi exploring it**
- **Make a video/ artwork in response**
- **Get in touch with Theresa Lola on twitter to research the poem**
- **Email mholloway@coloma.croydon.sch.uk if you want to do something different or have any questions**



PAPER 01 preparation

Go to the Harvard website at <https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/pages/text-and-translations>

to find translations of the following tales

from *The Canterbury Tales*: *The Knight's Tale*, *The Franklin's Tale*, *The Miller's Tale*
The Wife of Bath's Tale and *The Clerk's Tale*. Read each of them and make notes.

(This year's students found it helpful to watch these animated versions first on YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdTKmlbzKkg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3cvOm7qStk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deRyhTuny3w>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86Y62Cf3II>

Explore the lectures on Chaucer and Webster on Massolit (making notes for your file).

READ *Katherine* by Anya Seton. Based on historical research, it tells the story of Chaucer's sister-in-law, Katherine Swynford. It's a great lockdown read which will give you superb contextual understanding of Chaucer's period. I'd also recommend *Sacred Hearts* by Sarah Dunant to give you excellent understanding of women in Renaissance times in Italy.

Any questions, email Mrs Holloway on mholloway@coloma.croydon.sch.uk



Paper 02 preparation

WOMEN IN LITERATURE

Task : Read at least 5 short stories/essays from the choice above or from this list. Jot down notes on how women are presented. Note any similarities/patterns.

<https://trueafrica.co/lists/5-of-the-best-chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-stories-you-can-read-for-free/>

<http://www.katherinemansfieldsociety.org/short-stories-by-katherine-mansfield/>

<https://americanliterature.com/author/kate-chopin>

<https://americanliterature.com/author/edith-wharton>

<https://mashable.com/2018/02/03/best-short-stories-female-british-writers/?europe=true>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05sy2zs>

Read Zora Neale Hurston's **Their Eyes Were Watching God**

You would benefit from reading another book from this list:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie **Americanah**, Margaret Atwood **The Edible Woman** or **The Handmaid's Tale**, Jane Austen **Northanger Abbey**, Emily Brontë **Wuthering Heights**, George Eliot **The Mill on the Floss**, Thomas Hardy **Tess of the D'Urbervilles**, DH. Lawrence **Women in Love**, Anita Loos **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes**, , Sylvia Plath **The Bell Jar**, Toni Morrison **The Bluest Eye**, Jeanette Winterson **Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit**

Make notes on your reading for your folder to bring to your first lesson.

Research Massolit lectures to support your reading- make notes for your folder. You might like to look at lectures on Jane Austen, Morrison's *Beloved*, Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, *Mill on the Floss*, as well as on the texts you will be studying. You would find the course on Modernism very helpful.

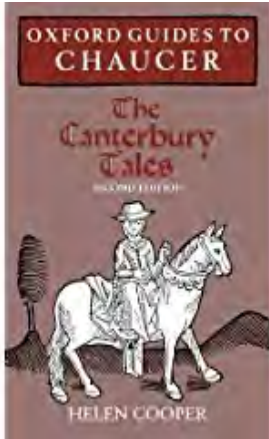
The following critical reading texts would be very useful



http://www.ricorso.net/tx/Courses/LEM2014/Critics/Gilbert_Gubar/Madwoman_full.pdf

Additional Suggestions for the Summer- some are more relevant if lockdown ends, others are more useful immediately.

See a play at the Globe [http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/theatre/whats-on/globe-](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/theatre/whats-on/globe-theatre)



[theatre](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/theatre/whats-on/globe-theatre) or other theatre venues such as the Young Vic, The National Theatre etc. Look out for local opportunities or go to one of the live screenings at a cinema

Try one of the wonderful London Walks

<http://www.walks.com/> - look out for the Shakespeare and Dickens' walks

Take a train ride out to Canterbury, take a tour of the Cathedral, then enjoy <https://www.canterburytales.org.uk/> to learn more about Chaucer!

Catch a literary event in London at <https://rsliterature.org/>

Join The Poetry Society <https://poetrysociety.org.uk/> to read some great poetry as well as entering your poetry in competitions

Join – or start – a Reading Group! Online is fine!

Visit <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog>

Listen on the internet to some of the amazing literary programmes available on Radio 4 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006x3hl/episodes/player>

In Our Time <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qykl>

Open Book is a personal favourite <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qp6p> along with A Good Read <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006v8jn>

And, lastly, plunder the incredible World Book Club archive to listen to amazing half hour programmes (usually with the author) of a huge range of literature <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003jhsk/episodes/downloads>



Feedback from Former Students

I wish that I had ...

- Been more organised from the start
- **Done my summer reading and read all the books when I had time!**
- Read Katherine by Anya Seton so I understood the Middle Ages
- Done homework the night I got it
- Known that the best guides are The Connell Guides or The Phillip Allan ones
- Started learning quotes from the start

The best bit was...

- Hearing other people's opinions
- It made me so much more confident
- The freedom to explore what interests you
- Those lightbulb moments when you really get a literary interpretation
- You get the chance to discuss so much
- It links well with other subjects
- It's fun!

"I really loved our lessons and the way we read through the texts and translated what was going on and I feel like if we hadn't done this I would have been completely lost, especially with Chaucer."

"I would say Coloma helped me so much for studying English at university. The texts we studied in Sixth Form were a wide enough range to get an understanding of studying literature in a scholarly way."

"My Director of Studies at Queens commented on how well prepared I'd been at Coloma for studying English at Cambridge."

