



ENGLISH LITERATURE: BRIDGING ACTIVITY

You will get the most out of this subject if you have a willingness to develop a passion for literature and then speak about it, bouncing ideas off others and learning different ways of interpreting texts. You will not like everything that you read and that is perfectly fine – as long as you remain open-minded and curious because literature is an extremely important part of history and society. However, it is also deeply personal and there will be moments in your life when a novel, a poem or a play resonates profoundly inside of you in a way that is hard to explain. This is something that has happened to all of us within the English department and this is the starting point for your...

...Summer project

Over the next couple of months, you are to read some literature and enjoy doing so! Below is a list of texts and writers that have all created an impact on at least one of the English department during their life. Each teacher has read his or her choices on many occasions for whatever personal reasons there are. This will clearly include imaginative uses of plot and language, but will also be because of the connection they had to moments in the text, the way it made them look at the world in a different way and many other reasons that, quite frankly and quite rightly, they might find difficult to share or explain.

You are to use this list as a starting point and 'dip into' some of the texts to see what grabs your fancy. Then commit to reading some texts closely and see what you discover. It is hard to say how much you need to read because texts are obviously of varying lengths, so you are expected to spend between 8 and 10 hours on this project. This should be enough time to read a 300-400 page novel if you choose to do this; if you are reading shorter texts then read more than one (please be aware that with poetry we have recommended longer poems or collections of poems rather than individual shorter poems).

As part of your project, you are also expected to write 450-550 words about the text(s) you have read. These pieces of writing will then be compiled and handed out to each student on the course so that you have a resource to inspire further wider reading and enjoyment – hopefully discovering the writing that makes you feel what we have all felt at different times. In your writing, you should include:

- What you liked about what you have read – plot, style, characterisation, language, setting etc.
- Whether or not it has made you consider the world around you – how and why?

- The impact it had on you and why.
- Whether it inspired you to do something further – read another text by the same writer or someone else, find out what others think about it, undertake some research about the writer or historical period etc.
- Anything else you wish.

The texts we are looking forward to discussing with you are:

- ❖ Mrs Ahlner recommends: the poetry of T. S. Eliot; King Lear by William Shakespeare; North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell; The Collector by John Fowles; As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner; Mrs Dalloway by Virginia Woolf; Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro; The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway.
- ❖ Mr Fox recommends: the poetry of William Butler Yeats; the poetry of William Blake; Paradise Lost by John Milton.
- ❖ Mrs Docker recommends: Far From the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy; Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen; A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens; Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult; The Other Boleyn Girl by Philippa Gregory; The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini; We Need to Talk about Kevin by Lionel Shriver; Enduring Love by Ian McEwen; Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn.
- ❖ Mr Peggs recommends: Brighton Rock by Graham Greene; The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot; A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess; Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad; Arcadia by Tom Stoppard; the poetry of Robert Frost; In Cold Blood by Truman Capote; Disgrace by J. M. Coetzee; anything at all by Evelyn Waugh.
- ❖ Mrs Tagg recommends: The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood; Four Quartets by T. S. Eliot; The Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis; The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams; Watership Down by Richard Adams.
- ❖ Mrs Trebess recommends: Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte; The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath; The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho; Brave New World by Aldous Huxley; Tess of the d’Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy; Midnight’s Children by Salman Rushdie; Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams.

However, it is possible that you will sample some of the texts listed above and come to the conclusion that you would rather look elsewhere. If so, please feel free to look for inspiration in these places:

- ❖ <http://thegreatestbooks.org/>
- ❖ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/oct/12/features.fiction>
- ❖ <https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/classic-literature>
- ❖ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/what-to-read/100-novels-everyone-should-read/>