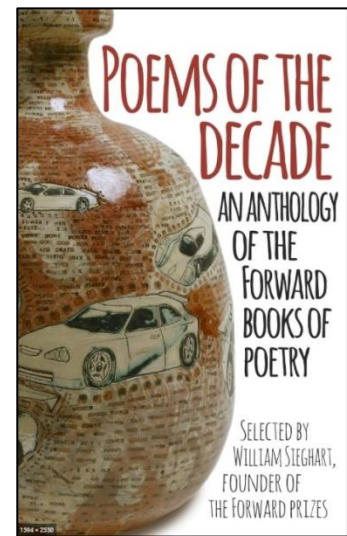
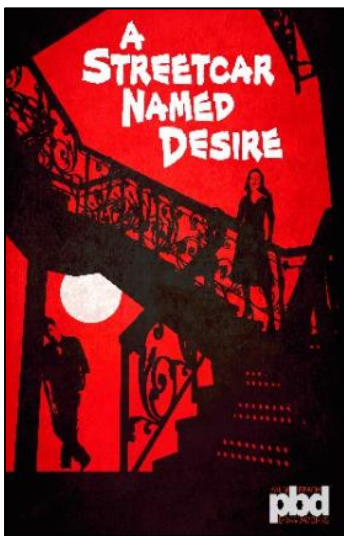
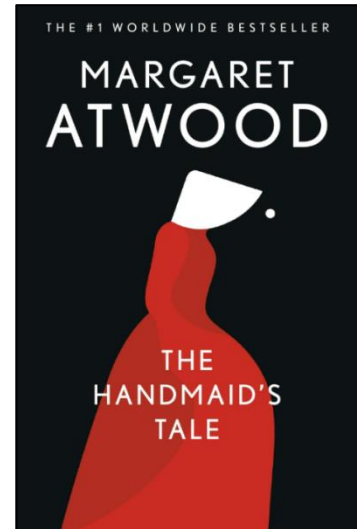
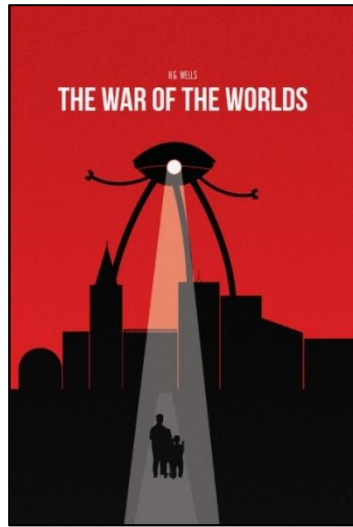
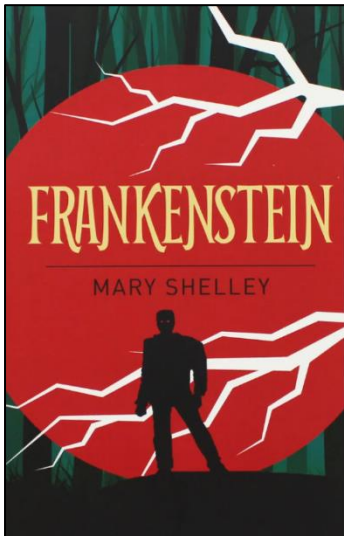


# A-Level English Literature



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## Introduction to the Course

Welcome to A-level English literature! You have made an excellent choice. English literature is known as a 'facilitating subject', meaning that it develops a broad range of skills and prepares students for study in a wide variety of degree courses and careers. Students of literature go on to study at top universities, and succeed in careers as diverse as law, politics, journalism, charitable professions, education and arts administration.

### What is Literature?

Literature is the study of texts. These include fiction, drama, poetry and prose other than fiction (memoirs or essays). Although you might read materials closely in other subjects, the language in which something is written becomes especially important in literature. Rather than simply understanding something, you will be required to read a text in order to respond to everything it offers both superficially and at deeper levels. You will also be required to approach texts from different perspectives including feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis and historicism. Indeed, you will also be required to understand literary texts as part of broader contexts of production and reception. That is, *Othello* is a different text today than it was in Shakespeare's time, when the world was seen and experienced very differently; we need to grasp what it meant in 1606 and what it means to us now.

### What do current students of literature say about it?

***“Opens up your mind to hundreds of new perspectives, ideas and theories; these come from all over the world and across time”***

***“The depth you go into is incredible, looking beyond the surface level of literature can seem intimidating at first, but it fuels your curiosity to a point where you will not be able to stop asking questions and explore further.”***

***“Facilitates a broader view of life – I never knew how many other subjects related to literature.”***

## Course Outline

A-level in English literature consists of three externally examined exams and one coursework component. You will study eight literary texts plus unseen poetry. This is a two-year course and examinations will be taken at the end of two years.

It is expected that you will purchase your own copies of the set texts to use throughout the course. There will be a great deal of reading as preparation for discussion work in lessons, so you must have constant access to the texts. Please be aware that if you are eligible for a post 16 bursary then the cost of relevant books and resources may be covered depending on family circumstances – please ask in the sixth form office for further details.

You are expected to have completed all these tasks prior to starting the course in September. We advise you to read the texts you will be studying prior to starting the course in September.

		Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Year 12	Autumn	An introduction to the assessment objectives of the course <b>Drama</b> <i>Othello</i> William Shakespeare	An introduction to literary movements <b>Poetry</b> <i>Poems of the Decade</i>
	Spring	<b>Drama</b> <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> Tennessee Williams	<b>Poetry</b> <i>The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale</i> Geoffrey Chaucer
	Summer	<b>Non-Exam Assessment</b> Base text study <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> Margaret Atwood	<b>Prose</b> <i>Frankenstein</i> Mary Shelley
Year 13	Autumn	<b>Non-Exam Assessment</b> Wider texts study	<b>Prose</b> <i>Science and Society: War of the Worlds</i> HG Wells
	Spring	Revision of course content and exam preparation	
	Summer		

See the next page for a detailed description of the course components.

## Detailed Course Overview

<b>Component 1: Drama</b>	<p><b>30 % of entire A-level</b>  <b>External exam: 2 hours 15 minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one Shakespeare play and one other drama</li> <li>• critical essays related to the Shakespeare play</li> <li>• clean copies of drama texts can be taken into the exam</li> <li>• total 60 marks available             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 35 marks for section A (Shakespeare)</li> <li>○ 25 marks for section B (other drama)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• texts: <i>Othello</i> with <i>Critical Anthology</i>; <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i></li> </ul>	<b>Component 3: Poetry</b>	<p><b>30% of entire A-level</b>  <b>External exam: 2 hours 15 minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will study:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ poetic form, meaning and language</li> <li>○ a selection of post-2000 specified poetry</li> <li>○ a specific poetry from a writer (pre 1900)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• clean copies of the texts can be taken into the exam</li> <li>• two sections to the exam:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Section A: post 2000 specified poetry                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ one comparative essay question on an unseen modern poem written post 2000</li> <li>▪ one named poem from the studied contemporary text</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Section B: specified poetry                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ one essay question on poet studied</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• total 60 marks available</li> <li>• texts: <i>Forward Anthology Poems of the Decade</i>; <i>The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale</i></li> </ul>
<b>Component 2: Prose</b>	<p><b>20% of entire A-level</b>  <b>External exam: 1 hour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two prose texts linked by a chosen theme, at least one pre-1900</li> <li>• a comparison between the two prose texts</li> <li>• clean copies of the text can be taken into the exam</li> <li>• total 40 marks available</li> <li>• theme: science and society</li> <li>• texts: <i>Frankenstein</i>; <i>War of the Worlds</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Component 4: NEA</b></p> <p><b>20% of entire A-level</b>  <b>Coursework   internally assessed   externally moderated</b></p> <p>You will choose a text to study next to Margaret Atwood's <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> which must be different from those studied in components 1, 2 and 3. They are to be linked by theme, movement, author or period and may be selected from poetry, prose, drama or literary non-fiction. Choice to be made by July 2024 and approved by your teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one extended comparative essay</li> <li>• word count 2500-3000 words</li> <li>• total 60 marks available</li> </ul>

## About the Texts

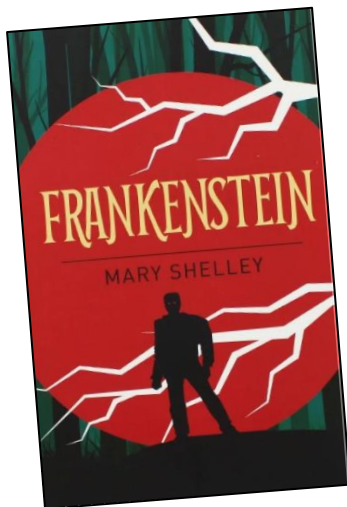


Iago is furious about being overlooked for promotion and plots to take revenge against his General, Othello, the Moor of Venice. Iago manipulates Othello into believing his wife Desdemona is unfaithful, stirring Othello's jealousy. Othello allows jealousy to consume him, murders Desdemona and then kills himself. This play explored relations between race, gender and authority.

**ISBN: 1107615593**

Fragile Blanche DuBois moved to Orleans to live with her sister Stella and husband Stanley Kowalski in their tiny apartment. With nerves frayed by alcohol and the DuBois family's estate and finances in ruin, the play explores the delicate balance between sanity and insanity and the impact relationships and environment have on these.

**ISBN: 9780141190273**



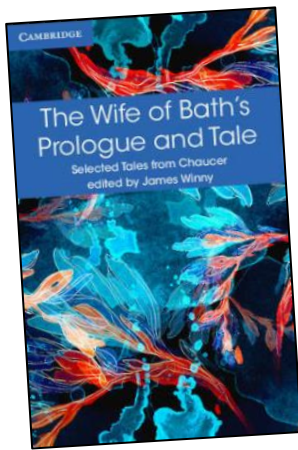
Gifted, ambitious scientist Victor Frankenstein succeeds in giving life to a being of his own creation. However, this is not the perfect specimen he imagines that it will be, but rather a hideous creature who is rejected by Victor and mankind in general. The monster seeks its revenge through murder and terror. This novel explores the extremes of science, humanity and nature.

**ISBN: 9780141439471**

In one of the first novels to detail conflict between man and extra-terrestrials, an unnamed narrator tells of the invasion of Martians on Earth. This novel was also broadcast as a radio play and caused mass panic when listeners believed the programme was reporting an actual alien invasion.

**ISBN: 9780141441030**



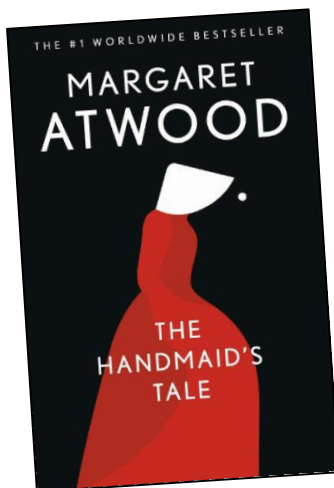
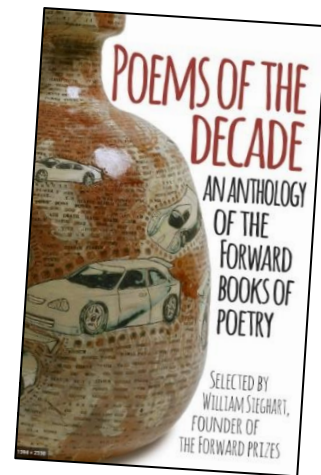


One of *The Canterbury Tales*, this tale is told by the Wife of Bath, who presents herself as an authority on marriage. Since the age of 12, she has had five husbands and defies the cultural ideal of a pure, chaste woman. She enjoys sex and uses her tale to expound her unconventional views.

**ISBN 9780521466899 or 9781316615607**

The collection of recently written poems explores a wide variety of cultures, ideas and relationships that affect society today. It includes works by famous poets such as Patience Agbabi, Seamus Heaney and Andrew Motion, to name a few. Students bring their own experiences to their readings of the texts.

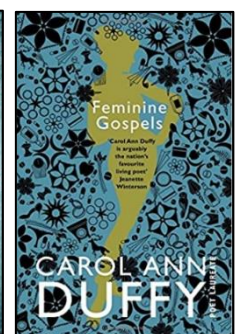
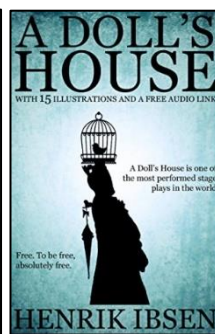
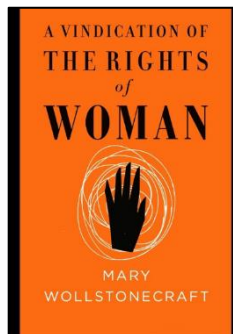
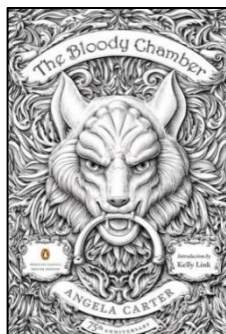
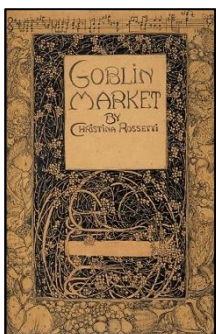
**ISBN: 0571325408**



This is the story of life in the future dystopia of Gilead, a totalitarian society in what was the United States. Gilead is ruled by a fundamentalist regime that treats women as property of the state, and is faced with environmental disasters and a plummeting birth rate. This novel explores themes of power, complacency, complicity, feminism, religion and reproduction.

**ISBN-10: 1784873187**

You will explore extracts of some of these texts to use as a comparison to *The Handmaid's Tale*. The texts have been selected because they offer of a variety of comparison and links with *The Handmaid's Tale*. It will be up to you to read in full any of the texts you think you might want to use for your comparison and to research his background, production and reception independently.



## Course Preparation: Task One

English literature has developed and grown for at least the last 1500 years. The aim of this project is to track some of the changes that literature from our country has been through and to explore in more detail areas that interest you.

	<b>450 – 1066</b>	Old English	<p>1 Choose two literary time periods to research and create a fact page for. You should find out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• important events that happened in England during this time.</li> <li>• famous writers who contributed to this movement.</li> <li>• key influences on the writing at this time.</li> <li>• the key features / ideas of writing that belonged to this movement (the writers were often responding to the world around them)</li> </ul> <p>The following websites might be useful:  <a href="http://www.bl.uk">www.bl.uk</a> <a href="http://www.britanica.com">www.britanica.com</a></p> <p>2 There is a list of famous texts from each time period on page 8 of this document: choose one text from each of the periods you have researched to read and annotate with your ideas about what makes this text a product of its time.</p> <p>3. Write a review of (see format for review on page 9) of your favourite text from each of the two movements you identified in the previous task.</p>
	<b>1066 – 1500</b>	Middle English	
	<b>1500 – 1660</b>	The Renaissance	
	<b>1558 – 1603</b>	Elizabethan Age	
	<b>1603 – 1625</b>	Jacobean Age	
	<b>1625 – 1649</b>	Caroline Age	
	<b>1649 – 1660</b>	Commonwealth Period	
	<b>1660 – 1785</b>	Neoclassical Period	
	<b>1660 – 1700</b>	Restoration Period	
	<b>1700 – 1745</b>	Augustan Age	
	<b>1745 – 1785</b>	Age of Sensibility	
	<b>1785 – 1830</b>	Romantic Period	
	<b>1832 – 1901</b>	Victorian Period	
	<b>1848 – 1869</b>	Pre-Raphaelites	
	<b>1880 – 1901</b>	Aestheticism and Decadence	
	<b>1901 – 1914</b>	Edwardian Period	
	<b>1910 – 1936</b>	Georgian Period	
	<b>1914 – 1945</b>	Modern Period	
	<b>1945 – Present</b>	Post-Modern Period	

## Famous texts from the English literary canon

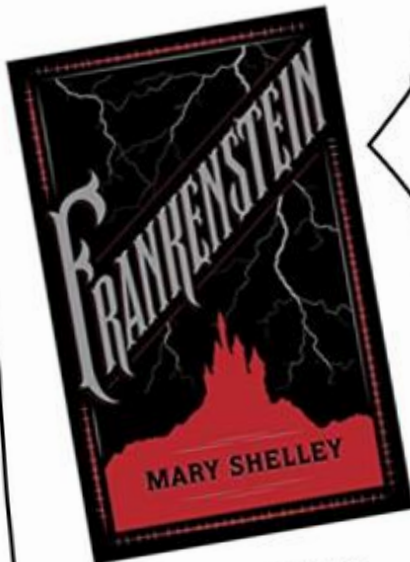
450 – 1066	<b>Old English</b>	Beowulf The Exeter Book	
	The Canterbury Tales Sir Gawain and the Green Knight	<b>Middle English</b>	1066 – 1500
1500 – 1660	<b>The Renaissance</b>	Arcadia by Sir Philip Sidney Shakespearean Sonnets	
	Book of Airs by Thomas Campion Rosalynde by Thomas Lodge	<b>Elizabethan Age</b>	1558 – 1603
1603 – 1625	<b>Jacobean Age</b>	The Dream by John Donne Winter by Samuel Johnson	
	The Spring by Thomas Carrew His Excuse for Loving by Ben Jonson	<b>Caroline Age</b>	1625 – 1649
1649 – 1660	<b>Commonwealth Period</b>	Lycidas by John Milton Introduction to A Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan	
	The Flower and the Leaf by John Dryden A Poison Tree by William Blake	<b>Neoclassical Period</b>	1660 – 1785
1660 – 1700	<b>Restoration Period</b>	Lycidas by John Milton The Flower and the Leaf by John Dryden	
	Ode on Solitude by Alexander Pope The Riddle of the World by Alexander Pope	<b>Augustan Age</b>	1700 – 1745
1745 – 1785	<b>Age of Sensibility</b>	The Vanity of Human Wishes by Samuel Johnson The Deserted Village by Oliver Goldsmith	
	To a Skylark by Percy Bysshe Shelley She Walks in Beauty by Lord Byron	<b>Romantic Period</b>	1785 – 1830
1832 – 1901	<b>Victorian Period</b>	A Birthday by Christina Rossetti The Romance of the Swan's Nest by Elizabeth Barrett Browning	
	The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde Hyperion by John Keats	<b>Pre-Raphaelites</b>	1848 – 1869
1880 – 1901	<b>Aestheticism and Decadence</b>	Before Parting by Algernon Charles Swinburne Choriambics by Algernon Charles Swinburne	
	The Darkling Thrush by Thomas Hardy The Soldier by Rupert Brooke	<b>Edwardian Period</b>	1901 – 1914
1910 – 1936	<b>The Georgian Period</b>	Suicide in the Trenches by Siegfried Sassoon Almond Blossom by D. H. Lawrence	
	The Wasteland by T.S. Elliot Lullaby by W. H. Auden	<b>Modern Period</b>	1914 – 1945
1945 – Present	<b>Post-Modern Period</b>	Blackberry Picking by Seamus Heaney In a Station of the Metro by Ezra Pound	



## Reviewing a text from the English literary canon

The layout is entirely up to you, however, you should include this information (aim for more detail than the example):

# Frankenstein by Mary Shelley



## What is this text about?

Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus is a gothic novel, which tracks the birth and growth of a creature created by the scientist Victor Frankenstein. Frankenstein's rejection of the creature has disastrous consequences for society, culminating in the creature hunting Frankenstein down to the Arctic for a final showdown.

## How does this text fit into the Romantic Period?

Many of the trademarks of Romanticism are evident in the novel. Walton and Frankenstein are ambitious geniuses who are determined to live up to their destinies; while neither is an artist, both engage in works of ground-breaking creativity by pushing the limits of geography and science. The impact and beauty of the natural world, always significant to Romantic writers, play an important role in creating an appropriate setting for the novel's dramatic events. The monster's experience of coming into the world without any knowledge of social norms and behavioural expectations reflects Romanticism's curiosity about how innate human nature is gradually shaped by society and culture.

## Why did you enjoy about the text?

Shelley characterises the creature as an intelligent, articulate character, who the audience sympathises with throughout his rejection and suffering when he comes into contact with members of society. The tragedy of the novel (Frankenstein's inability to take responsibility and care for the creature, who is ultimately his child) always stays with me long after I have finished the story.



## Course Preparation: Task Two

It is useful to provide your teacher with an example of your analysis at the beginning of the course. This gives them an idea of your current standard and ability, and helps to highlight the skills you need to develop. Complete the analysis tasks over the next couple of pages.

1. Read the following poem. You have not been provided with the title. I am interested to see **your** interpretation of the poem. Some of these questions will help you to annotate the poem:

- What is the subject of the poem? What is it about?
- What language and structure choices can you identify? Label these.
- Which words stand out? What are their connotations?
- What do you notice about the rhyme scheme? How does this link to the meaning of the poem?

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

2. The poem has been altered slightly. Go through the steps as before, exploring new ideas and meanings created by the changes:

She clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, she stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath her crawls;  
She watches from her mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt she falls.

3. You will now write an analytical response. Use this as an opportunity to show your teacher your analytical skills. Aim to cover all of the notes you have made.

*What is your interpretation of the poem, and how did that interpretation change when the male pronouns were switched to female?*

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## Course Preparation: Task Three

The first full texts you will encounter in the course are *Poems of the Decade* and *Othello*. It is important that you know the context of these texts for your studies, as these would have influenced the writer's ideas and intentions in producing the text.

For each text, you will create a fact page (or pages), the layout of which is entirely up to you covering these general areas:

- important world events during the time period
- important events in the UK during the time period
- attitudes towards gender, race and age

and the specific areas in the boxes below:

<b>Poems of the Decade   2000 to present day</b>	<b>Othello   1564 to 1616</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• attitudes, beliefs and issues around identity and self-image</li><li>• attitudes towards / concerns around the environment / natural world</li><li>• parenting (the role of mother and father)</li><li>• attitudes towards the past (specific 'lived' experiences and shared cultural past)</li><li>• love and relationships</li><li>• attitudes towards illness (physical and mental) / disability</li><li>• attitudes towards growing old and death</li><li>• attitudes towards violence, conflict and abuse</li><li>• attitudes towards technology and travel</li><li>• attitudes toward multiculturalism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• femininity and masculinity / gender roles</li><li>• race and multiculturalism</li><li>• attitudes around marriage and adultery</li><li>• attitudes toward honour</li><li>• conventions of 'Tragedy'</li><li>• the wars between Venice and Turkey in the 16<sup>th</sup> century</li><li>• Cinthio's Othello</li><li>• the racial term 'Moor' and its application in the 16<sup>th</sup> century</li></ul>

## Suggested Wider Reading List

The titles below have been organised by the text they link to in the course. These are recommendations which will help to broaden your knowledge and understanding of the texts and the contexts in which they were written.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Othello</b></p>	<p>Further Shakespeare plays:  <i>Titus Andronicus</i>  <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>  <i>Hamlet</i></p> <p>Critical reading / historical research:  <i>The Masks of Othello</i> – Marvin Rosenberg  <i>Othello: a Contextual History</i> – Virginia Mason Vaughan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Frankenstein</b></p>	<p><i>Paradise Lost</i> – John Milton  <i>The Sorrows of Young Werther</i> – J. W. von Goethe  <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> – Mary Wollstonecraft  <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> – Robert Louis Stevenson  <i>A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein</i> – Tim Morton</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Streetcar Named Desire</b></p>	<p><i>The Great Gatsby</i> – F. Scott Fitzgerald  <i>The Colour Purple</i> – Alice Walker  <i>The Bell Jar</i> – Sylvia Plath</p> <p>Critical reading / historical research:  <i>The Cambridge Companion to Tennessee Williams</i> – Matthew C. Roudane  <i>The Kindness of Strangers</i> – Donald Spoto</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The War of the Worlds</b></p>	<p><i>The Origin of the Species</i> – Charles Darwin  <i>The Battle of Dorking</i> – George Tompkins Chesney  <i>The War of the Worlds</i> – radio adaptation  <i>An Introduction to the War of the Worlds</i> – Iain Sinclair</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale</b></p>	<p>Further Chaucer Texts:  <i>The Miller’s Tale</i>  <i>The Nun’s Priest’s Tale</i></p> <p>Critical reading / historical research:  <i>Chaucer and the Social Contest</i> – Peggy Knapp  <i>A Companion to Chaucer</i> – Peter Brown</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Handmaid’s Tale and NEA Comparison</b></p>	<p><i>Jane Eyre</i> – Charlotte Bronte  <i>Wuthering Heights</i> – Emily Bronte  <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> – Jean Rhys  <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> – Mary Wollstonecraft  <i>Goblin Market</i> – Christina Rossetti  <i>The Bloody Chamber</i> – Angela Carter  <i>The Madwoman in the Attic</i> – Gilbert and Gubar</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Poems of the Decade</b></p>	<p><i>The Art of Poetry: Forward’s Poems of the Decade (in 3 volumes)</i> – Neil Bowen  <i>The Feminine Gospels</i> – Carol Ann Duffy  <i>Anthology of Named Poems Study Guide</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Handmaid’s Tale and NEA Comparison</b></p>	<p><i>Oranges are not the Only Fruit</i> – Jeanette Winterson  <i>Atonement</i> – Ian McEwan  <i>Never Let me Go</i> – Kazuo Ishiguro  <i>Feminine Gospels</i> – Carol Ann Duffy  <i>The World’s Wife</i> – Carol Ann Duffy  <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> – Nathaniel Hawthorne  <i>1984</i> – George Orwell  <i>Brave New World</i> – Aldous Huxley  <i>A Doll’s House</i> – Henrik Ibsen</p>