

A level English Literature Year 11-12 Summer Independent Learning

Welcome to A Level English Literature. Please complete the following tasks ready for your first day at New College:

Part One: Compulsory Content

ONE You need to purchase the following texts for the first term:

A Streetcar named Desire (ISBN: 978-0-141-19027-3)

The Handmaid's Tale (ISBN: 978-0-099-74091-9)

Frankenstein (ISBN: 13 9781853260230 or 978-1-85326-023-0)

Note: occasionally editions of texts are updated and ISBN numbers change, so it may be that over time there is variation in the ISBN numbers above. Good second-hand copies of these can often be found online or in used bookshops. Additionally, .pdf copies of some of these texts/the openings may be found online if you are keen to get started before you are able to get hold of a physical copy.

TWO Read *A Streetcar Named Desire*, by Tennessee Williams. You might also watch a production on YouTube if you would like to see it in performance, but this should be done in addition to, not instead of, the reading task. You should:

- summarise each scene in brief, bullet-point form
- select three pieces of textual evidence from each scene and describe in detail the effect created by

Williams with the use of each piece of evidence. Your evidence can be dialogue or stage directions such as use of sound, staging, props, costume or proxemics. You might want to consider tone, lexis, connotations, symbolism and imagery, depending on the quotation selected.

For your 'exploration of effects', you might want to consider:

- the impression your chosen quotation gives of emerging or developing themes, and how it does this
- the impression your chosen quotation gives of character, and how this may relate to developing or emerging themes, and how it does this
- the impression your chosen quotation gives of setting, and how this may relate to developing or emerging themes, and how it does this
- the impression your chosen quotation gives of relationships, and how this may relate to developing or emerging themes, and how it does this

Of course, many quotations may show a combination of these.

The best way of recording this would be to create and complete your own version of the '*A Streetcar Named Desire* initial reading notes' table (see below). We strongly suggest that you create the notes tables in Word or similar format, and type your responses, as this will then become a useful document as you continue studying the text in the first term.

***A Streetcar Named Desire* Initial Reading Notes**

Scene	Bullet point summary	3 pieces of textual evidence and exploration of effects
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		

THREE Read Chapters 1-5 of *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood. As you read, you should:

- summarise each chapter in brief, bullet-point form
- select three pieces of textual evidence from each chapter and describe in detail the effect of Atwood's use of language for each quotation. You might want to consider tone, lexis, connotations, symbolism, and imagery, depending on the quotation selected.

For your 'explanation of effects' you might want to consider the same four bullet points given for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (see page 1, above). Again, many quotations may show a combination of those four bullet points.

The best way of recording this would be to create and complete your own version of the '*The Handmaid's Tale* initial reading notes' table (see below). We strongly suggest that you create the notes tables in Word doc or similar format, and type your responses, as this will then become a useful document as you continue studying the text in the first term.

***The Handmaid's Tale* Initial Reading Notes**

Section	Bullet point summary	3 pieces of textual evidence and exploration of effects
Chapter 1		
Chapter 2		
Chapter 3		
Chapter 4		
Chapter 5		

FOUR Read the 'Robert Walton's Letters' section, and chapters 1-3, of *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley. As you read, you should:

- summarise each section/chapter in brief, bullet-point form
- select three pieces of textual evidence from each chapter and describe in detail the effect of Atwood's use of language for each quotation. You might want to consider tone, lexis, connotations, symbolism, and imagery, depending on the quotation selected.

For your 'explanation of effects' you might want to consider the same four bullet points given for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (see page 1, above). Again, many quotations may show a combination of those four bullet points.

The best way of recording this would be to create and complete your own version of the '*Frankenstein* initial reading notes' table (see below). We strongly suggest that you create the notes tables in Word doc or similar format, and type your responses, as this will then become a useful document as you continue studying the text in the first term.

***Frankenstein* Initial Reading Notes Table**

Section	Bullet point summary	3 pieces of textual evidence and exploration of effects
Robert Walton's Letters		
Chapter 1		
Chapter 2		
Chapter 3		

We strongly recommend that you read the rest of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Frankenstein*. This will be a real help to you during the first term.

Further Reading and Exploration

The most valuable thing you can do as a student of literature is to read widely. Literature students at New College tend always to have 'a book on the go' (or three or four...). Ideally there should be a nice balance between enjoying your old favourites, following your interests, and challenging yourself by reading more widely. If most of your reading is novels, it would be good to explore poetry and drama. There is a whole world of literature out there, and you should jump right in! Your teacher will be happy to give you further advice once you start at New College, but the key thing is to keep reading.

Some audio streaming services, such as Spotify or Audible, offer free audio versions of texts such as *Frankenstein* which may be useful to you in addition to reading the texts themselves. In addition to this, the following resources may be of use to you as you begin to explore *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Frankenstein*. Used copies of these can be picked up relatively cheaply online. Slightly different editions will also be perfectly fine and usable, as long as they are specified for A Level (or occasionally, with older editions, 'AS & A2'), rather than GCSE:

A Streetcar Named Desire study guide: ISBN 9781447982265

The Handmaid's Tale study guide: ISBN 978-1292138183

Frankenstein study guide: ISBN 9781447913214

In your first few weeks of study with us, you will look at the following poems:

- 'Eat Me' - Patience Agbabi
- 'The Gun' - Vicki Feaver
- 'The Deliverer' - Tishani Doshi
- 'Chainsaw Versus the Pampas Grass' - Simon Armitage
- 'Giuseppe' - Roderick Ford

Search for these poems online and write down your initial thoughts. Keep these to hand so you can refer to them in class.

At New College we encourage students to explore online beyond the classroom and construct their own journey around the wealth of additional resources which can be found online. Once you start at New College you will have access to some fantastic online resources to which we have subscribed. There is plenty out there in the public domain though, so do explore the texts above and see what you can find.

In addition, we would encourage you to look at film/theatre versions or clips of film/theatre versions of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, a number of which can be found on YouTube. Consider how these different versions interpret the play, and the extent to which this aligns with the impressions you gain from your reading of the text on the page.