

A Level English Language and Literature

Summer work 2023

Welcome to A level English Language and Literature!

The first thing to consider between the end of Year 11 and the start of A Levels is which books you plan to read over the summer! It could be that you pick to re-read an old favourite or you might prefer to peruse the shelves of the latest releases. The best preparation for studying English is reading widely and often.

The second thing to consider is the bridging work below. If you have any questions, please email me, Ms Hobbs ahobbs@presdales.herts.sch.uk

***Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens**

Please read *Great Expectations* (or as much as possible) over the summer - see below for information about editions.

Feel free to use a film version, plot summary or study guide to help you. Do note that the recent BBC TV series made major changes to the book (it's perhaps more disturbing too) and is therefore not very useful as a guide to characters and plot! The 2011 TV series or the 2012 film are more accurate, but of course miss quite a lot out. We are well aware that you may not have read a novel of this length before, so do use resources to support you if necessary. The York Notes Advanced is a good study guide for A level and this page has some helpful notes:

<https://www.charlesdickenspage.com/charles-dickens-great-expectations.html>



When you begin the course I shall set a schedule for a re-reading of the novel (3-5 chapters a week) so that we can study it in detail.

Answer these questions in preparation for studying the text:

1. *Great Expectations* is a 19th Century novel. What are your impressions of life in England at that time for different groups of people? What seems different from today's society?
2. What are your impressions of Pip and the ways in which he develops as a character through the novel? Do you think Dickens wants us to like him or not?
3. Pip is the narrator and protagonist of the novel. Choose another character - how do you think the novel might be different if this character narrated the story?

Please email your answers to Ms Hobbs ahobbs@presdales.herts.sch.uk

Optional extras:

- Read the other set novel *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald (see below)
- Research Charles Dickens' life and career.
- Read or watch film versions of other novels by Dickens.
- Read a variety of non-fiction texts - e.g. newspaper articles and features, travel writing, biographies, memoirs, blogs or reviews. Some newspaper websites like The Guardian and The Independent are free to access and have sections for opinion/comment pieces, reviews and travel etc.
- Have a listen to this recent series on Radio 4 all about how to write fiction <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00187r0/episodes/player> - really useful for the coursework in Year 13!

Extra special optional extras!

- If you happen to be in London, consider visiting the Dickens House Museum near Kings Cross station <https://dickensmuseum.com/>
- If you have the opportunity, watch a live theatre performance or a live stream/recording of one - we'll be studying a play in Year 13 so this would be useful preparation.

Editions of the Year 12 set texts

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

The Great Gatsby by F Scott Fitzgerald

You will need to buy your own copies to use and annotate in lessons. The exam board approved editions that you will use in the exam itself (it's an open book exam and the school provides clean, unannotated copies for this) are the best ones to buy so that you are familiar with the layout. The covers look like the pictures on the right and links to the editions on Amazon are below. However, any edition will have the same text in it.

Great Expectations: ISBN 978-0099511571 Published by Vintage.

Amazon link: [Vintage edition - Great Expectations](#)

If that one is not available, the next best version is this:

[Wordsworth edition - Great Expectations](#)

The Great Gatsby: 978-0141182636 published by Penguin.

Amazon link: [Penguin edition - The Great Gatsby](#)

