

GCSE book challenge

Next year, you will be reading a range of exciting and challenging texts for your GCSE English literature exam. To prepare for this, the English department would like you to start reading some GCSE texts! Whilst these are not ones that you will study next year, they are on the AQA specification. Therefore, they will prepare you for the demands of challenging context, structure and language. Copies of these are available in the library. How many can you read between now and September?

19th century literature:	
Frankenstein – Mary Shelley	
Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen	
Jane Eyre – Charlotte Bronte	
Great Expectations – Charles Dickens	
Modern prose:	
Lord of the Flies – William Golding	
Never Let me Go – Kazuo Ishiguro	
Pigeon English – Stephen Kelman	
Anita and Me – Meera Syal	
Modern drama:	
A Taste of Honey – Shelagh Delaney	
DNA – Dennis Kelly	
The History Boys – Alan Bennett	
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night – Time (play version)	
Shakespeare:	
Romeo and Juliet	
Julius Caesar	
Much Ado About Nothing	
The Tempest	
The Merchant of Venice	

When reading any of the titles above, consider the following GCSE style questions:

Language:

How does the writer use language for effect?

What language techniques do they use?

How does language create atmosphere?

Structure:

What does the writer get their reader to focus on in the first sentence/paragraph? How might this be important?

Are there any patterns of language and imagery you notice? i.e. repeated symbols, motifs etc.

Is there a switch between internal monologue (thoughts of characters) and external action/dialogue? What effect does this create?

Who is the narrator? Is it the same narrator throughout? What is the effect of the story being told from this character's perspective? Or if it's written in the third person, what's the effect of this?

Is the story written in chronological order? Are there flashbacks? What's the effect of this?

Does the writer withhold any information from the reader? Is this revealed at any point? What's the effect of this?

Writer's viewpoint:

What are the main themes/ideas/issues raised and explored in the text and what does the writer seem to suggest about these?

What is your own personal response to issues/themes/characters etc?