

English Literature (Edexcel) Transition Tasks

Compulsory tasks

Task 1

Read '1984' by George Orwell. This is essential pre-reading for our first Prose text on the course, 'The Handmaid's Tale'. As you read, reflect on the messages Orwell has about society and government control.

Task 2

Select any three books from the list below to read. You will be expected to create a 5-10-minute presentation on one of the novels providing a personal response, commentary on interesting character or theme and the significance of context.

Ian McEwan ***Atonement***
Bernardine Evaristo ***Girl, Woman, Other***
Gail Honeyman ***Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine***
Celeste Ng ***Little Fires Everywhere***
Art Spiegelman ***Maus***
George Orwell ***1984***
Ray Bradbury ***Fahrenheit 451***
Sylvia Plath ***The Bell Jar***
Vera Brittain ***Testament of Youth***
Sebastian Faulks ***Birdsong***
Khaled Hosseini ***A Thousand Splendid Suns***
Cormac McCarthy ***The Road***
Emily Bronte ***Wuthering Heights***
Oscar Wilde ***The Picture of Dorian Grey***
Alice Walker ***The Colour Purple***
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie ***Purple Hibiscus***
Chinua Achebe ***Things Fall Apart***
Thomas Hardy ***Tess of the D'Urbervilles***
Louis de Bernières ***Captain Corelli's Mandolin***
Jane Austen ***Persuasion***
Evelyn Waugh ***Brideshead Revisited***
Arundhati Roy ***God of Small Things***
Angela Carter ***The Bloody Chamber***
L.P. Hartley ***The Go-Between***
Aldous Huxley ***Brave New World***
Kazuo Ishiguro ***Never Let Me Go***
Andrea Levy ***Small Island***
Toni Morrison ***Beloved***
Sarah Waters ***The Little Stranger***
Jeanette Winterson ***Oranges are not the only Fruit***

Madeline Miller *Circe*

Colson Whitehead *The Underground Railroad*

Max Porter *Grief is the thing with feathers*

Margaret Atwood *The Blind Assassin*

Delia Owens *Where the Crawdads Sing*

Task 3

Read the poem 'I Want the Confidence' by Raymond Antrobus of below:

<https://www.brinkerhoffpoetry.org/poems/i-want-the-confidence-of>

Write a short essay (roughly 500-750 words) responding to the following question: *Explore how Antrobus presents identity and emotions in 'I Want the Confidence of'.*

Success Criteria:

- *Be a relevant response to the question*
- *Explore how Antrobus creates meanings through her choice of language, form and structure*
- *Make links between the poem and its context*

Extension – Read a work of non-fiction from the list below. Once finished, write a 300-word pitch explaining why your book should be taught on the English syllabus at school.

Tara Westover *Educated*

- *A memoir that describes the struggle of a young girl who escapes from violence and an emotional prison in search of education. It is a conflicting story of fierce family loyalty as well as that of the intense sorrow that arises from the division of one's closest ties.*

J. D. Vance *Hillbilly Elegy*

- *When J.D. Vance was eleven, his drug-addicted mother chased him across farmland after threatening to murder him by crashing the car, with Vance taking refuge in a stranger's house until the police arrived. When he turned eighteen, Vance managed another dramatic escape, this time from his dysfunctional 'hillbilly' background, joining the marines to serve in Iraq.*

Reni Eddo-Lodge *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*

- *A charged and necessary wake-up call to pervasive, institutionalised racism, Eddo-Lodge's searing polemic reconstitutes the frame of the argument around race, removing it from the hands of those with little experience of its resonances. From ambient and lazy cultural stereotyping to open hostility, Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race is a clarion call of understanding.*

Paul Kalinithi *When Breath Becomes Air*

- *This is a non-fiction autobiographical book written by American Neurosurgeon Dr. Paul Kalanithi. It is a memoir about his life and illness, battling stage IV metastatic lung cancer. It begins with the onset of his symptoms; the book then takes readers back in time to trace his development from a bookish teenager and inquisitive student to a talented and well-trained resident with a bright future in neurosurgery ahead of him.*

Maya Angelou ***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings***

- *The first of seven autobiographical works by American writer Maya Angelou, published in 1969. The book chronicles her life from age 3 through age 16, recounting an unsettled and sometimes traumatic childhood that included rape and racism. It became one of the most widely read and taught books written by an African American woman.*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie ***We Should All Be Feminists***

- *We Should All Be Feminists is a short book by Adichie in which she argues that being a feminist means understanding and acknowledging that sexism exists. Adichie recalls a male friend in her home country of Nigeria calling her a "feminist," clearly meaning it as an insult.*

Additional Tasks

Listen

- Choose an episode of *The Good Read* (perhaps based on the celebrity guest) and listen to the novels that they discuss. From this, you could choose one of the three novels to read yourself.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006v8jn/episodes/player?page=1>

Visit

- The Globe Theatre – see a play or take a tour of the amazing theatre
During closures due to Covid-19, catch a performance of a play shared online. More information here <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/watch/>
- The National Theatre – see a play
During closures due to Covid-19, watch one of their free performances streamed weekly on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUDq1XzCY0NIOYVJvEMQiqw>
- British Library – visit the Treasures of the British Library, a free exhibition of the library's most prized objects
During closures due to Covid-19, explore the British Library website: <https://www.bl.uk/>

Do

- Start a book club with your friends. Read for pleasure and talk about what you've read.
- Look at the list of recommended books from Emma Watson's reading group, Our Shared Shelf:
<https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/179584-our-shared-shelf>
- Read a range of books from the Man Booker shortlist: <https://thebookerprizes.com/fiction/2020>
- Watch the TV series *Novels that Shaped Our World* for an overview of key literary movements:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m000b8mh/novels-that-shaped-our-world>