

# **AS AND A-LEVEL**

# **ENGLISH LITERATURE A**

**AS (7711)**

**A-level (7712)**

## **Specification**

For teaching from September 2025 onwards

For AS exams from 2026 (no change)

For A-level exams from 2027 onwards (new texts added)

Version 1.7.1 20 October 2025





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## Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at [aqa.org.uk/7712](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7712)
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Why choose AQA for AS and A-level English Literature A

### Specifications designed for you and your students

We have worked closely with teachers and universities to develop relevant, engaging and up-to-date specifications that approach the study of literature through the lens of historicism, encouraging the independent study of a range of texts within a shared context, giving logic and meaning to the way that texts are grouped for study.

This unifying approach facilitates the inclusion of a range of wider reading, thus extending students' experience and appreciation of literature.

Offering clear progression from GCSE, these courses allow students to build on the skills and knowledge already gained and prepare for their next steps.

The variety of assessment styles used, such as passage-based questions, unseen material, single-text questions, multiple-text questions, open- and closed-book approaches allows students to develop a wide range of skills, such as the ability to read critically, analyse, evaluate and undertake independent research which are valuable for both further study and future employment.

### Choice and flexibility

With a variety of genres and authors, you can choose the texts that will be most appealing and of most interest to your students.

### Teach AS and A-level together

Both AS and A-level courses provide strong stand-alone qualifications that are fully co-teachable so that you can choose the approach that best suits your, and your students', needs.

### Independent learning

The A-level non-exam assessment component provides opportunities for students to pursue their own areas of interest and develop personal and independent learning skills.

### We support you every step of the way

Our free poetry anthologies, also available digitally, will provide you with easy access to a range of poetry texts and a valuable interactive resource to support teaching.

To further support teaching and learning, we provide a comprehensive range of resources including a resource bank and access to the largest network of English teachers facilitated through our national subject advocate network.

Learn more about our English qualifications at [aqa.org.uk/english](https://www.aqa.org.uk/english)

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## 1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We know that support and resources are vital for your teaching and that you have limited time to find or develop good quality materials. So we've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

### Teaching resources

We have a comprehensive range of English Literature A resources. Visit [aqa.org.uk/7712](http://aqa.org.uk/7712) to see them all. They include:

- a digital resource bank which will include a wide range of free, interactive resources to support the teaching of English language, English literature and English language and literature
- poetry anthologies to give you free and easy access to a range of poetry so that you don't need to source all the poems set for study
- marked and annotated student responses to the questions on our specimen papers, with senior examiner commentaries
- subject advocates who will support you in the transition to the new specification and facilitate local and regional network and update meetings
- student textbooks and digital resources that have been checked and endorsed by AQA
- training courses to help you deliver AQA qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

### Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7712](http://aqa.org.uk/7712) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- sample papers and mark schemes for new courses
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

### Analyse your students' results with Data Insights

We've replaced Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) with a new platform – Data Insights. It does the same things as ERA – and more.

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. Data Insights, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Find out more at [aqa.org.uk/data-insights](http://aqa.org.uk/data-insights)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](http://aqa.org.uk/results)

### Keep your skills up to date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at [aqa.org.uk/professional-development](https://www.aqa.org.uk/professional-development)

## Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7712](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7712)

You can talk directly to the English Literature A subject team:

E: [english-gce@aqa.org.uk](mailto:english-gce@aqa.org.uk)

T: 0161 9537504

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# 2 Specification at a glance

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These qualifications are linear. Linear means that students will sit all the AS exams at the end of their AS course and all the A-level exams at the end of their A-level course.

## 2.1 AS

### Subject content

#### Core content:

3.1 [Love through the ages](#) (page 12)

### Assessments

| Paper 1: Love through the ages: Shakespeare and poetry  |
|---|
| Study of two texts: one Shakespeare play and one AQA anthology of love poetry through the ages (pre-1900 or post-1900)  |
| <b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes</li><li>closed book</li><li>50 marks</li><li>50% of AS level</li></ul>              |
| <b>Questions</b> <p>Section A: Shakespeare. One passage-based question with linked essay (25 marks)</p> <p>Section B: Poetry. One question on printed poem (25 marks)</p> |



| Paper 2: Love through the ages: prose  |
|--|
| Study of two prose texts. Examination will include an unseen prose extract   |
| <p><b>Assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes</li> <li>open book</li> <li>50 marks</li> <li>50% of AS level</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Questions</b></p> <p>Section A: Unseen prose. One compulsory question on unseen prose extract (25 marks)</p> <p>Section B: Comparing prose texts. One comparative question on two prose texts (25 marks)</p> |

## 2.2 A-level

### Subject content

#### Core content:

- 4.1 [Love through the ages](#) (page 16)
- 4.2 [Texts in shared contexts](#) (page 18)
- 4.3 [Independent critical study: Texts across time](#) (page 22)

#### Options:

- [Option A: WW1 and its aftermath](#) (page 18)
- [Option B: Modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day](#) (page 20)

### Assessments

| Paper 1: Love through the ages  |
|---|
| Study of three texts: one poetry and one prose text, of which one must be written pre-1900, and one Shakespeare play. Examination will include two unseen poems   |
| <p><b>Assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written exam: 3 hours</li> <li>open book in Section C only</li> <li>75 marks</li> <li>40% of A-level</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Questions</b></p> <p>Section A: Shakespeare: one passage-based question with linked essay (25 marks)</p> <p>Section B: Unseen poetry: compulsory essay question on two unseen poems (25 marks)</p> <p>Section C: Comparing texts: one essay question linking two texts (25 marks)</p> |



### Paper 2: Texts in shared contexts

Choice of two options:

Option 2A: WW1 and its aftermath

Option 2B: Modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day

Study of three texts: one prose, one poetry, and one drama, of which one must be written post-2000

Examination will include an unseen prose extract

#### Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
- open book
- 75 marks
- 40% of A-level

#### Questions

Section A: Set texts. One essay question on set text (25 marks)

Section B: Contextual linking

- one compulsory question on an unseen extract (25 marks)
- one essay question linking two texts (25 marks)



### Non-exam assessment: Independent critical study: texts across time

Comparative critical study of two texts, at least one of which must have been written pre-1900

One extended essay (2500 words) and a bibliography

#### Assessed

- 50 marks
- 20% of A-level
- assessed by teachers
- moderated by AQA

## 3 Subject content – AS

English Literature A's historicist approach to the study of literature rests upon reading texts within a shared context. Working from the belief that no text exists in isolation but is the product of the time in which it was produced, English Literature A encourages students to explore the relationships that exist between texts and the contexts within which they are written, received and understood. Studying texts within a shared context enables students to investigate and connect them, drawing out patterns of similarity and difference using a variety of reading strategies and perspectives. English Literature A privileges the process of making autonomous meaning, encouraging students to debate and challenge the interpretations of other readers as they develop their own informed personal responses.

The historicist method of studying texts diachronically (across a very broad time period) is at the centre of the specification. In *Love through the ages*, the theme of love, one of the most central themes in literature, is explored across time. Given the spirit of the specification, rather than imposing a uniform list of prescribed set texts, various options are offered in terms of both time period and genre.

Working within historicist principles means students are required to read widely across a range of texts. Working with texts over time involves looking at ways in which authors shape meanings within their texts. It also involves thinking about a wide range of relevant contexts, some of them to do with the production of the text at the time of its writing, some (where possible) to do with how the text has been received over time, and most of all in this specification contexts to do with how the text can be interpreted by readers now. And finally, because texts and their meanings are not fixed, interpretation is not fixed, and multiple interpretations are possible.

The specification reflects the belief that the assessment objectives (AOs) work best together, producing a rounded and holistic view of English literature. Thus all five AOs are addressed in each question. See [Assessment objectives](#) (page 31)

When used in AS and A-level English Literature questions, the term 'significance' has a very specific use and gives access to AOs 2, 3, 4 and 5. Its use here derives from semiotics and involves understanding the idea of 'signification'. In the way literary study is configured in this specification, significance involves weighing up all the potential contributions to how a text can be analysed: through the way the text is constructed and written; through text specific contexts that can be relevantly applied; through connecting the text(s) to other texts; and then finding potential meanings and interpretations.

Whilst the course invites a variety of written response types, these will all encourage critical debate. In each task, students will be required to argue and to show personal responses and critical preferences, supported by the terminology relevant to the topics and contexts with which they are engaging. In doing so, they will be able to show 'creativity'. English Literature A not only equips students with the knowledge and skills needed for exams, but also opens up a rich, challenging and coherent approach to English literature that provides an excellent basis for further study in the subject.

This specification promotes as wide a choice of texts for you and your students as possible within a clear and helpful framework. The requirement in the subject criteria for students to study a minimum of **four** texts from particular genres and periods has been organised as follows:

| Love through the ages |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| One drama text        | A Shakespeare play from set list (pre-1900) |

| Love through the ages |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| One poetry text       | From set list |
| Two prose texts       | From set list |

This specification has been designed to be co-teachable with the AQA English Literature A A-level specification.

## 3.1 Love through the ages

The aim of this topic area is to encourage students to explore aspects of a central literary theme as seen over time, using unseen material and set texts. Students should be prepared for Love through the ages by reading widely in the topic area, reading texts from a range of authors and times.

- The four Shakespeare plays on offer allow students to study Shakespeare's representations of love in a range of different dramatic genres: tragedy, comedy, problem play or late play.
- The AQA anthologies of love poetry through the ages allow students to encounter a range of different types of poem as they study representations of love over time.
- The range of comparative prose texts on offer allows students to study representations of love by a variety of authors across time.
- Students will study **four** texts: **one** Shakespeare play, **one** poetry anthology and **two** prose texts. They will also respond to an unseen prose extract in the exam.

Although not an exhaustive list of aspects of Love through the ages, areas that can usefully be explored include: romantic love of many kinds; love and sex; love and loss; social conventions and taboos; love through the ages according to history and time; love through the ages according to individual lives (young love, maturing love); jealousy and guilt; truth and deception; proximity and distance; marriage; approval and disapproval.

### 3.1.1 Set texts

#### Shakespeare and poetry

Students study **one** of the following Shakespeare plays:

- *Othello*
- *The Taming of the Shrew*
- *Measure for Measure*
- *The Winter's Tale*

Students study **one** of the following anthologies:

- *AQA anthology of love poetry through the ages pre-1900*
- *AQA anthology of love poetry through the ages post-1900*

The paper for this component is closed book. Students are **not** permitted to take a copy of their set text(s) into the exam.

#### Prose

Students study **two** texts from the following list:

| Author      | Text              |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Jane Austen | <i>Persuasion</i> |

| Author              | Text                             |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Charlotte Brontë    | <i>Jane Eyre</i>                 |
| Emily Brontë        | <i>Wuthering Heights</i>         |
| Kate Chopin         | <i>The Awakening</i>             |
| Jonathan Coe        | <i>The Rotters' Club</i>         |
| George Eliot        | <i>The Mill on the Floss</i>     |
| Thomas Hardy        | <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> |
| F. Scott Fitzgerald | <i>The Great Gatsby</i>          |
| E.M. Forster        | <i>A Room with a View</i>        |
| L.P. Hartley        | <i>The Go-Between</i>            |
| Daphne Du Maurier   | <i>Rebecca</i>                   |
| Ian McEwan          | <i>Atonement</i>                 |

The paper for this component is open book. Students may take a copy of their set texts into the exam. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain any additional notes or materials.

We do not expect to change texts within the first five years of the specification. However, texts will be reviewed each year starting in September 2017 and we will give at least nine months' notice of any changes prior to first teaching of a two year course. The criteria for changing texts will be where a text becomes unavailable or where we can no longer use it in a question paper. Notice of any change will be communicated via our exam bulletins and [aqa.org.uk/english](http://aqa.org.uk/english)



# 4 Subject content – A-level

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English Literature A's historicist approach to the study of literature rests upon reading texts within a shared context. Working from the belief that no text exists in isolation but is the product of the time in which it was produced, English Literature A encourages students to explore the relationships that exist between texts and the contexts within which they are written, received and understood. Studying texts within a shared context enables students to investigate and connect them, drawing out patterns of similarity and difference using a variety of reading strategies and perspectives. English Literature A privileges the process of making autonomous meaning, encouraging students to debate and challenge the interpretations of other readers as they develop their own informed personal responses.

Given the spirit of the specification, rather than imposing a uniform list of prescribed set texts, various options are offered in terms of both time period and genre. Across the course, students will study texts both diachronically (produced across a very broad time period) and synchronically (produced within a clearly defined time period).

The specification encourages the exploration of texts in a number of different ways:

- the study of a literary theme over time
- the study of literature through engaging with two of the main historicist perspectives, the diachronic (reading texts written across widely different time periods that explore the same theme) and synchronic (reading texts written within a narrower and clearly defined time period)
- the study of various texts, both singly and comparatively, chosen from a list of core set texts and a list of chosen comparative set texts
- writing about texts in a number of different ways.

Working within historicist principles means students are required to read widely across a range of texts and connect them across time and topic. Working with texts over time involves looking at ways in which authors shape meanings within their texts. It also involves thinking about a wide range of relevant contexts, some of them to do with the production of the text at the time of its writing, some (where possible) to do with how the text has been received over time and, most of all in this specification, contexts to do with how the text can be interpreted by readers now. And finally, because texts and their meanings are not fixed, interpretation is not fixed, and multiple interpretations are possible.

This specification reflects the belief that the assessment objectives (AOs) work best together, producing a rounded and holistic view of English literature. Thus all five AOs are assessed in each question. See [Assessment objectives](#) (page 31) section.

When used in AS and A-level English Literature questions, the term 'significance' has a very specific use and gives access to AOs 2, 3, 4 and 5. Its use here derives from semiotics and involves understanding the idea of 'signification'. In the way literary study is configured in this specification, significance involves weighing up all the potential contributions to how a text can be analysed: through the way the text is constructed and written; through text specific contexts that can be relevantly applied; through connecting the text(s) to other texts; and then finding potential meanings and interpretations.

Whilst the course invites a variety of written response types, these will all encourage critical debate. In each task, students will be required to argue and to show personal responses and critical preferences, supported by the terminology relevant to the topics and contexts with which they are engaging. In doing so, they will be able to show 'creativity'. Taken as a whole, therefore,

English Literature A not only equips students with the knowledge and skills needed for both exams and non-exam assessment, but also opens up a rich, challenging and coherent approach to English literature that provides an excellent basis for studying the subject at university.

Both examined elements of the course have the methodologies of historicism at their centre. In Love through the ages, the theme of love, one of the most central themes in literature, is explored across time. In Texts in shared contexts, students explore texts written within a narrower and clearly defined time period: either WW1 and its aftermath, or Modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day. The non-exam assessment element offers students the freedom to compare texts either diachronically or synchronically.

### Connecting and exploring texts: principles and rationale

This specification promotes as wide a choice of texts for you and your students as possible within a clear and helpful framework. The requirement in the subject criteria for students to study a minimum of **eight** texts from particular genres and periods has been organised as follows:

| Component                | Section | Text type                      | Genre requirement                        | Text requirement              |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Love through the ages    | A       | One core set text              | One drama text                           | Shakespeare                   |
|                          | B       | Two comparative set texts      | One poetry and one prose text            | One must be written pre-1900  |
| Texts in shared contexts | A       | One core set text              | One drama, one poetry and one prose text | One must be written post-2000 |
|                          | B       | Two comparative set texts      |  |                               |
| Texts across time        |         | Two independently chosen texts | Choice of genre                          | One must be written pre-1900  |

Within and across each examined element of the course, a shared context links the texts studied and thereby opens up fruitful areas of comparative study. The shared context gives the students' reading a clear focus and encourages them to develop close and comparative reading skills. With the ability to select texts from the lists relevant to each component, you have not only the high degree of autonomous text choice but also the knowledge that students will be well prepared for the specific demands of each exam. This flexibility is enhanced by the non-exam assessment, which offers as free a choice of independently selected texts as possible for both you and your students, ensuring that you have the freedom to create a coherent course of study for your students.

## 4.1 Love through the ages

The aim of this topic area is to encourage students to explore aspects of a central literary theme as seen over time, using unseen material and set texts. Students should be prepared for Love through the ages by reading widely in the topic area, reading texts from a range of authors and times.

- The four Shakespeare plays on offer allow students to study Shakespeare's representations of love in a range of different dramatic genres: tragedy, comedy, problem play or late play.
- The AQA anthologies of love poetry through the ages allow students to encounter a range of different types of poem as they study representations of love over time.

- The range of comparative prose texts on offer allows students to study representations of love by a variety of authors across time.
- Students study three texts: **one** poetry and **one** prose text, of which **one** must be written pre-1900, and **one** Shakespeare play. They will also respond to **two** unseen poems in the exam.

Although not an exhaustive list of aspects of Love through the ages, areas that can usefully be explored include: romantic love of many kinds; love and sex; love and loss; social conventions and taboos; love through the ages according to history and time; love through the ages according to individual lives (young love, maturing love); jealousy and guilt; truth and deception; proximity and distance; marriage; approval and disapproval.

### 4.1.1 Set texts

#### Core set texts: Shakespeare

Students study **one** of the following Shakespeare plays:

- *Othello*
- *The Taming of the Shrew*
- *Measure for Measure*
- *The Winter's Tale*

#### Chosen comparative set texts: poetry and prose

Students study **two** texts from the following list: **one** poetry and **one** prose text, **one** of which must be written pre-1900.

| Author              | Text  | Time period |
|---------------------|---|-------------|
| AQA ed.             | <i>Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages: Pre-1900</i>  | Pre-1900    |
| AQA ed.             | <i>Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages: Post-1900</i> |             |
| Jane Austen         | <i>Persuasion</i> (pre-1900)                                | Pre-1900    |
| Charlotte Brontë    | <i>Jane Eyre</i> (pre-1900)                                 | Pre-1900    |
| Emily Brontë        | <i>Wuthering Heights</i> (pre-1900)                         | Pre-1900    |
| Kate Chopin         | <i>The Awakening</i> (pre-1900)                             | Pre-1900    |
| Thomas Hardy        | <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> (pre-1900)                 | Pre-1900    |
| F. Scott Fitzgerald | <i>The Great Gatsby</i>                                     |             |
| E.M. Forster        | <i>A Room with a View</i>                                   |             |
| L.P. Hartley        | <i>The Go-Between</i>                                       |             |
| Daphne Du Maurier   | <i>Rebecca</i>  |             |
| Ian McEwan          | <i>Atonement</i>  |             |
| Elif Shafak         | <i>The Island of Missing Trees</i> (first assessment 2027)  |             |

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As with all the requirements around genre/dates in this specification, a text can fulfil more than one category. So, for example, *Persuasion* covers the requirement for a prose text and a text written pre-1900.

Section C of the paper for this component is open book. Students may take a copy of their prose and poetry texts into the exam. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain any additional notes or materials.

We do not expect to change texts within the first five years of the specification. However, texts will be reviewed each year starting in September 2017 and we will give at least nine months' notice of any changes prior to first teaching of a two year course. The criteria for changing texts will be where a text becomes unavailable or where we can no longer use it in a question paper. Notice of any change will be communicated via our exam bulletins and [aqa.org.uk/english](http://aqa.org.uk/english)

## 4.2 Texts in shared contexts

The aim of this topic area is to encourage students to explore aspects of literature connected through a period of time.

Students will choose **one** of the following options:

- Option 2A: WW1 and its aftermath
- Option 2B: Modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day

Option A explores literature arising out of WW1, but extends this period to allow reflection on the full impact of the war that reverberates up to the present day. It considers the impact on combatants, non-combatants and subsequent generations as well as its social, political, personal and literary legacies.

Option B takes the end of WW2 as its historical starting point and explores both modern and contemporary literature's engagement with some of the social, political, personal and literary issues which have helped to shape the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Students should prepare for Texts in shared contexts by reading widely within their chosen option. Studying representations of the key themes identified below will allow them to encounter a range of ideas and opinions relevant to the shared context.

### 4.2.1 Set texts

Students will study three texts: **one** prose, **one** poetry and **one** drama text, at least **one** of which must be written post-2000. They will also respond to an unseen prose extract in the exam.

The paper for this component is open book. Students may take a copy of their set texts into the exam. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain any additional notes or materials.

#### Option A: WW1 and its aftermath

Although not an exhaustive list of aspects of WW1 and its aftermath, areas that can usefully be explored include: imperialism and nationalism; recruitment and propaganda; life on the front line; responses on the home front; pacifism; generals and soldiers; slaughter; heroism; peace and memorials; writers in action and writers looking back; the political and social aftermath; different and changing attitudes to the conflict; impact on combatants, non-combatants and subsequent generations as well as its social, political, personal and literary legacies.

**Section A: Core set texts**

Students study at least **one** of the six core set texts listed below:

*Prose*

| Author           | Text                |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Pat Barker       | <i>Regeneration</i> |
| Sebastian Faulks | <i>Birdsong</i>     |

*Drama*

| Author          | Text                         |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Joan Littlewood | <i>Oh! What a Lovely War</i> |
| R.C. Sherriff   | <i>Journey's End</i>         |

*Poetry*

| Author               | Text                        |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ed. Brian Gardner    | <i>Up the Line to Death</i> |
| ed. Catherine Reilly | <i>Scars Upon My Heart</i>  |

**Section B: Chosen comparative set texts**

Students study **two** texts. These texts can be taken from the following list or from the core set text list. Any text from the core set text list used in the Section A response, however, cannot be used in Section B.

*Prose*

| Author  | Text  | Time Period<br>Post-2000? |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| Pat Barker  | <i>Life Class</i> (post-2000)                                       | Post-2000                 |
| Sebastian Barry                                       | <i>A Long, Long Way</i> (post-2000)                                 | Post-2000                 |
| Ben Elton   | <i>The first Casualty</i> (post-2000)                               | Post-2000                 |
| Robert Graves   | <i>Goodbye to All That</i>  |                           |
| Ernest Hemingway                                      | <i>A Farewell to Arms</i>   |                           |
| Susan Hill  | <i>Strange Meeting</i>  |                           |
| Anna Hope   | <i>Wake</i> (post-2000)<br>(first assessment 2027)                  | Post-2000                 |
| Erich Maria Remarque<br>(translated by Brian Murdoch) | <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> (Vintage paper back edition)* |                           |

| Author       | Text                             | Time Period<br>Post-2000? |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rebecca West | <i>The Return of the Soldier</i> |                           |

\*The edition of *All Quiet on the Western Front* which must be used is the Vintage paperback edition, translated by Brian Murdoch. We will treat the translated text as Remarque's own words for assessment purposes.

### Drama

| Author                       | Text                                | Time Period<br>Post -2000? |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Peter Whelan                 | <i>The Accrington Pals</i>          |                            |
| Richard Curtis and Ben Elton | <i>Blackadder Goes Forth</i>        |                            |
| David Haig                   | <i>My Boy Jack</i>                  |                            |
| Ian Hislop and Nick Newman   | <i>The Wipers Times</i> (post-2000) | Post-2000                  |

### Poetry

| Author              | Text  |
|---------------------|---|
| ed. George Walter   | <i>The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry</i> |
| ed. Jon Stallworthy | <i>The Oxford Book of War Poetry</i>              |
| ed. Jon Stallworthy | <i>The War Poems of Wilfred Owen</i>              |

## Option B: Modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day

Although not an exhaustive list of aspects of Modern times, areas that can usefully be explored include: wars and the legacy of wars; personal and social identity; changing morality and social structures; gender, class, race and ethnicity; political upheaval and change; resistance and rebellion; imperialism, post-imperialism and nationalism; engagement with the social, political, personal and literary issues which have helped to shape the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Section A: Core set texts

Students study at least **one** of the six core set texts listed below:

#### Prose

| Author          | Text                       |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Margaret Atwood | <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> |
| Graham Swift    | <i>Waterland</i>           |

*Drama*

| Author             | Text                            |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Caryl Churchill    | <i>Top Girls</i>                |
| Tennessee Williams | <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> |

*Poetry*

| Author          | Text                                |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Carol Ann Duffy | <i>Feminine Gospels</i> (post-2000) |
| Owen Sheers     | <i>Skirrid Hill</i> (post-2000)     |

**Section B: Chosen comparative set texts**

Students study **two** texts. These texts can be taken from the following list or from the core set text list. Any text from the core set text list used in the Section A response, however, cannot be used in Section B.

*Prose*

| Author              | Text  | Time Period<br>Post-2000? |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Bernardine Evaristo | <i>Mr Loverman</i> (post-2000)<br>(first assessment 2027) | Post-2000                 |
| Michael Frayn       | <i>Spies</i> (post-2000)                                  | Post-2000                 |
| Ken Kesey           | <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>                    |                           |
| Arundhati Roy       | <i>The God of Small Things</i>                            |                           |
| Kathryn Stockett    | <i>The Help</i> (post-2000)                               | Post-2000                 |
| Alice Walker        | <i>The Color Purple</i>                                   |                           |
| Jeanette Winterson  | <i>Oranges are not the Only Fruit</i>                     |                           |
| Richard Yates       | <i>Revolutionary Road</i>                                 |                           |

*Drama*

| Author                 | Text                         |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Brian Friel            | <i>Translations</i>          |
| Arthur Miller          | <i>All My Sons</i>           |
| Timberlake Wertenbaker | <i>Our Country's Good</i>    |
| Tennessee Williams     | <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> |

## Poetry

| Author        | Text                                |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Tony Harrison | <i>Selected Poems 2013 Edition</i>  |
| Seamus Heaney | <i>New Selected Poems 1966–1987</i> |
| Ted Hughes    | <i>Birthday Letters</i>             |
| Sylvia Plath  | <i>Ariel</i>                        |

As with all the requirements around genre/dates in this specification, a text can fulfil more than one category. So, for example, *The Help* covers the requirement for a prose text and a text written post-2000.

We do not expect to change texts within the first five years of the specification. However, texts will be reviewed each year starting in September 2017 and we will give at least nine months' notice of any changes prior to first teaching of a two year course. The criteria for changing texts will be where a text becomes unavailable or where we can no longer use it in a question paper. Notice of any change will be communicated via our examination bulletins and [aqa.org.uk/english](http://aqa.org.uk/english)

## 4.3 Independent critical study: texts across time

In Texts across time, students write a comparative critical study of **two** texts.

This specification is committed to the notion of autonomous personal reading and Texts across time provides a challenging and wide-ranging opportunity for independent study. Possible themes for the comparison are indicated below, but this is not a set list and students are free to develop their own interests from their own wider and independent reading.

Texts chosen for study must maximise opportunities for writing about comparative similarity and difference and must allow access to a range of critical views and interpretations, including over time. Students should take an autonomous approach to the application and evaluation of a range of critical views.

The title 'Independent critical study' highlights the important idea that, within a literature course, students should have the opportunity to work independently. Although one common text could, if required, be taught to a whole cohort, at least one text should be studied independently by each student. Texts should always be chosen with your guidance and support. Students should also individually negotiate their own task.

In Texts across time, students write a comparative critical study of two texts on a theme of their choice. Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- the struggle for identity
- crime and punishment
- minds under stress
- nostalgia and the past
- the Gothic
- satire and dystopia
- war and conflict
- representations of race and ethnicity
- representations of sexuality
- representations of women

- representations of men
- representations of social class and culture.

The spirit of this component is for independent study, with schools and colleges submitting work on a range of texts and tasks. Schools and colleges are encouraged to check the appropriateness of texts and tasks with their non-exam assessment adviser, especially where there may be some uncertainty on the approach being taken, either by the school or college as a whole or by individual students.

### 4.3.1 Tasks

- The word count is 2,500 words.
- Tasks should be designed to ensure that students address all assessment objectives in their essay response.
- An appropriate academic bibliography (not included within the 2,500 word count) must be included.
- An appropriately academic form of referencing must be used.

### 4.3.2 Texts

The following conditions apply to the texts chosen:

- one text must have been written pre-1900
- two different authors must be studied
- set texts listed for the A-level exam components cannot be used for non-exam assessment, even if they will not be used in the exam
- the essay is comparative and connective so equal attention must be paid to both texts
- a poetry text could be either one longer narrative poem or a single authored collection of shorter poems. If using a collection of poetry, students must have studied the whole text and select at least two poems to write about in detail as examples of the wider collection
- single authored collections of short stories are permissible. If using a collection of short stories, students must have studied the whole text and select at least two stories to write about in detail as examples of the wider collection
- texts chosen for study may include texts in translation that have been influential and significant in the development of literature in English. The translated text should be treated as the original writer's own words for assessment purposes. Therefore, schools and colleges should ensure that they use a version recognised by academia as being a high quality translation which supports the original author's writing appropriately.

### Recommended texts

Texts listed in the A-level core set text and comparative set text lists in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 cannot be studied for non-exam assessment. Texts chosen for study may include texts in translation that have been influential and significant in the development of literature in English.

Possible pre-1900 texts include, but are not limited to:

#### Prose

| Author      | Text                               |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Jane Austen | <i>Northanger Abbey</i>            |
|             | <i>Mansfield Park</i>              |
| Anne Brontë | <i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i> |

| Author                      | Text                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Wilkie Collins              | <i>The Moonstone</i>              |
|                             | <i>The Woman in White</i>         |
| Charles Dickens             | <i>Hard Times</i>                 |
| George Eliot                | <i>Middlemarch</i>                |
|                             | <i>The Mill on the Floss</i>      |
| Elizabeth Gaskell           | <i>North and South</i>            |
| Mary Shelley                | <i>Frankenstein</i>               |
| William Makepeace Thackeray | <i>Vanity Fair</i>                |
| Oscar Wilde                 | <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> |

### Drama

| Author                    | Text                             |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| William Congreve          | <i>The Way of the World</i>      |
| Henrik Ibsen              | <i>A Doll's House</i>            |
|                           | <i>Hedda Gabler</i>              |
| Oliver Goldsmith          | <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>     |
| George Bernard Shaw       | any pre-1900 play by this writer |
| Richard Brinsley Sheridan | <i>The School for Scandal</i>    |
| Oscar Wilde               | any pre-1900 play by this writer |
| William Wycherley         | <i>The Country Wife</i>          |

### Poetry

| Author                  | Text                              |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Geoffrey Chaucer        | 'The Wife of Bath's Tale'         |
|                         | 'The Miller's Tale'               |
| Samuel Taylor Coleridge | 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' |
| John Keats              | 'Lamia'                           |
|                         | 'Isabella or The Pot of Basil'    |
|                         | 'The Eve of St Agnes'             |

### 4.3.3 NEA prohibited texts

Students cannot use the following texts for non-exam assessment as they appear on the exam set text lists.

## A

| Author          | Text                       |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Margaret Atwood | <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> |
| Jane Austen     | <i>Persuasion</i>          |

## B

| Author           | Text                       |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Pat Barker       | <i>Regeneration</i>        |
| Pat Barker       | <i>Life Class</i>          |
| Barry Sebastian  | <i>A Long, Long Way</i>    |
| William Blake    | <i>The Garden of Love</i>  |
| Charlotte Brontë | <i>Jane Eyre</i>           |
| Emily Brontë     | <i>Wuthering Heights</i>   |
| Robert Burns     | <i>Song (Ae fond kiss)</i> |
| Lord Byron       | <i>She Walks in Beauty</i> |

## C

| Author                       | Text                         |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Kate Chopin                  | <i>The Awakening</i>         |
| Caryl Churchill              | <i>Top Girls</i>             |
| Wendy Cope                   | <i>After the Lunch</i>       |
| Richard Curtis and Ben Elton | <i>Blackadder Goes Forth</i> |

## D

| Author            | Text   |
|-------------------|--|
| John Donne        | <i>The Flea</i>                                    |
| Keith Douglas     | <i>Vergissmeinnicht</i>                            |
| Ernest Dowson     | <i>Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonae sub Regno Cynarae</i> |
| Daphne Du Maurier | <i>Rebecca</i>                                     |
| Carol Ann Duffy   | <i>The Love Poem</i>                               |
| Carol Ann Duffy   | <i>Feminine Gospels</i>                            |

## E

| Author    | Text                      |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Ben Elton | <i>The First Casualty</i> |

| Author              | Text                                       |
|---------------------|--|
| Bernardine Evaristo | <i>Mr Loverman (first assessment 2027)</i> |

## F

| Author              | Text                       |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Sebastian Faulks    | <i>Birdsong</i>            |
| F. Scott Fitzgerald | <i>The Great Gatsby</i>    |
| E. M. Forster       | <i>A Room with a View</i>  |
| Michael Frayn       | <i>Spies</i>               |
| Brian Friel         | <i>Translations</i>        |
| Robert Frost        | <i>Love and a Question</i> |

## G

| Author             | Text                        |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Brian Gardner, ed. | <i>Up the Line to Death</i> |
| Robert Graves      | <i>Goodbye to All That</i>  |

## H

| Author                     | Text                                  |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| David Haig                 | <i>My Boy Jack</i>                    |
| Thomas Hardy               | <i>The Ruined Maid</i>                |
| Thomas Hardy               | <i>At an Inn</i>                      |
| Thomas Hardy               | <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>      |
| Tony Harrison              | <i>Timer</i>                          |
| Tony Harrison              | <i>Selected Poems (2013 edition)</i>  |
| L. P. Hartley              | <i>The Go-Between</i>                 |
| Seamus Heaney              | <i>Punishment</i>                     |
| Seamus Heaney              | <i>New Selected Poems (1966–1987)</i> |
| Ernest Hemingway           | <i>A Farewell to Arms</i>             |
| Susan Hill                 | <i>Strange Meeting</i>                |
| Ian Hislop and Nick Newman | <i>The Wipers Times</i>               |
| Anna Hope                  | <i>Wake (first assessment 2027)</i>   |
| Ted Hughes                 | <i>Birthday Letters</i>               |

## J

| Author             | Text             |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Elizabeth Jennings | <i>One Flesh</i> |

## K

| Author     | Text                                   |
|------------|--|
| John Keats | <i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i>        |
| Ken Kesey  | <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> |

## L

| Author           | Text                         |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Philip Larkin    | <i>Wild Oats</i>             |
| Philip Larkin    | <i>Talking in Bed</i>        |
| Joan Littlewood  | <i>Oh! What a Lovely War</i> |
| Richard Lovelace | <i>The Scrutiny</i>          |

## M

| Author                  | Text  |
|-------------------------|---|
| Louis MacNeice          | <i>Meeting Point</i>                        |
| Andrew Marvell          | <i>To His Coy Mistress</i>                  |
| Ian McEwan              | <i>Atonement</i>                            |
| Charlotte Mew           | <i>A quoi bon dire</i>                      |
| Edna St. Vincent Millay | <i>I, being born a woman and distressed</i> |
| Arthur Miller           | <i>All My Sons</i>                          |
| Paul Muldoon            | <i>Long Finish</i>                          |

## N

| Author                     | Text                    |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ian Hislop and Nick Newman | <i>The Wipers Times</i> |

## P

| Author       | Text         |
|--------------|--------------|
| Sylvia Plath | <i>Ariel</i> |

## R

| Author                  | Text                                  |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Catherine Reilly, ed.   | <i>Scars Upon My Heart</i>            |
| Erich Maria Remarque    | <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> |
| Michael Symmons Roberts | <i>To John Donne</i>                  |
| Christina Rossetti      | <i>Remember</i>                       |
| Arundhati Roy           | <i>The God of Small Things</i>        |

## S

| Author               | Text   |
|----------------------|--|
| Anne Sexton          | <i>For My Lover, Returning to His Wife</i>                 |
| Elif Shafak          | <i>The Island of Missing Trees (first assessment 2027)</i> |
| William Shakespeare  | <i>Othello</i>   |
| William Shakespeare  | <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>                             |
| William Shakespeare  | <i>Measure for Measure</i>                                 |
| William Shakespeare  | <i>The Winter's Tale</i>                                   |
| William Shakespeare  | <i>Sonnet 116</i>  |
| Owen Sheers          | <i>Skirrid Hill</i>  |
| R. C. Sherriff       | <i>Journey's End</i>                                       |
| Jon Stallworthy, ed. | <i>The Oxford Book of War Poetry</i>                       |
| Jon Stallworthy, ed. | <i>The War Poems of Wilfred Owen</i>                       |
| Kathryn Stockett     | <i>The Help</i>  |
| Graham Swift         | <i>Waterland</i>   |

## W

| Author                         | Text  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Alice Walker                   | <i>The Color Purple</i>                           |
| George Walter, ed.             | <i>The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry</i> |
| Timberlake Wertenbaker         | <i>Our Country's Good</i>                         |
| Rebecca West                   | <i>The Return of the Soldier</i>                  |
| Peter Whelan                   | <i>The Accrington Pals</i>                        |
| Tennessee Williams             | <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>                   |
| Tennessee Williams             | <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i>                      |
| John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester | <i>A Song (Absent from thee)</i>                  |
| Jeanette Winterson             | <i>Oranges are not the Only Fruit</i>             |

| Author           | Text  |
|------------------|---|
| Sir Thomas Wyatt | <i>Whoso list to hunt I knowe where is an hynde</i> |

## Y

| Author        | Text                      |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| Richard Yates | <i>Revolutionary Road</i> |

#### 4.3.4 Examples of choices of non-exam assessment texts and possible connections

1. John R. Reed (1973) has suggested that the ‘unacknowledged crime’ of Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone* is the colonial guilt of the British Empire for its annexation of the entire Indian sub-continent rather than the theft of a single exquisite diamond.

Compare and contrast the presentation of British attitudes to race and ethnicity in *The Moonstone* and in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* in the light of this view.

2. Compare and contrast the presentation of women in Keats’ narrative poems ‘Lamia’, ‘Isabella’ and ‘The Eve of St Agnes’ with that of Anne Brontë’s in her novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

In what ways do you think the Gothic settings of these texts help the writers to shape their presentation of heroines in peril?

3. Sarah Waters has argued that the Victorian ‘sensation novel’ genre ‘was at its best when tugging at the seams of certainties and easy solutions’.

Compare and contrast the presentation of Sue Trinder in *Fingersmith* with Marian Halcombe in *The Woman in White* in the light of this view.



# 5 Scheme of assessment

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Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at [aqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://aqa.org.uk/pastpapers)

The AS specification is designed to be taken over one or two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course. The A-level specification is designed to be taken over two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course.

Assessments and certification for the AS specification are available for the first time in May/June 2016 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

Assessments and certification for the A-level specification are available for the first time in May/June 2017 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

These are linear qualifications. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all exams in May/June in a single year. All assessments must be taken in the same series.

Our AS and A-level exams in English include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their knowledge, skills and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

All AS and A-level components offer only extended response questions.

All materials are available in English only.

## 5.1 Aims

Courses based on these specifications must encourage students to develop their interest in and enjoyment of literature and literary studies as they:

- read widely and independently both set texts and others that they have selected for themselves
- engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and ways of responding to them
- develop and effectively apply their knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation
- explore the contexts of the texts they are reading and others' interpretations of them.

In addition, A-level specifications must encourage students to develop their interest in and enjoyment of literature and literary studies as they undertake independent and sustained studies to deepen their appreciation and understanding of English literature, including its changing traditions.

## 5.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS and A-level English Literature specifications and all exam boards.

The exams and non-exam assessment will measure to what extent students have achieved the following AOs:

- AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
- AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.
- AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.
- AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

## Weighting of assessment objectives for AS English Literature A

| Assessment objectives (AOs)     | Component weightings (approx %) |         | Overall weighting (approx %) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|
|                                 | Paper 1                         | Paper 2 |                              |
| AO1                             | 14                              | 14      | 28                           |
| AO2                             | 12                              | 12      | 24                           |
| AO3                             | 12                              | 12      | 24                           |
| AO4                             | 6                               | 6       | 12                           |
| AO5                             | 6                               | 6       | 12                           |
| Overall weighting of components | 50                              | 50      | 100                          |

The specification reflects the belief that the assessment objectives (AOs) work best together, producing a rounded and holistic view of English literature. Students will need to show coverage of all AOs in all tasks. To be specific:

AO1 essentially requires informed and relevant responses which are accurately written and use appropriate concepts and terminology.

AO2 requires students to analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts, with particular focus on the structures of texts as a form of shaping.

AO3 relates to the many possible contexts which arise out of the text, the specific task and the period being studied.

This specification treats AOs 1, 2 and 3 as broadly equal, given their relative weightings: AO1 has a weighting of 28% whilst AOs 2 and 3 both have a weighting of 24%.

AO4 involves connections across texts and sees possible meanings and interpretations arising not only out of the contexts of the text itself (AO3 above) but also out of the wider and broader contexts which comes from the study of period. Thus even when an individual text is being investigated it should still be seen as being framed by a wider network of texts and contexts to which it connects.

AO5 completes the picture by acknowledging that if work in AOs 2, 3 and 4 had been included in the response to the question then debate and interpretations will arise out of this work showing that the interpretation of texts is not a fixed process but a dynamic one.

AOs 4 and 5 each have a weighting of 12% in all questions.

## Weighting of assessment objectives for A-level English Literature A

| Assessment objectives (AOs)     | Component weightings (approx %) |         |                     | Overall weighting (approx %) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------|------------------------------|
|                                 | Paper 1                         | Paper 2 | Non-exam assessment |                              |
| AO1                             | 11.2                            | 11.2    | 5.6                 | 28                           |
| AO2                             | 9.6                             | 9.6     | 4.8                 | 24                           |
| AO3                             | 9.6                             | 9.6     | 4.8                 | 24                           |
| AO4                             | 4.8                             | 4.8     | 2.4                 | 12                           |
| AO5                             | 4.8                             | 4.8     | 2.4                 | 12                           |
| Overall weighting of components | 40                              | 40      | 20                  | 100                          |

This specification reflects the belief that the assessment objectives (AOs) work best together, producing a rounded and holistic view of English literature. Students will need to show coverage of all AOs in all tasks. To be specific:

AO1 essentially requires informed and relevant responses which are accurately written and use appropriate concepts and terminology.

AO2 requires students to analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts, with particular focus on the structures of texts as a form of shaping.

AO3 relates to the many possible contexts which arise out of the text, the specific task and the period being studied.

This specification treats AOs 1, 2 and 3 as broadly equal, given their relative weightings: AO1 has a weighting of 28% whilst AOs 2 and 3 both have a weighting of 24%.

AO4 involves connections across texts and sees possible meanings and interpretations arising not only out of the contexts of the text itself (AO3 above) but also out of the wider and broader contexts which comes from the study of period. Thus even when an individual text is being investigated it should still be seen as being framed by a wider network of texts and contexts to which it connects.

AO5 completes the picture by acknowledging that if work in AOs 2, 3 and 4 had been included in the response to the question then debate and interpretations will arise out of this work showing that the interpretation of texts is not a fixed process but a dynamic one. In non-exam assessment only, discussion of different interpretations must include, on at least one text, consideration of different interpretations of the text(s) over time.

AOs 4 and 5 each have a weighting of 12% in all questions.

### 5.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

## AS

| Component  | Maximum raw mark | Scaling factor     | Maximum scaled mark |
|--|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Paper 1: Love through the ages: Shakespeare and Poetry | 50               | x1                 | 50                  |
| Paper 2: Love through the ages: Prose                  | 50               | x1                 | 50                  |
|  |                  | Total scaled mark: | 100                 |

## A-level

| Component                              | Maximum raw mark | Scaling factor     | Maximum scaled mark |
|--|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Paper 1: Love through the ages         | 75               | x2                 | 150                 |
| Paper 2: Texts in shared contexts      | 75               | x2                 | 150                 |
| Non exam-assessment: Texts across time | 50               | x1.5               | 75                  |
|  |                  | Total scaled mark: | 375                 |

## 5.4 Non-exam assessment marking criteria

Weightings for each question are as follows:

AO1: 7 marks; AO2: 6 marks; AO3: 6 marks; AO4: 3 marks; AO5: 3 marks

| Band/Mark  | AO  | Typical features  | How to arrive at mark  |
|--|-----|---|--|
| Band 5<br>Perceptive/Assured<br>21-25 marks<br><br>'Perception' is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task.<br><br>'Assuredness' is shown when students write with confidence and conviction. | AO1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task</li> <li>assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression</li> </ul>               | <p>This band is characterised by perceptive and assured work which shows confidence, sharpness of mind and sophistication in relation to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students are consistently assured and will demonstrate sensitivity and perception across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some perception but with less consistency and evenness.</p> |
|  | AO2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | AO3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>assuredness in the connection between those contexts and the comparative texts studied</li> </ul> |  |
|  | AO4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of comparative study</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | AO5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perceptive and confident engagement with interpretations, including over time</li> </ul>   |  |

| Band/Mark  | AO  | Typical features   | How to arrive at mark   |
|--|-----|--|---|
| <p>Band 4<br/>Coherent/ Thorough<br/>16-20 marks</p> <p>'Coherence' is shown when students are logical and consistent in their arguments in relation to the task. They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way.</p> <p>'Thoroughness' is shown when students write carefully, precisely and accurately.</p> | AO1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>logical, thorough and coherent argument in relation to the task where ideas are debated in depth</li> <li>appropriate use of literary critical concepts and terminology; precise and accurate expression</li> </ul> | <p>This band is characterised by coherent and thorough work where ideas are linked together in a focused and purposeful way in relation to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a fully coherent and thorough argument across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band ideas will be discussed in a shaped, relevant and purposeful way with a clear sense of direction, with one or two lapses in coherence and accuracy.</p> |
|  | AO2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>  |   |
|  | AO3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>coherence in the connection between those contexts and the comparative texts studied</li> </ul>                    |   |
|  | AO4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of comparative study</li> </ul>   |   |
|  | AO5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thorough engagement with interpretations, including over time</li> </ul>  |   |

| Band/Mark  | AO  | Typical features   | How to arrive at mark  |
|--|-----|--|--|
| <p>Band 3</p> <p>Straightforward/Relevant</p> <p>11-15 marks</p> <p>'Straightforward' work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known.</p> <p>'Relevant' work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.</p> | AO1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensibly ordered ideas in a relevant argument in relation to the task</li> <li>• some use of literary critical concepts and terminology which are mainly appropriate; straightforward and clear expression</li> </ul> | <p>This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student's response to the task is clear and intelligible.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of straightforward thinking.</p> |
|  | AO2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>• relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | AO3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>• relevant connections between those contexts and the comparative texts studied</li> </ul>                    |  |
|  | AO4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explores connections across literary texts arising out of comparative study in a straightforward way</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | AO5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• straightforward engagement with interpretations, including over time</li> </ul>   |  |

| Band/Mark  | AO  | Typical features   | How to arrive at mark  |
|--|-----|--|--|
| <p>Band 2<br/>Simple/Generalised<br/>6-10 marks</p> <p>'Simple' work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task.</p> <p>'Generalised' work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.</p> | AO1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a simple structure to the argument which may not be consistent but which does relate to the task</li> <li>generalised use of literary critical concepts and terminology; simple expression</li> </ul> | <p>This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a basic generalised understanding in the course of their answer. Ideas will be developed in a simple way.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.</p> |
|  | AO2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | AO3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>generalised connections between those contexts and the comparative texts studied</li> </ul>            |  |
|  | AO4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of comparative study</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | AO5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simple and generalised response to interpretations, including over time</li> </ul>  |  |

| Band/Mark  | AO | Typical features  | How to arrive at mark   |
|--|----|---|---|
| <p>Band 1</p> <p>Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate</p> <p>1-5 marks</p> <p>'Largely irrelevant' work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question. 'Largely misunderstood' and 'largely inaccurate' work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.</p> |    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s)</li> <li>• the writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant</li> <li>• little sense of the AOs in relation to the task; little sense of how meanings are shaped; little sense of any relevant contexts; little sense of any connection arising out of comparative study; little sense of an argument in relation to the task</li> </ul> | <p>This band is characterised by work which is largely irrelevant and largely misunderstood and largely inaccurate, and so unlikely to be addressing many of the AOs.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will mention some unconnected points in relation to the task during the course of their writing. The writing is likely to lack clarity.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.</p> |
| <p>0 marks</p>   |    | <p>No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.</p>  |   |



# 6 Non-exam assessment administration (A-level only)

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The non-exam assessment (NEA) for the A-level specification only is 'Independent critical study: texts across time', and consists of one extended essay and a bibliography.

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7712](https://aqa.org.uk/7712) for detailed information about all aspects of NEA administration.

The head of the school or college is responsible for making sure that NEA is conducted in line with our instructions and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions.

## 6.1 Supervising and authenticating

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria:

- **students** must sign the Candidate record form to confirm that the work submitted is their own
- all **teachers** who have marked a student's work must sign the declaration of authentication on the Candidate record form. This is to confirm that the work is solely that of the student concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by this specification
- teachers must ensure that a Candidate record form is attached to each student's work.

Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own. This means that you must review the progress of the work during research, planning and throughout its production to see how it evolves.

You may provide guidance and support to students so that they are clear about the requirements of the task they need to undertake and the marking criteria on which the work will be judged. You may also provide guidance to students on the suitability of their proposed task, particularly if it means they will not meet the requirements of the marking criteria.

When checking drafts of a student's work, you must not comment or provide suggestions on how they could improve it. However, you can ask questions about the way they are approaching their work and you can highlight the requirements of the marking criteria.

If a student receives any additional assistance which is acceptable within the further guidance that is provided for this specification, you should award a mark that represents the student's unaided achievement. Please make a note of the support the student received on the Candidate record form. This will allow the moderator to see whether the student has been awarded an appropriate mark. Please note that you should sign the authentication statement on the Candidate record form. If the statement is not signed, we cannot accept the student's work for assessment.

Once a student submits work for marking and it has been marked, you cannot return it to the student for improvement, even if they have not received any feedback or are unaware of the marks awarded.

Further guidance on setting, supervising, authenticating and marking work is available on the subject pages of our website and through teacher standardisation.

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## 6.2 Avoiding malpractice

Please inform your students of the AQA regulations concerning malpractice. They must not:

- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or use of, their own independently-sourced source material
- include work copied directly from books, the Internet or other sources without acknowledgement
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

These actions constitute malpractice and a penalty will be given (for example, disqualification).

If you identify malpractice **before** the student signs the declaration of authentication, you don't need to report it to us. Please deal with it in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools and colleges to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice **after** the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form JCQ/M1, available from the JCQ website at [jcq.org.uk](http://jcq.org.uk)

You must record details of any work which is not the student's own on the Candidate record form or other appropriate place.

You should consult your exams officer about these procedures.

## 6.3 Teacher standardisation

We will provide support for using the marking criteria and developing appropriate tasks through teacher standardisation.

For further information about teacher standardisation visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/7707](http://aqa.org.uk/7707)

In the following situations teacher standardisation is essential. We will send you an invitation to complete teacher standardisation if:

- moderation from the previous year indicates a serious misinterpretation of the requirements
- a significant adjustment was made to the marks in the previous year
- your school or college is new to this specification.

For further support and advice please speak to your adviser. Email your subject team at [english-gce@aqa.org.uk](mailto:english-gce@aqa.org.uk) for details of your adviser.

## 6.4 Internal standardisation

You must ensure that you have consistent marking standards for all students. One person must manage this process and they must sign the Centre declaration sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking some sample pieces of work to identify differences in marking standards
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved
- referring to reference and archive material, such as previous work or examples from our teacher standardisation.

## 6.5 Annotation

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria, you must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the marking criteria in this specification.

Your annotation will help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the marking criteria.

Work can be annotated using either or both of the following methods:

- flagging evidence in the margins or in the text
- summative comments, referencing precise sections in the work.

## 6.6 Submitting marks

You should check that the correct marks for each of the marking criteria are written on the Candidate record form and that the total mark is correct.

The deadline for submitting the total mark for each student is given at [aqa.org.uk/keydates](https://www.aqa.org.uk/keydates)

## 6.7 Factors affecting individual students

For advice and guidance about arrangements for any of your students, please email us as early as possible at [eos@aqa.org.uk](mailto:eos@aqa.org.uk)

**Occasional absence:** you should be able to accept the occasional absence of students by making sure they have the chance to make up what they have missed. You may organise an alternative supervised session for students who were absent at the time you originally arranged.

**Lost work:** if work is lost you must tell us how and when it was lost and who was responsible, using our special consideration online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

**Special help:** where students need special help which goes beyond normal learning support, please use the Candidate record form to tell us so that this help can be taken into account during moderation.

**Students who move schools:** students who move from one school or college to another during the course sometimes need additional help to meet the requirements. How you deal with this depends on when the move takes place. If it happens early in the course, the new school or college should be responsible for the work. If it happens late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work as a student who was 'Educated Elsewhere'.

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## 6.8 Keeping students' work

Students' work must be kept under secure conditions from the time that it is marked, with Candidate record forms attached. After the moderation period and the deadline for Enquiries about Results (or once any enquiry is resolved) you may return the work to students.

## 6.9 Moderation

You must send all your students' marks to us by the date given at [aqa.org.uk/deadlines](http://aqa.org.uk/deadlines). You will be asked to send a sample of your students' NEA evidence to your moderator.

You must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the assessment criteria in this specification. Your comments must help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the assessment criteria. You must:

- record your comments on the Candidate Record Form (CRF)
- check that the correct marks are written on the CRF and that the total is correct.

The moderator re-marks a sample of the evidence and compares this with the marks you have provided to check whether any changes are needed to bring the marking in line with our agreed standards. Any changes to marks will normally keep your rank order but, where major inconsistencies are found, we reserve the right to change the rank order.

## School and college consortia

If you are in a consortium of schools or colleges with joint teaching arrangements (where students from different schools and colleges have been taught together but entered through the school or college at which they are on roll), you must let us know by:

- filling in the *Application for Centre Consortium Arrangements for centre-assessed work*, which is available from the JCQ website [jqc.org.uk](http://jqc.org.uk)
- appointing a consortium co-ordinator who can speak to us on behalf of all schools and colleges in the consortium. If there are different co-ordinators for different specifications, a copy of the form must be sent in for each specification.

We will allocate the same moderator to all schools and colleges in the consortium and treat the students as a single group for moderation.

## 6.10 After moderation

We will return your students' work to you after the exams. You will also receive a report when the results are issued, which will give feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, interpretation of the marking criteria and how students performed in general.

We will give you the final marks when the results are issued.

To meet Ofqual requirements, as well as for awarding, archiving or standardisation purposes, we may need to keep some of your students' work. We will let you know if we need to do this.

# 7 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at [aqa.org.uk/examsadmin](http://aqa.org.uk/examsadmin)

## 7.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, Further and Higher Education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

| Qualification title                                 | Option                | AQA entry code | DfE discount code         |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in English Literature A |                       | 7711           | 5110 (post-16), FC4 (KS4) |
| AQA Advanced Level GCE in English Literature A      | Option A WW1          | 7712A          | 5110                      |
|   | Option B Modern times | 7712B          | 5110                      |

These specifications comply with Ofqual's:

- *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all relevant regulatory documents.

Ofqual has accredited these specifications. The qualification accreditation number (QAN) for the AS is 601/5259/X. The QAN for the A-level is 601/5327/1.

## 7.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level English Literature A specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

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## 7.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E.

The A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A\*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

## 7.4 Re-sits and shelf life

Students can re-sit the qualifications as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualifications.

## 7.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on these specifications are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

However, we recommend that students should have the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE English Literature course or equivalent.

## 7.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at [jcq.org.uk](http://jcq.org.uk)

### Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

## Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see [aqa.org.uk/access](https://www.aqa.org.uk/access) or email [accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk](mailto:accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk)

## 7.7 Safeguarding

Some of the content within this curriculum may generate discussions or disclosures from students which raise safeguarding concerns. If this happens, please follow your centre's safeguarding policy to arrange support.

## 7.8 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](https://www.aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

If your school or college is new to these specifications, please let us know by completing an Intention to enter form. The easiest way to do this is via e-AQA at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

## 7.9 Private candidates

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

If you are a private candidate you may be self-taught, home-schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. You must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/examsadmin](https://www.aqa.org.uk/examsadmin)
- email: [privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk](mailto:privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk)

## Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7712](https://aqa.org.uk/7712)

You can talk directly to the English Literature A subject team:

E: [english-gce@aqa.org.uk](mailto:english-gce@aqa.org.uk)

T: 0161 9537504