

English Department Reading List Suggestions

Reading widely is excellent preparation for any English course. **A-level Language & Literature** and **A-level Literature** students should aim to read both fiction and non-fiction; for example, reading a variety of newspapers and magazines as well as novels, plays and poems. **A-Level Language** students should look at anything about the development and use of language. Look for texts that are outside your usual reading but also look for texts that sound interesting. Here are some that might help!

English Language & Literature English Literature

The Secret History Donna Tartt
Black Swan Green David Mitchell
Breath Tim Winton
Brick Lane Monica Ali
Brighton Rock Graham Greene
Collected Poems Audre Lorde
Disgrace J. M. Coetzee
Enduring Love Ian McEwan
Girl with a Pearl Earring Tracy Chevalier
Girl, Woman, Other Bernadine Evaristo
If This is a Man Primo Levi
Mansfield Park Jane Austen
Norwegian Wood Haruki Murakami
On Beauty Zadie Smith
Once in a House on Fire Andrea Ashworth
Perfume Patrick Süskind
Seasonal Quartet Ali Smith
Small Island Andrea Levy
Sophie's Choice William Styron
The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath
The Bluest Eye Toni Morrison
The Color Purple Alice Walker
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
The God of Small Things Arundhati Roy
The Ice Storm Rick Moody
The Paying Guests Sarah Waters
The Rattle Bag Ted Hughes & Seamus Heaney
The Reader Bernhard Schlink
The Road Home Rose Tremain
The Shipping News Annie Proulx
The Stone Gods Jeanette Winterson
This is Shakespeare Emma Smith

English Language

Because Internet – Understanding the New Rules of Language Gretchen McCulloch
Dent's Modern Tribes – The Secret Languages of Britain Susie Dent
Language Handbook – Key Thinkers on Key Topics English & Media Centre
Language Myths Laurie Bauer & Peter Trudgill
Listen To Your Child – A Parent's Guide to Children's Language David Crystal
The Babel Lexicon of Language – McIntyre et al
The Language Wars – A History of Proper English Henry Hitchings
The Myth of Mars and Venus – Do Men and Women Really Speak Different Languages Deborah Cameron
The Prodigal Tongue – The Love-Hate Relationship Between British and American English Lynne Murphy
You're All Talk – Why We Are What We Speak Rob Drummond
You Say Potato – The Story of English Accents Ben Crystal and David Crystal

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15 Reasons to Take English

1. It's about creativity – not just in the texts you read but how you respond, think and change in relation to them.
2. English isn't always English – texts in English come from across the globe and bear witness to the diverse cultures that produced them.
3. We're shaped by language, so studying its use and significance is both important and exciting.
4. Employers LOVE English students: research shows companies value communication, collaboration, critical thinking, independence, adaptability. English teaches these.
5. The medium is the message – whether it's a medieval manuscript, a hand-printed book, or an e-reader. Literature has always shaped and responded to technological change.
6. It's sociable! English A-Levels rely on discussing and communicating with others.
7. Literature is a part of our living cultural ecosystem: it's still growing, developing and changing.
8. Assessed in all kinds of different ways: creative work, reviews, presentations, coursework, discussions and essays.
9. Other subjects may study 'what' you are: English is about 'who' you are.
10. Join the greatest, longest conversation of humanity.
11. Language is personal, social and political – it shapes us and our world so studying its use is vital.
12. What you read for pleasure is part of what you study – it will fuel you as a reader and as a person for the rest of your life.
13. English the subject isn't always in English – texts in translation let us read across national borders and think about communication between cultures.
14. English is about both dissensus and consensus – the disagreements are as intellectually engaging as the agreements.
15. In English you think about history, geography, philosophy, technology, the visual arts and science. You might even use the scientific tools of data analysis.