

**A Level English Literature**

**Lecturers**  
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**Activity 1** - Reading and initial response

All Literature students engage with Unseen poetry and building confidence in approaching these tasks is something we work on in the first year of the course. Read the poem below, by poet Robert Frost, and write a paragraph to summarise what you think the poem is about. This poem was written in 1915.

**The Road Not Taken**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

**Activity 2** - Understanding, analysis and interpretation

Consider the following questions to develop your response to this poem, its meaning, and the poet’s wider message:

* The poet talks about two paths he sees before him. Which quotes tell you about the different paths?
* Is one path obviously better than the other? How do you know?
* Identify three poetic techniques the poet has used, and comment on how they impact the meaning of the poem
* Which path does the poet decide to take?
* How does the poet feel about this choice by the end of the poem?
* What do you think the poet’s message might be? How do you know?

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**Frequently asked questions**

**How is the subject assessed?**A Level Literature is assessed via three two-hour exams and a non-examined comparative essay. The exams are Poetry, Drama and Unseen, and you will compare two prose texts (novels) in your non-examined essay.

**How many books do I have to read?**Over the course of study, you will cover three collections of poetry, three drama texts and two novels. These will be complemented with a range of poetry and prose extracts to prepare you for the Unseen exam paper.

**Do we study any modern texts?**Yes! The course comprises a range of texts, dating from the 17th century all the way to the literature of the 21st century.

**What trips/guest speakers are there?**We regularly take trips to see drama texts being performed live, and where possible we visit Stratford-Upon-Avon or the Globe to experience Shakespeare live. We also attend Literature days at local universities, so students can get a taste of what it is like to study Literature at Higher Education level.

**What other subjects does A Level Literature go with?**A Level Literature is a versatile subject, which compliments the study of many other areas. It lends itself particularly well to the study of A levels such as History, English Language, Law, Art, Religious Studies and Languages.

**Recommended Reading**Any reading will set you in great stead for the course, but the following are widely recommended for any Literature student. We do not require you to pre-read our set texts, but if you would like a copy of the text list, please do not hesitate to get in touch!

C. Achebe *Things Fall Apart*

Peter Ackroyd *The House of Doctor Dee*

Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Jane Austen *Emma*

*Persuasion*

Charlotte Bronte *Jane Eyre*

Anthony Burgess *A Clockwork Orange*

Angela Carter *The Company of Wolves*

Wilkie Collins *The Woman in White*

Joseph Conrad *The Heart of Darkness*

Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*

George Eliot *Silas Marner*

William Faulkner *As I Lay Dying*

Sebastian Faulks *Birdsong*

F. Scott Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*

E.M. Forster *A Passage to India*

John Fowles *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*

William Golding *The Lord of the Flies*

Graham Greene *Brighton Rock*

Thomas Hardy *Far from the Madding Crowd*

Joseph Heller *Catch-22*

Ernest Hemingway *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

Susan Hill *The Woman in Black*

Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*

K. Ishiguro *The Remains of the Day*

Henry James *The Turn of the Screw*

Ken Kesey *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

D.H. Lawrence *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*

John Le Carre *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*

Harper Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Doris Lessing *The Summer before the Dark*

Iain McEwan *The Child in Time*

*Atonement*

Toni Morrison *Beloved*

Iris Murdoch *The Sandcastle*

George Orwell *Animal Farm*

*1984*

B. Pasternak *Dr Zhivago*

A. Paton *Cry, the Beloved Country*

M. Peake *The Gormenghast Trilogy*

Sylvia Plath *The Bell Jar*

Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Salman Rushdie *Midnight’s Children*

J.D. Salinger *Catcher in the Rye*

John Steinbeck *The Grapes of Wrath*

Tolstoy *Anna Karenina*

Alice Walker *The Color Purple*

Oscar Wilde *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Jeanette Winterson *Oranges are not the only Fruit*

Tom Wolfe *Bonfire of the Vanities*

Virginia Woolf *Mrs Dalloway*