

Course: AQA A-Level English Literature Specification A (7712)

Wider Reading List - NEA (Non-Examined Assessment – or coursework):

Victorian Text:

1. ***The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*** by Anne Brontë [1848 novel] - A mysterious young widow arrives at Wildfell Hall, an Elizabethan mansion which has been empty for many years, with her young son and servant. She lives there in strict seclusion under the assumed name Helen Graham and very soon finds herself the victim of local slander.

Modernist Texts:

1. ***The Painted Veil*** by W. Somerset Maugham [1925 novel] – Set in England and Hong Kong in the 1920s, *The Painted Veil* is the story of the beautiful, but love-starved Kitty Fane. When her husband discovers her adulterous affair, he forces her to accompany him to the heart of a cholera epidemic. Stripped of the British society of her youth and the small but effective society she fought so hard to attain in Hong Kong, she is compelled by her awakening conscience to reassess her life.
2. ***The Eyes Were Watching God*** by Zora Neale Hurston [1937 novel] – Set in Central and Southern Florida in the early 20th century, the novel is primarily a love story involving Janie Crawford, but it is also a rites-of-passage novel that chronicles an Afro-American woman's steps towards self-fulfilment. Janie's once enslaved and brutalised grandmother, Nanny, has placed all her hopes for the future stability and opportunity of the family on her teenage granddaughter. As a child, Hurston grew up living in the security of the first incorporated black town in America, and her novel about black life inspired a new generation of black American writers, including Alice Walker and Toni Morrison.
3. ***Gaslight*** by Patrick Hamilton [1937 play] – The play was first staged in 1938 but it is set in the late Victorian period. Years after her aunt was murdered in her home, a young woman moves back into the house with her new husband, Mr Manningham. However, he has a secret that he will do anything to protect, even if it means driving his wife insane.

Mid-20th Century Texts:

1. ***Look Back in Anger*** by John Osborne [1956 play] – It concerns a love triangle involving an intelligent and educated but disaffected young man of working-class origin (Jimmy Porter), his upper-middle-class, impassive wife (Alison), and her haughty best friend (Helena Charles). Cliff, an amiable Welsh lodger, attempts to keep the peace.
2. ***Wide Sargasso Sea*** by Jean Rhys [1966 novel] - a postcolonial prequel and reimagining of Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847), describing the background to the marriage that Jane learns about after going to work for Mr. Rochester.
3. ***We Have Always Lived in the Castle*** by Shirley Jackson [1962 novella] – Merricat Blackwood lives on the family estate with her sister Constance and her Uncle Julian. Not long ago

Course: AQA A-Level English Literature Specification A (7712)

before the novella begins, seven members of the Blackwood family until a lethal dose of arsenic finds its way into the sugar bowl on one terrible night.

4. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou [1969 autobiography] – the autobiography of Angelou’s early years, it is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma.

21st Century Text

1. *Brooklyn* by Colm Tóibín [2009 novel] - Eilis Lacey is a young woman in 1950s Ireland. Her older sister Rose organizes a meeting with a Catholic priest called Father Flood on a visit from New York City, who tells Eilis of the wonderful opportunities awaiting her in New York with excellent employment prospects. Because of this she emigrates to Brooklyn, New York and takes up a job in a department store whilst undertaking night classes in bookkeeping.

Independence – The exam board are very keen to stress that this is an independent research project, so **it may be possible** for you to choose your own secondary text. There are two limiting factors:

1. You cannot use any text that is on the specification. If you are unsure check with your current teacher or the AQA website, Specification code 7712. This means that texts such as *Wuthering Heights*, *Rebecca*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Colour Purple*, *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *The Taming of the Shrew* **cannot** be used. Please refer to pp. 24-27 of the specification if you wish to check.
[Specification \[texts which the exam board do not permit you to use are on pp. 24-27\]](#)
2. Texts that have had a significant impact on British writing but are in translation might be used but they will need to be approved. Eg. Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* [Russian novel] would be permitted and would be a good alternative to those texts not permitted above.

Wide Reading Texts [some **but not all** of these texts are not permitted for use on the NEA – see the specification for clarity]

1. *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess (1962)
2. *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (1987)
3. *Engleby* by Sebastian Faulks (2007)
4. *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (1861)
5. *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare (1602)
6. *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1847)
7. *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf (1925)
8. *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* by Jeanette Winterson (1985)
9. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813)
10. *Small Island* by Andrea Levy (2004)
11. *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy (1891)

Course: AQA A-Level English Literature Specification A (7712)

12. The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath (1963)
13. The Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger (1951)
14. The Collector by John Fowles (1963)
15. The Colour Purple by Alice Walker (1982)
16. The End of the Affair by Graham Greene (1951)
17. The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood (1985)
18. The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde (1890)
19. The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins (1892)
20. To Kill A Mocking Bird by Harper Lee (1960)
21. White Teeth by Zadie Smith (2000)
22. Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf by Edward Albee (1963)
23. Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte (1847)
24. 1984 by George Orwell (1949)