

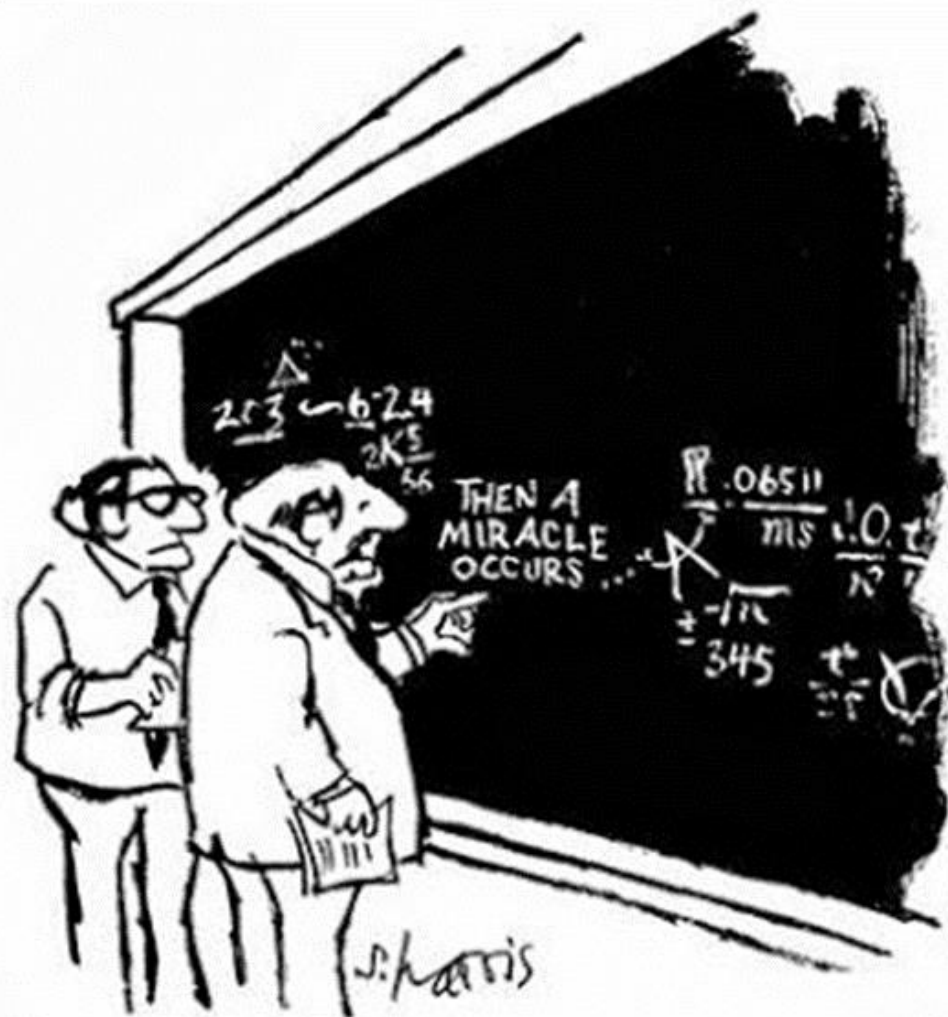
# Introduction to A Level Literature

Some approaches to topics, tasks, and  
study methods to prepare you for Sixth  
Form.

**Independence**

**Imagination**

**Investigation**



"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

## *Focusing Upon Study Skills*

For each of the following tasks you should select what you think will be the most useful and effective study/research strategy from the strategies listed on the *Study Strategies* page, and also explain the thinking behind and the reasons for your choice.

You will need appraise the likely outcomes on the *Evaluation Summary* to show how effective the strategy you have chosen will be.

### **Literature**

**Task 1:** You have to research the biographical and literary/historical context for a writer who you will study.

**Task 2:** You need to develop a high level of skill in using new subject-specific terminology in order to explore and evaluate the effects a writer wishes to create in drama, poetry, and prose.

**Task 3:** You are required to be able to discuss how the critical reception and responses to a text you are studying have changed over time.

**Task 4:** You need to write an essay-based thematic analysis of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century poem.

## *Study Strategies: focusing upon developing my independence*

1. Investigate recent research which has been published on the Internet.
2. Download the relevant sections of the Specification published on your Exam Board's website, including information on how your writing in the exam will be assessed.
3. Consult a published study guide; e.g. *York Notes*, *Letts Guides*, *CPG guide* etc.
4. Go onto your Exam Board's A level website and study the teaching and learning pages for this topic.
5. Download past exam papers from the Exam Board's website.
6. Download the *Desmos* app onto your phone.
7. Find past papers and mark schemes on the exam board website and try them and mark them yourself.
8. Use the online textbook to read further detail of the topic.

Invent your own original strategy.

*and if all else fails ...*

Ask your teacher.

## Introduction to A Level Study

One of the key points that is emphasised each year in Chief or Senior Examiners' Reports on A-Level examinations is that candidates who demonstrate *independent and original thinking* as well as a comprehensive knowledge of the course of study will be highly rewarded.

The biggest change for you from GCSE to A-Level courses is that in order to obtain the highest grades you can, you need to develop your ability and skill in working independently.

Essentially, this means that you become an active learner.

Whereas for your GCSEs you waited to be told what to do and how and when to do it by your teacher, at A-Level you need to investigate the full range of each of your courses so that you have the basic knowledge at your fingertips:

- how is the course structured?
- how many modules are there?
- how many topics are there per module?
- how many exams will there be?



All of the UK Exam Boards have highly-developed websites which consist of:

1. **Specifications:** which show how the course has been designed. The 'at-a-glance' or 'overview' page is a good starting point.
  - a. *Assessment:* will tell you how many and what types of exams you will have to sit. This will also list the set of Assessment Objectives (AOs) which you will have to target in all of your A-Level work.
  - a. *Mark-schemes:* although you might think that these are for your teachers to assess your work, they are an essential tool in helping you to improve your work and gauge your progress.
  - a. *Set-texts,* reading-lists, suggested wider reading. These lists are a perfect opportunity for you to get going on your own without waiting to be told. Print off the lists, stick them in your folders, borrow/buy the books and tick them off as you complete them
2. **'How to teach/plan the course':** again these pages might seem to be aimed at teachers but if you read and study these sections, you are developing your own expertise.
3. **Past Papers:** increasingly, each of the Exam Boards is building up a library of past papers. You need to use these regularly, particularly under timed conditions, to develop the speed and stamina you will need for your final exams.
4. **Key Dates/Exam Timetables:** essential for planning your study and revision timetables.

Here is the link to the Eduqas A Level subject-page and Literature Resources:

[AS and A Level English Literature | Eduqas](#)

## Literature A Level: Working Independently.

The attached document (*‘Introduction to A Level Literature’*) is an introduction to what is known as **‘Close Reading’** which is the core skill for A Level Literature.

Close reading means that you don’t simply read a text for entertainment, enjoyment, and information. It means instead that you have to examine and explore the ways in which the writer has used language to create a particular meaning that *you* find in *that* particular text.

The key message from the Edquas Chief Examiner for all four Literature components is that students “*explore and explain how meanings are shaped*”.

Please read the introduction to close reading and make notes of some of interesting comments and opinions from some academic writers and authors.

Then please read the texts/extracts themselves as many times as you need to so that you can start to make detailed notes about how the writers of the texts have presented and *shaped* their meanings.

## Summer Reading and Writing Tasks

Please work through the 'Introduction' booklet. You need to write a short essay analysing each of the four reading four. Your focus for each text should be upon how the writer shapes the meanings in the text.

Texts:

1. *Pied Beauty* by G.M. Hopkins
2. Extract from *Cleopatra* by Shakespeare
3. *Popular Mechanics* by Raymond Carver
4. *The Old Ways* by Robert Macfarlane