

Studying English Literature with Us

OCR A Level English Literature (H472) · For life, not school, we learn.

My thanks to Claude

1. What You'll Start in September

You begin with *Hamlet* — a full text immersion (the play itself, alongside critical and performance history) that sets the analytical standard for the whole course. It is deliberately the steepest step up from GCSE: closer textual work, wider critical reading, and your first experience of writing at A Level length and depth.

- **Autumn Term:** *Hamlet* (the Shakespeare half of Paper 1). Expect a progress test within the first month to establish you have made the correct subject choice – every subject, not just Lit!!
- **Later in Year 12:** Christina Rossetti's poetry (new selection this year) and Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, studied comparatively with a focus on context of composition.
- **Component 2:** a Dystopia comparative unit – the set texts (*1984* and *The Handmaid's Tale*).
- **Component 3 (NEA):** your independent coursework, running alongside taught content across both years.

2. How the Course Is Assessed – BLU's experience as an examiner

Component	Focus	Weight	Format
01 — Drama & Poetry pre-1900	Shakespeare + Rossetti / Ibsen	40%	2h 30, closed text
02 — Comparative & Contextual	Dystopia, plus unseen extract	40%	2h 30, closed text
03 — NEA	Two tasks: one focused on AO2; one a two-text comparative essay.	20%	3,000 words

All five Assessment Objectives (AO1–AO5) run across the course: textual analysis, interpretation, context, and comparison all matter **from day one**.

3. Equipment & Capturing Your Notes (A2L)

EQUIPMENT

- A4 ring-binder, divided by component. Some students prefer exercise books/digital platforms.
- Your own annotatable copies of set texts — you will be expected to buy these yourselves as you are expected to write on them. The Shakespeare must be the Collins edition (ISBN: 978-0008400484)
- Coloured pens for annotation coding, plus a highlighter set
- A dedicated vocabulary / critical terminology notebook

A SIMPLE NOTE-CAPTURING METHOD TO START WITH

- **Being present:** Not just in terms of attendance! Ask questions: be curious; engage in your scholarship.
- **Annotate:** Annotate directly on the text
- **Track:** After each lesson, transfer key quotations onto a running tracker sheet per text — quotation, technique, effect, possible essay use
- **Build:** Maintain one page per theme/character that you add to across the year, rather than starting new notes each time
- **Revisit:** Time spent weekly re-reading the previous week's tracker entries — this is what separates secure A Level recall from GCSE cramming

4. Academic and Deadlines Challenges to Expect

The two years ask more of your independence than GCSE did, in volume of reading, depth of analysis, and self-management of deadlines.

- **Tenth Period:** This need to be accounted for in order to ensure you are keeping up and aiming for your best possible outcome.
- **Year 12:** A significant jump in reading volume and density — full plays and collections studied in detail alongside critical materials and the writings of other academics. Mocks in the Spring.
- **Year 13:** Sustained 2h 30 exam-writing stamina, comparative essay technique, and the start of independent NEA research — choosing your own questions. **Two rounds** of mock examinations (November and March)
- **NEA timeline:** TBC. Internal drafting deadlines (first draft, redraft, final submission) running alongside taught content and your other A Levels — this is the single biggest organisational challenge of the course, especially if you also study history, for example.
- **A Levels are hard – but enormously enriching intellectually. And: I LOVE this particular course.**
- **November of year 13** 🧐

5. The Role of Subject Captains – Leadership opportunities

Subject Captains are ambassadors for English within PHSG and beyond — a leadership role open to students across Years 12 and 13.

- Devising and running department competitions (creative writing, poetry, debate) for younger year groups
- Reading Ambassador roles
- Representing English at Open Evenings and Offer Holder Days — talking to prospective students and families
- Acting as a voice between students and staff, feeding back what is and isn't working
- A genuine leadership and advocacy role — valuable experience for personal statements and beyond

6. Questions

Use this space to jot down anything you'd like to ask in the session, or afterwards by email (siobhan.blundencurrie@phsg.tsat.uk)

Please come along with a working knowledge of 'Hamlet' by watching productions available online, probably by signing up to the ERA here: [Educational Recording Agency - TV & Radio copyright licensing](#)