

English Literature: Top Tips for Success at A Level

Teacher tips:

- Read ahead. It is an expectation that you read to the end of each text as quickly as you can, and that you re-read the sections you know are going to be covered in the next lesson.
- Read widely – you could read from texts from a similar genre, but also literary criticism in the periodicals in the library (e-magazine and The English Review) and online. It is important to experience fluent writing of a high standard.
- Engage as frequently as possible in whole class discussions. Contribute your opinion and listen carefully to the ideas of others.
- Get used to taking notes during discussions (whether based on teacher's ideas or students') without having to be prompted first by the teacher.
- Be organised. Go over your notes taken in the lesson and organise and summarise them at home.
- Learn, and practise using, a specific literary register, especially for narrative devices.
- Write concise, fluent and well-structured prose that conveys your argument clearly and guides the reader well.
- Know the specific Assessment Requirements for each question.
- Active revision – you need to be completing practice essays in timed conditions and responding carefully to the targets you received on the last piece of work.
- Take pride in your work. Only submit something once you have proof-read it carefully.

Student tips:

- Finish reading the texts thoroughly and as quickly as you can; always re-read relevant chapters/poems before the lesson.
- Set the right foundations from the beginning by learning to write about aspects of narrative.
- Take detailed notes from class discussions. Organise them at home, based around key narrative terms (form, structure, voice etc).
- Look at past papers and mark schemes; use the criteria to mark all the work you do.
- Be independent; if you have missed anything or not completed tasks in lessons, catch up at home.