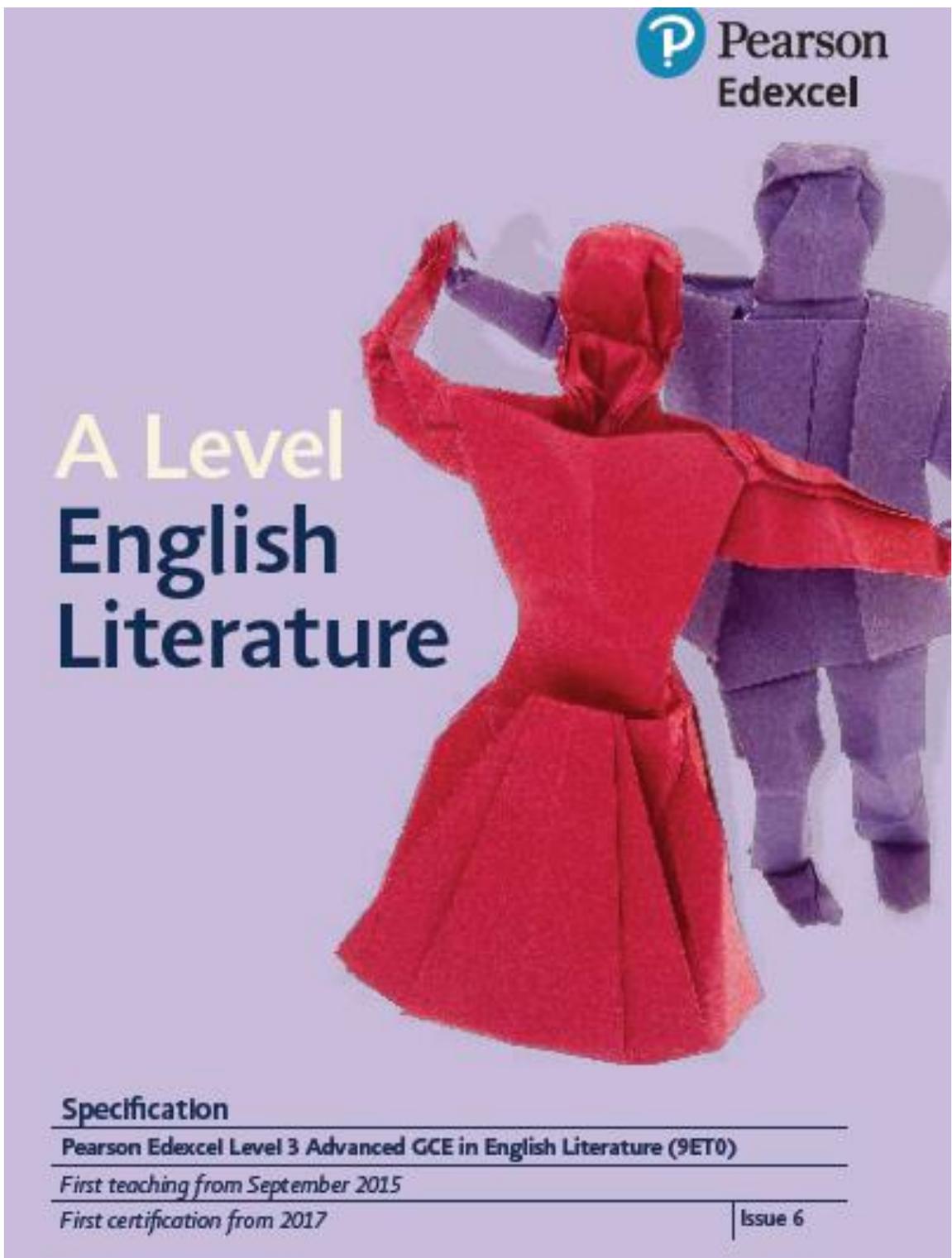


JWS

Edexcel A Level English Literature

G Aston



Specification:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/english-literature-2015.html>

Suggested support text

If you are able to access a copy of this it will support you, but you can also use the suggested websites provided later in this booklet



How to use this booklet

- Within this booklet, you will find access to tasks and activities, as well as suggested resources to support you.
- If you do manage to get hold of the suggested textbook, this would be an excellent introduction to one of the set texts on the course.
- Work your way through the tasks.
- The tasks that are highlighted in purple should be submitted to my email address at g.aston@jws.bham.sch.uk
- When you feel ready, complete and submit the baseline assessment at the end of the booklet.
- The deadline for the baseline assessment is 28th June.
- Please email me for support with any of this g.aston@jws.bham.sch.uk

Tasks and activities

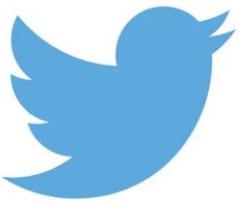
- Research the author of 'The Handmaid's Tale' – Margaret Atwood and produce a page of information about her intentions when writing the novel
- Create an A-Z glossary of subject terminology you use when analysing texts including novels, poetry and plays

'The Handmaid's Tale'

- Read sections 1-3 of the novel (chapters 1-7)
- Task: Atwood said of her novel 'There's nothing in the book that hasn't already happened.' From your reading, identify quotations from the text that relate to current or past events that have occurred within society. To develop this further, explore why Atwood may have done this considering the dystopian genre of the novel.
- Read sections 4-7 of the novel (chapters 8-18)
- Task: Throughout the novel Atwood shifts the action between past and present. What is the impact of this and how does this enable you to engage with the protagonist? Produce a detailed essay response using quotations to support your analysis.
- Read sections 8-11 of the novel (chapters 19-30)
- Task: Compare the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Offred's own version in Chapter 30. Why do you think Atwood chose to include this re-worked version of a well-known prayer? When you have responded to this question, explore the use of biblical references throughout the novel and what impact they have on the reader.
- Read sections 12-15 of the novel (chapters 31-46)
- Task: The horrific idea of women who, in an ecstatic frenzy, tear a man apart, is graphically depicted in a very ancient play, The Bacchae by Euripides (reflecting a custom of the time). Why does Atwood present a similar scene in chapter 43? Produce a detailed response to this and explore other depictions of violence within the novel.
- Read the Historical Notes
- Task: Several twentieth century novels - for example John Fowles' The French Lieutenant's Woman offer the reader possible alternative plots or endings. Atwood herself leaves endings open in her dystopian novels Oryx and Crake and The Year of the Flood. Is the 'open-ended' approach more interesting, or simply frustrating for the reader? Consider this after reading the final section of The Handmaid's Tale: 'Historical Notes'. Why did Atwood choose to include the Historical Notes, rather than end the novel after chapter 46?
- Baseline assessment: How does Atwood attempt to make her story believable? In your answer you must consider: the writer's methods and the relevance of contextual factors

Websites and social media support

- <https://crossref-it.info/textguide/the-handmaids-tale/31/0>
- <https://crossref-it.info/textguide/frankenstein/7/0>
- <https://crossref-it.info/textguide/othello/41/0>
- <https://crossref-it.info/articles/category/15/critical-approaches-to-literature>
- <https://crossref-it.info/articles/category/12/drama-developments>
- <https://crossref-it.info/articles/category/7/women-and-literature>



Twitter:

- @JWEngDept
- @MargaretAtwood
- @HandmaidsOnHulu
- @themassolit

Film recommendations and adaptations

- The National Theatre are currently offering the chance to watch productions of theirs every Thursday for free <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUDq1XzCY0NIOYVJvEMQjqw> It would be well worth watching adaptations of any Literature texts as this is always a useful discussion point
- The Handmaid's Tale is available as an audio book on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z7LhHTkJWQ>
- The Handmaid's Tale, Frankenstein, Poems of the Decade, A Streetcar Named Desire, Othello and Romantic Verse are all texts covered on this course and it would be worth watching any relevant videos available online

Book recommendations

- Please make use of the 'Making the Leap' pack that has been provided which offers a range of hugely useful articles
- York Notes Advanced or any A Level study guide for the set texts: The Handmaid's Tale, Frankenstein, Poems of the Decade, A Streetcar Named Desire, Othello and Romantic Verse
- 'The Testaments' by Margaret Atwood which is the sequel to the 'The Handmaid's Tale'
- Other dystopian Literature such as '1984' by George Orwell, 'Catch 22' by Joseph Heller, 'Vox' by Christina Dalcher, 'The Last' by Hanna Jameson

