Getting ready to study A Level English at The Cherwell School

English is a subject for students who love reading! You will study three set texts in Year 12 and two set texts in Year 13. In addition, you will study a range of modern texts for your coursework; these will depend partly on your teacher and also on your own interests.

Additionally, you will be expected to read widely around your set texts – we’ll give you lots of guidance on how to do this, but you will also be expected to read independently. You will also be given an anthology of Gothic literature at the end of Year 12.

You will be studying for the OCR H472 English Literature examination.

The three key texts for Year 12 are shown below. You must buy copies of these texts before starting the course and it is essential that you buy the exact edition of the text so it looks like the ones shown below.

The Merchant’s Prologue and Tale by Geoffrey Chaucer
Cambridge School edition, edited by Sheila Innes
ISBN 978-0521787536

An Ideal Husband by Oscar Wilde
Published by Methuen, New Mermaids edition, edited by Sos Eltis

Hamlet by William Shakespeare
Published by Palgrave Macmillan, edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen

You are not expected to have read these texts from cover to cover before starting Year 12 as they are quite challenging, but you should familiarise yourself with the characters and the plot; reading a study guide online can be helpful for this. It is also a good idea to read the start of the texts – the first couple of scenes or opening sections. Have a look at the editor’s introduction at the very start of your copies of the set texts.
Further reading

If you choose to study English Literature at A Level, you obviously like reading! A level is often the best opportunity to read widely and be adventurous in tackling new types of texts - it could be prose (novels and short stories), poetry or drama. Below is a brief list of suggested texts which Year 13 students and teachers often recommend to students moving into Year 12. Go to your local library, or buy a second hand copy of at least one of these texts over the summer holidays and read it (even if it is a challenge!). This is a great start to your A Level.

PROSE
✓ *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
✓ *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood
✓ *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
✓ *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad
✓ *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
✓ *All the Light We Cannot See* by Antony Doerr
✓ *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway
✓ *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
✓ *Never Let me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro
✓ *Dubliners* or *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce
✓ *Small Island* by Andrea Levy
✓ *Station Eleven* by Emily St John Mandel
✓ *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys
✓ *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell
✓ *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald
✓ *NW* by Zadie Smith

POETRY
✓ *The Oxford Book of English Verse* edited by Christopher Ricks (a great starting point if you don’t know what you might like to read)
✓ *Selected Poems* by Emily Dickinson
✓ *The Waste Land* by T.S Eliot
✓ *North* by Seamus Heaney
✓ *The Whitsun Weddings* by Philip Larkin
✓ *Look We Have Coming to Dover!* by Daljit Nagra
✓ *Ariel* by Sylvia Plath
✓ *Selected Poems* by W.B.Yeats

DRAMA
✓ anything by Shakespeare
✓ *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett
✓ *Jerusalem* by Jez Butterworth
✓ *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill
✓ *Translations* by Brian Friel
✓ *A Doll’s House* by Henrik Ibsen
✓ *The Caretaker* by Harold Pinter
✓ *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard
✓ *Our Country’s Good* by Timberlake Wertenbaker
✓ *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde