

**THE URSULINE ACADEMY**  
**A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE**  
**PREPARATORY WORK**



*'A word after a word after a word is power.'* – Margaret Atwood

Welcome to *A Level English Literature*! We look forward to meeting you all in class very soon.

At A Level you *must* read widely around the primary texts and we will guide you to do this. Ambitious students will explore the plethora of resources available, both those provided by your class teachers and beyond, and will use what they learn to further explore and develop ideas about the primary texts while becoming informed critical thinkers.

At A Level, you get out what you put in. Do your best and explore your specific areas of interests in texts and you will find yourself not only enjoying but achieving in the subject.

Below is a brief overview of the units will study in the first term of Year 12, along with some essential pre-course reading.

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### **Year 12: Autumn Term Course Content**

- *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare
- *Doctor Faustus: B Text*, by Christopher Marlowe (Longman edition)

It is up to you which edition of *The Tempest* that you buy, however it is imperative that you buy the Longman B Text edition of *Doctor Faustus* (ISBN: 978-0582254091) as there are important variations to the A Text.

You will need these texts immediately in September.

### **Some suggested wider readings:**

- ❖ '*Christopher Marlowe: The Man, the Myth, the Mighty Line*', by Andrew Dickinson – <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/christopher-marlowe-the-man-the-myth-and-the-mighty-line>
- ❖ '*Marlowe's Doctor Faustus*' – <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/marlowes-doctor-faustus-1631>
- ❖ '*The First Night of The Tempest*', by Gordon McMullon – <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/the-first-night-of-the-tempest>

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**TASK 1:** Find and read a short biography of Christopher Marlowe, for example that found on the British Library website, <https://www.bl.uk/people/christopher-marlowe>. (This will also help you when completing Task 3.)

- As you read your biography, make a note of the key features of this genre. You will need this for the next task.

**TASK 2:** Using what you have learnt from Marlowe's biography, write your own one page, typed biography of yourself as a literature student.

- You will be expected to write a clear, detailed biography, demonstrating understanding of the key features of the genre.
- We would also like you to take the relevant course Assessment Objectives (as outlined below) into account when writing your biography.

**AO1:** Articulate informed, personal and creative responses, using coherent, accurate written expression.

**AO3:** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of contexts.

**TASK 3:** Using the suggested topics below, research and produce a set of contextual notes on both *The Tempest* and *Doctor Faustus*.

***The Jacobean Era***

- King James I
- Jacobean Theatre
- Magic in the Jacobean era

***The Tempest***

- Time of writing and relevance to Shakespeare's writing career

Literary background:

- Michel de Montaigne's essay, '*Of the Canibales*'
- William Strachey's '*A true reportory of the wreck*' in Bermuda

Historical Background:

- Travel and Colonisation
- Political and social hierarchy in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Italy

***Doctor Faustus***

- Christopher Marlowe's life and works

Literary background:

- The Faust story
- Other literary sources
- Morality Plays
- Poetic Styles

Historical Background:

- Protestantism and Catholicism
- Heresy and Atheism
- Puritans
- Humanism
- Despair
- John Dee

*Useful sources:*

- <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/montaignes-essays-translated-by-florio>
- <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/stracheys-a-true-reportory-of-the-wreck-in-bermuda>