

Bridging work for English Literature Summer 2025

Please send your completed notes to fholmes@stj.kent.sch.uk

1. **Essential bridging work:** Use the questions below to analyse the three extracts that follow. You can print these off and write your notes around the texts and send pictures of your completed work to me. Or you can type your answers and send just those, provided that you use quotations from the extracts to support your points.
2. **Optional bridging work:** Choose a text from the attached reading list and read it over the summer holidays. You will be asked to discuss your reading in the first lessons in Year 12, where you can discuss the book you have chosen (and others you have read in the summer).

Reading questions:

1. What leaps out at you about this text?
2. First thoughts as you read the text?
3. What do you find puzzling?
4. Pick a line or phrase that you really like and think about why?
5. What are your predictions based on what you have read?
6. What do you want us to discuss about this text?
7. What does this remind you of?
8. How does this compare with the texts you read for English GCSE?

Extract 1:

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

I shouldn't have come to this party.

I'm not even sure I belong at this party. That's not on some bougie shit, either. There are just some places where it's not enough to be me. Either version of me. Big D's spring break party is one of those places.

I squeeze through sweaty bodies and follow Kenya, her curls bouncing past her shoulders. A haze lingers over the room, smelling like weed, and music rattles the floor. Some rapper calls out for everybody to Nae-Nae, followed by a bunch of "Heys" as people launch into their own versions. Kenya holds up her cup and dances her way through the crowd. Between the headache from the loud-ass music and the nausea from the weed odour, I'll be amazed if I cross the room without spilling my drink.

We break out the crowd. Big D's house is packed wall-to-wall. I've always heard that everybody and their momma comes to his spring break parties – well, everybody except me – but damn, I didn't know it would be this many people. Girls wear their hair coloured, curled, laid, and slayed. Got me feeling basic as hell with my ponytail. Guys in their freshest kicks and sagging pants grind so close to girls they just about need condoms. My nana likes to say that spring brings love. Spring in Garden Heights doesn't always bring love, but it promises babies in the winter. I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of them are conceived the night of Big D's party. He always has it on the Friday of spring break because you need Saturday to recover and Sunday to repent.

Extract 2:

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year. That'll make it almost exactly twelve years. Now I know my being a carer so long isn't necessarily because they think I'm fantastic at what I do. There are some really good carers who've been told to stop after just two or three years. And I can think of one carer at least who went on for all of fourteen years despite being a complete waste of space. So I'm not trying to boast. But then I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work, and by and large, I have too. My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before fourth donation. Okay, maybe I am boasting now. But it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well, especially that bit about my donors staying "calm." I've developed a kind of instinct around donors. I know when to hang around and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves; when to listen to everything they have to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it.

Anyway, I'm not making any big claims for myself. I know carers, working now, who are just as good and don't get half the credit. If you're one of them, I can understand how you might get resentful—about my bedsit, my car, above all, the way I get to pick and choose who I look after. And I'm a Hailsham student—which is enough by itself sometimes to get people's backs up. Kathy H., they say, she gets to pick and choose, and she always chooses her own kind: people from Hailsham, or one of the other privileged estates. No wonder she has a great record. I've heard it said enough, so I'm sure you've heard it plenty more, and maybe there's something in it. But I'm not the first to be allowed to pick and choose, and I doubt if I'll be the last. And anyway, I've done my share of looking after donors brought up in every kind of place. By the time I finish, remember, I'll have done twelve years of this, and it's only for the last six they've let me choose.

Extract 3:

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

Mariam was five years old the first time she heard the word harami.

It happened on a Thursday. It must have, because Mariam remembered that she had been restless and preoccupied that day, the way she was only on Thursdays, the day when Jalil visited her at the kolba. To pass the time until the moment that she would see him at last, crossing the knee-high grass in the clearing and waving, Mariam had climbed a chair and taken down her mother's Chinese tea set. The tea set was the sole relic that Mariam's mother, Nana, had of her own mother, who had died when Nana was two. Nana cherished each blue-and-white porcelain piece, the graceful curve of the pot's spout, the hand-painted finches and chrysanthemums, the dragon on the sugar bowl, meant to ward off evil.

It was this last piece that slipped from Mariam's fingers, that fell to the wooden floorboards of the kolba and shattered.

When Nana saw the bowl, her face flushed red and her upper lip shivered, and her eyes, both the lazy one and the good, settled on Mariam in a flat, unblinking way. Nana looked so mad that Mariam feared the jinn would enter her mother's body again. But the jinn didn't come, not that time. Instead, Nana grabbed Mariam by the wrists, pulled her close, and, through gritted teeth, said, "You are a clumsy little harami. This is my reward for everything I've endured. An heirloom-breaking, clumsy little harami."

At the time, Mariam did not understand. She did not know what this word harami bastard meant. Nor was she old enough to appreciate the injustice, to see that it is the creators of the harami who are culpable, not the harami, whose only sin is being born. Mariam did surmise, by the way Nana said the word, that it was an ugly, loathsome thing to be a harami, like an insect, like the scurrying cockroaches Nana was always cursing and sweeping out of the kolba.

Recommended reading list for English Literature A Level

This list is by no means exhaustive (although it would take you a while to get through it all!) nor are there any guarantees that you will enjoy all the books included. It is merely a list of suggestions that will give you somewhere to start when faced with a whole library-full of possibilities. With any luck, there is something on this list that you will still be re-reading in 20 years time!

Author Particularly recommended titles(feel free to extend this to other titles by the same author!)

C. Achebe	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>
Margaret Atwood	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , <i>Cat's Eye</i> , <i>Oryx and Crake</i>
Jane Austen	anything
Iain Banks	<i>Complicity</i>
Louis de Bernieres	anything
Charlotte Bronte	<i>Jane Eyre</i>
Emily Bronte	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>
Anthony Burgess	<i>A Clockwork Orange</i>
Sebastian Faulks	<i>Birdsong</i>
F. Scott Fitzgerald	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
E.M. Forster	anything
William Golding	<i>The Lord of the Flies</i>
Hawthorne	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>
Joseph Heller	<i>Catch-22</i>
Ernest Hemingway	<i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i> , <i>Farewell to Arms</i>
Susan Hill	<i>I'm the King of the Castle</i>
Aldous Huxley	<i>Brave New World</i>
K. Ishiguro	<i>The Remains of the Day</i> , <i>Never Let Me Go</i>
Harper Lee	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
Toni Morrison	<i>Beloved</i> , <i>Song of Solomon</i> , <i>The Bluest Eye</i> ,
Sula Iris Murdoch	<i>The Sandcastle</i>

George Orwell	<i>Animal Farm, 1984</i>
Sylvia Plath	<i>The Bell Jar</i>
J.D. Salinger	<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>
John Steinbeck	anything
Bram Stoker	<i>Dracula</i>
Patrick Suskind	<i>Perfume</i>
Thackeray	<i>Vanity Fair</i>
Tolstoy	<i>Anna Karenina</i>
Alice Walker	<i>The Color Purple</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>