



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Success in A-level English Literature, as with any A-level, depends on the time you invest in it. To help you prepare for next year, you should take time now to research the texts you will need to know for your examinations. These are:

- *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald)
- *Measure for Measure* (William Shakespeare)
- *The Duchess of Malfi* (John Webster)

You will study one other examination text (*Paradise Lost*, by John Milton) and three other texts for coursework. You need not think about these now.

As you read about your texts, you must make brief, precise **notes** on the plot, the characters and themes. For the plot, you need only make brief notes – perhaps three bullet points – on each chapter/scene. Do not analyse; simply note what happens and who is involved. You will find specific guidance below on characters and themes.

You should also:

- read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*,
- watch a production – a film of the play is perfect – of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

You could also:

- read Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*;
- read either of these novels:
 - *The Grapes of Wrath* (John Steinbeck);
 - *Native Son* (Richard Wright);
- watch a film adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's [The Great Gatsby](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/gatsby/)

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/gatsby/>

Characters:

- Jay Gatsby
- Daisy Buchanan
- Tom Buchanan
- Nick Carraway

Themes:

- Settings (different places: cities, houses, rooms, etc.)
- Success, failure and the American dream
- Love
- Men and women

William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*

<https://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/measure/characters/>

Characters:

- Isabella
- Angelo
- Duke Vincentio

Themes:

- Deceit and corruption
- Power and powerlessness
- Men and women
- Justice and mercy

Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/ageofinnocence/>

Characters

- Newland Archer
- Ellen Olenska (the Countess Olenska)
- May Welland Themes

Themes

- Conformity and non-conformity
- Settings (different places: cities, houses, rooms, etc.)
- Love
- Men and women

John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*

<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-duchess-of-malfi/characters/the-duchess-of-malfi>

Characters

- The Duchess
- Bosola
- Antonio
- Ferdinand

Themes

- Corruption
- Revenge
- Strong feelings (passions), such as love, hate, ambition