

# English Literature Summer Assignment

*Your summer assignment must be submitted in the **first lesson for this subject in September**. The completion of this assignment is compulsory and we expect you to put every effort into completing it to the best of your ability. Failure to submit this assignment will jeopardise your place on this course.*

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You need to do **both** of the tasks below:

## **Task 1: Close textual analysis (60 mins - see assessment criteria at the end)**

Choose **one** of the poems listed and answer the question. This will need to be written as an analytical essay and will build on your skills learned in studying unseen poetry. We are looking to see how developed your analysis skills are, what your writing and ideas are like and how you structure your argument.

## **Task 2: Desert Island Books discussion and presentation**

In order for your teacher to find out more about you as a reader, we would like you to be able to talk, in a small group, about how reading has shaped you and do a very short presentation of something you have read this summer.

We would like you to choose **3 novels or other** texts that have been important to you as a reader and show how your reading habits have developed over time. There is a note taking sheet attached to shape your thinking and to help you make some notes about why this book is important to you and why you chose it.

They may be texts that have particular relevance to a part of your life or changed the way you felt about reading or something else.

You **might** choose

- your first favourite book as a child and why it mattered to you;
- the first book you chose independently;
- a book that is important to your family;
- a book that was a recommendation;
- a book that had a profound effect upon you;
- a book that you have re-read many times.

The choice is up to you.

It might be hard to whittle it down but by persevering, it will tell you something about your journey and your relationship with books.

You should also prepare a very short presentation of one book that you have read this summer and enjoyed and try to include some comments on:

- The narrative voice
- The presentation of characters
- The time period of the text
- The structure
- Your personal response

You might decide to produce a poster, a scrapbook, or a power point to help you. You don't need to stand up or make it really formal. We are going to use it so that you can get to know each other.

Obviously, as a keen reader, you will want to do a lot of reading for pleasure over the summer and the list below includes our suggestions of authors that we think you'll like.

We have tried to choose a variety of genres and eras to encourage you to find someone new and expand the range of authors that you know a little further. Of course, it is not exhaustive and there are plenty more great authors out there.

Have a look online to find out more about these authors to see who you might find interesting and then be a little selective about the novels that you choose. Some of their novels will appeal to you and some will not.

Make sure you pick something that you think you're going to like and if you don't, try something else.

Just make sure that you are reading widely and choosing things that are a bit challenging.

Margaret Atwood	Marina Lewycka	Ian McEwan	David Nicholls
E M Forster	Jane Austen	Alice Walker	Khaled Hosseini
Celeste Ng	Janice Galloway	Zadie Smith	Ottessa Moshfegh
Erin Kelly	Angela Carter	Charles Dickens	James Patterson
Cormac McCarthy	Graham Greene	Andrea Levy	Maya Angelou
Sebastian Faulks	Donna Tartt	Monica Ali	George Orwell
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Sayaka Murata	F Scott Fitzgerald	Toni Morrison
Daphne Du Maurier	Sarah Waters	Jackie Kay	Gabriel Garcia Marquez
Colm Toibin	Lionel Shriver	Rachel Seiffert	Stephen King



## 2. Cradle Cap – Fiona Benson

It begins as a roughness,  
then spreads to a lichenous crust that  
helmets your head for months,  
and for months a cuckoo-spit salve  
wets down your scalp  
as we try to soak it off.

At last it lifts  
bringing out your hair in tufts  
till you look for all the world  
like my own, small, robin-in-the-moult  
with your dishevelled feathers,  
stuck quills.

Little hedge familiar,  
you came to us perfect;  
now you claw at your head and  
draw blood, till your skull  
is as scritch-scratched and scored  
as if we'd left you to sleep in the gorse.

Yet this is what we hope for,  
that you roughen, weather –  
darling, you cannot always be this tender,  
but hush you and heal  
and soon you'll come fledging into this life  
tempered and whole.

**How does Fiona Benson create a sense of a new born baby's fragility in this poem?**

### **3. Nightrunning – Tiffany Atkinson**

So much cold  
even the moon can't swallow it  
or the harbour in its fishy dark. You  
balance your breath like a bowl of dry  
ice. It's all a mistake, this body,  
this job, this love. Somewhere inside  
where the heart spins hard on its string  
is an animal watching. It scratches  
at night, perhaps a beak or a tusk,  
is neither kind nor unkind, just restless.

So much rain  
even the deepest hill can't filter it  
or the river with its open gills. You  
carry your heart like a full dish of blood.  
It's all such a blessing, this body,  
this job, this love. Somewhere inside  
where the lungs stretch their intricate wings  
is an animal watching. It wriggles  
at night and shows its belly or its tender scales,  
is neither kind nor unkind, just restless.

**How does the poet present feelings of love in this poem?**

#### **4. Exit Interview – Blake Morrison**

This poem is my exit interview.  
I'm giving HR my reasons for leaving.  
They sit there like psychiatrists, taking notes.

I was happy to begin with, I tell them.  
No new arrival could have asked for more:  
kindly mentors to help me find my feet,

sleepy afternoons in the sunlit atrium,  
a screen and keyboard to disseminate my work.  
Records will show that I made good progress,

hit it off with colleagues and line managers  
and met the targets I was paid to meet.  
What's changed then? No gripe about money or status

just a feeling I've accomplished all I can.  
Oh, I know where I'm off to isn't rated,  
that no good word has ever been said of it.

But think of the perks. No stress, no deadlines,  
no gossip by the water cooler, no sick building syndrome,  
no team-building awaydays, no commuter gridlock,

no voicemail, nothing at all for ever and ever –  
an unbeatable package, I tell them,  
slamming the door behind me as I go.

**How does the poet convey their feelings about their place of work?**

**5. Old Father Thames – John Agard**

Old Father Thames  
of the flowing patriarchal locks  
See how the Ganges still breathes

in your West India docks.  
See how the Nile's distant kiss  
still finds the cheeks of your metropolis

Old Father Thames  
Empire's wrinkles etch your tide.  
About time you reclaimed your feminine side.

Try laying down your trident, old chap.  
Take the weight of anchors and maps  
from off your monumental head.

Have a good squat, old Father Thames.  
Squat on your dark silted bed  
till birth screams of changing winds

turn you midwife to a new beginning.

**How does the poet convey feelings regarding place, identity and culture?**

6. **Prayer - Regie Gibson**

for the drummers hands  
severed before they could strike skin

for the seventh string of unplayed guitars  
gone suicidal with longing

for the fifth tendon of the hobbled upright

the fourth key of discarded trumpets  
tortured into silent confession

for the ghostly gray keys of murdered pianos  
condemned to inhabit the cadavers of their killers

prayer for every dancers legs  
stolen and pawned

for all poets made to eat their tongues

the artists eyes

painted shut by the color blind  
the singers throat made mausoleum  
of infant hymns

this elegy is for your aborted souls

your mahabarata suffocated while dreaming of your birth

your music massacred while praying

your song assassinated in flight

for you whose flames  
could have scorched

open paths between us  
and ourselves

and for us  
condemned to never know it

**How does the poet convey his feelings of injustice and racial oppression?**

## **Task 1: Close Textual Analysis**

### **Assessment criteria**

These criteria are taken from the OCR assessment criteria.

#### **Band 5 - Grade A/B**

- Excellent and detailed understanding of the poem.
- Analysis is detailed and uses poetic terminology accurately.
- Analysis of the effects of form, structure and language is detailed.
- Writing is consistently fluent, accurate, and structures and develops an argument fully.
- Consistently effective use of quotations critically discussed and blended into discussion.

#### **Band 4 – Grade C/D**

- Good understanding of the poem
- Analysis is good and uses poetic terminology well.
- Analysis is developed and covers form, structure and language.
- Writing is coherent; accurate and has a clear line of argument that is developed.
- Good use of quotations that are generally critically discussed.

#### **Band 3 – Grade E**

- Some understanding of the poem
- Analysis is competent and there is some discussion of form structure and language.
- Writing is clear and appropriate and some straightforward arguments have been made.
- There is some competent use of quotations that are relevant and support the discussion.

#### **Band 4 – Grade U**

- Limited understanding of poem or task

## **Task 2: Desert Island Books discussion and presentation**

**This will be assessed informally by your teacher during the first lesson.**

## Optional note taking sheet for your presentation or discussion:

<b>Choice of book 1</b>	
What is your reason for choosing this book? What does it mean to you?	
What is the history behind your relationship with this book?	
What lessons did this book teach you?	
How would you describe this book to a friend?	
<b>Choice of book 2</b>	
What is your reason for choosing this book? What does it mean to you?	
What is the history behind your relationship with this book?	
What lessons did this book teach you?	
How would you describe this book to a friend?	
<b>Choice of book 3</b> <b>Summer read</b>	
Why did you choose this book? What did you know about it before you started reading?	
What could you say about the narrative voice that is used?	
What was interesting about the way the characters were presented?	
What time period was this text set in and what effect did that create?	
What was interesting about the structure?	
What was your personal response to this text?	