The GCSE syllabus is more demanding than ever. Students need to be able to engage with a wide range of challenging texts from the 19th to the 21st century as part of the Language and Literature courses.

Below are the set texts on the AQA GCSE English Literature syllabus. Students will be required to study one text from the 19th century section and one text from the modern section, either prose or drama. However, to support their learning students could also read the texts they are not studying.

19th Century Novels

- The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde – Robert Louis Stevenson
- A Christmas Carol – Charles Dickens
- Great Expectations – Charles Dickens
- Jane Eyre – Charlotte Bronte
- Frankenstein – Mary Shelley
- Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen
- The Sign of Four – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Modern Texts – Prose

- Lord of the Flies – William Golding
- Animal Farm – George Orwell
- Never Let Me Go – Kazuo Ishiguro
- Anita and Me – Meera Syal
- Pigeon English – Stephen Kelman

Modern Texts – Drama

- An Inspector Calls – JB Priestley
- Blood Brothers – Alan Bennett (M)
- The History Boys – Alan Bennett (M)
- DNA – Dennis Kelly
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Mark Haddon (L)
- A Taste of Honey – Shelagh Delaney (M)

More 19th Century novels

- Sense and Sensibility (1811) - Jane Austen
- The Three Musketeers (1844) – Alexander Dumas
- Wuthering Heights (1847) - Emily Bronte
- The Scarlet Letter (1850) - Nathaniel Hawthorne
- Moby Dick (1851) – Herman Melville
- The Woman in White (1859) - Wilkie Collins
- Silas Marner (1861) - George Eliot
- The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890) - Oscar Wilde
- Tess of the D’Urbervilles (1891) - Thomas Hardy
- Dracula (1897) - Bram Stoker

20th Century Best of British

- A Room with a View (1908) – E M Forster
- Mrs Dalloway (1925) - Virginia Woolf
- Brighton Rock (1938) - Graham Greene (V/M)
- Brideshead Revisited (1945) - Evelyn Waugh
- Lucky Jim (1954) - Kingsley Amis
- The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy (1979) - Douglas Adams
- Empire of the Sun (1984) - J G Ballard
- The Remains of the Day (1989) - Kazuo Ishiguro
- Birdsong (1993) - Sebastian Faulks
- Enduring Love (1997) - Ian McEwan

M - Mature themes  L - Explicit Language  V - Violence  Accessible texts  Challenging texts
20th Century American Classics

The Great Gatsby (1922) – F. Scott Fitzgerald
Of Mice and Men (1937) - John Steinbeck
The Catcher in the Rye (1951) - J D Salinger
A Farewell to Arms (1952) - Ernest Hemingway
To Kill a Mockingbird (1960) - Harper Lee

War & Conflict

All Quiet on the Western Front (1929) - Erich Maria Remarque
Catch 22 (1961) – Joseph Heller
Regeneration (1991) - Pat Barker

Science Fiction

War of the Worlds (1898) – H G Wells
Day of the Triffids (1951) – John Wyndham
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep (1968) – Philip K Dick
Oryx and Crake (2003) – Margaret Atwood

Dystopian

Brave New World (1932) - Aldous Huxley
1984 (1948) - George Orwell
The Handmaid’s Tale (1985) – Margaret Atwood (M)

Mystery & Thriller

The 39 Steps (1915) - John Buchan
Rebecca (1938) – Daphne du Maurier
The Talented Mr Ripley (1955) – Patricia Highsmith (M)

Horror

The Turn of the Screw (1898) – Henry James
The Birds (1952) – Daphne du Maurier
The Woman in Black (1983) – Susan Hill

Contemporary Reads

Good Omens (1990) - Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett
The Perks of being a Wallflower (1999) – Stephen Chbosky (M)
The Blind Assassin (2000) - Margaret Atwood
Atonement (2001) - Ian McEwan (M)
Life of Pi (2001) – Yan Martel
The Lovely Bones (2002) - Alice Sebold (M)
The Time Traveller’s Wife (2003) - Audrey Niffenegger
The Kite Runner (2003) - Khaled Hosseini (M)
Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell (2004) - Susanna Clarke
A Long Way Down (2005) – Nick Hornby
The Road (2006) - Cormac McCarthy
13 Reasons Why (2007) - Jay Asher (M)
One Day (2009) – David Nicholls
The Help (2009) - Katherine Stockett
Room (2010) - Emma Donoghue (M)
The Night Circus (2011) - Erin Morgenstern
The Sisters Brothers (2011) - Patrick deWitt (M)
Eleanor and Park (2012) – Rainbow Rowell
We Were Liars (2014) - E Lockhart
Station Eleven (2014) - Emily St. John Mandel
All the Bright Places (2015) - Jennifer Niven
Spellbook of the Lost and Found (2017) - Moria Fowley-Doyle (M)

Non Fiction

The Diary of a Young Girl (1947) – Anne Frank
In Cold Blood (1966) - Truman Capote
Touching the Void (1988) - Joe Simpson
Friday Night Lights (1990) - H. G. Bissinger
Fever Pitch (1992) - Nick Hornby
Notes from a Small Island (1995) - Bill Bryson
We Should All Be Feminists (2014) - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

M - Mature themes
L - Explicit Language
V - Violence
Accessible texts
Challenging texts