Course: Pearson Edexcel A Level English Language and Literature

**Recommended Reading and Watching List for both Section Bs of the exams**

***Text 1: A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams (Paper 1 Section B)***

* *Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell.*
* *A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams – this will show you the similar themes that Williams was focused on – dysfunctional relationships, familial relationships, race relations, The South etc.
* *The Waste Land* by T.S. Elliot – particularly for comparisons between the Valley of Ashes and the descriptions in this poem.
* *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy – A story of a ‘fallen woman’ and the cruel treatment of a woman by a patriarchal society – useful when analysing this text through a Feminist lens. Could also read Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti if you’re exploring Feminist Theory. This will also help with your understanding of Myrtle Wilson in The Great Gatsby.
* What to Watch: *The Marlon Brando movie version of this text, Blue Jasmine (starring Cate Blanchett – loosely based on this text), documentaries about New Orleans in this time period, Gone with the Wind.*

***Text 2: The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Paper 2 Section B)***

* *The Twenties* by Edmund Wilson - one of Fitzgerald's friends - is an interesting introduction to the decade and to the many cultural figures in America at that time. Another book by Wilson that chronicles the Twenties and Thirties is *The Shores of Light*, 1952.
* *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad. Conrad was a literary favourite of Fitzgerald, who used the Polish author's narrative technique in *The Great Gatsby*. The short novel is the story of the civilized Mr. Kurtz, who travels to the savage heart of Africa, only to find his evil soul.
* *Six Tales of the Jazz Age and Other Stones* F. Scott Fitzgerald 1922. This is the author's second collection of short stories, the most notable of which is “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz.” The recurrent theme of fantasy and winning the top girl and financial success is central to this and other stories.
* *Great Expectations* (1861) by Charles Dickens tells of a grim childhood and an orphan's encounter with wealth and lost love in England during the Victorian era. You can draw parallels between Gatsby and Pip’s hubris and rags to riches stories.
* Gatsby can be considered as related to other Modernist works such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). But *The Great Gatsby* and all of Fitzgerald's works are best compared to those written by other Americans such as Ernest Hemingway, members of the "Lost Generation" of American writers who moved to Europe after World War I. All these writers depicted the reality, corruption, and sadness of the human condition.
* Sparknotes further reading list: <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/gatsby/bibliography/> and companion text list: <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/gatsby/companion-texts/> (note Zelda on this one – definitely worth a read as Fitzgerald’s relationship with his wife was a major influence on his writing about Gatsby and Daisy).
* What to watch: Midnight in Paris, Z: The Beginning of Everything, Citizen Kane, Bugsy Malone.

***Text 3: A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry***

* The poetry of Langston Hughes, in particular Harlem <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46548/harlem>, which lends itself to both the title and epigraph of this book.
* Richard Wright’s works, e.g. *Native Son*, which is particularly relevant as it's about a young black man not feeling accepted in Chicago. Also Wright’s autobiography *Black Boy* (1945) discusses the author’s experience of racial discrimination and poverty in twentieth-century Chicago.
* The poetry of Maya Angelou e.g. Caged Bird:  <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48989/caged-bird>.
Read about her here too: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/maya-angelou>
* James Baldwin’s *Notes of a Native Son* (1955)
* Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952) explore urban African-American life, the question of assimilation, and the realities of Northern racism.
* To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee
* Other texts that explore the idea of The American Dream: *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (these last 2 texts also discuss race relations in the US pre-1930).
* Sparknotes further reading list: <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/raisin/bibliography/>
* What to watch: 2008 movie version with P Diddy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKj7wcuY6X8&list=FL7c2cZfI5Z3_e_AHetmznuw&index=76> ,