

## English Literature Transition Project



At A-Level we follow the **Edexcel Specification** and will study the following texts:

Year 12

'A Thousand Splendid Suns' Hosseini

'Wuthering Heights' Bronte

'The Duchess of Malfi' Webster

'Hamlet' Shakespeare

Year 13

'Regeneration' Barker

First World War poetry

The Romantic Poets

Contemporary poetry



<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/home.html>

The A level course covers texts from a range of periods and across poetry, prose and drama. However, all units have a focus on AO3 which is the context in which the texts were produced. To help prepare you for the step up and keep you engaged with English Literature over the summer, complete Task 1 a research task into the context for 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' and Task 2 which is to read 'The Kite Runner', another novel by the author Hosseini, linking to your research on context and an Extension Task to read a piece of 19<sup>th</sup> Century literature to prepare for 'Wuthering Heights'.

We'd like you to bring your research and review to enrolment in August. If you'd like to get in touch before then, please email Thomas Wheeler at [twh@woking.ac.uk](mailto:twh@woking.ac.uk).

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## Task 1 – Context and Research

Research Afghanistan during the time period of the novel 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' by Hosseini. Try not just to copy from Wikipedia! Find news reports and articles which cover more than just the facts. You will be able to find articles from the perspective of Afghan women which would be relevant to the protagonists of the novel, Mariam and Laila. The time periods have been broken up into who was in power at the time. Try and answer the questions under each of the headings – you may want to use these to create posters or other visual reminders of this useful core information.

### The Soviets 1979- 1988

Why were they there?

What was life like for women while they were in power?

What was the attitude towards education, especially for the female population?

What was life like for the population as a whole?

What did the population feel about their presence in Afghanistan?

Why did the Soviets leave?



**The Mujahideen – Were a force who opposed the Soviets but really formed a cohesive group from 1985- 1996**

Who were they and why did they oppose the Soviets?

What was their philosophy?

What was their attitude towards women?

What was their attitude towards the general population?

How did the population view them?

Why did they stop being a force in Afghanistan?



**The Taliban – 1996 to present day (the novel ends 2003)**

Who were they?

How are they different to the Mujahideen? What is different about their philosophies?

What was their attitude towards women?

What was their attitude towards men?

What was their attitude towards education?

How did the general population feel about them?



**Context will also include the life and ideas of the writer.**

Research Hosseini's background. Try to find an interview with him which explains why he has written 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' and 'The Kite Runner'.

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## Task 2 – Reading Literary Context

Read 'The Kite Runner' by Hosseini which follows the male perspective of life in Afghanistan, unlike 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' whose main protagonists are female. There is also a film version you can watch.

**Write a review of the novel focusing on how accurately it portrays life in Afghanistan. Use your research on Afghanistan.**



## Task 3 – Wider Reading



Reading is extremely important to an English Literature student. Not only does reading a range of novels aid your ability to understand a text, it also enables you to become a better writer yourself – especially of essays! Try and always be reading a novel so use this strange time and the holidays to achieve this. Have a look at reading lists produced by newspapers like *The Times* for ideas.

Below is a list of 19<sup>th</sup> century novels for you to try. You will also read 'Wuthering Heights' as part of the course and some students struggle with the complexities of the writing style. The more you read the easier these novels become to understand. Have a dictionary beside you to look up vocabulary you have not come across before and make a note of it. I suggest you start with 'Silas Marner' by George Eliot as it is a fairly short novel and she is a brilliant writer.

*Silas Marner* George Eliot

*Adam Bede* George Eliot

*Great Expectations* Charles Dickens

*David Copperfield* Charles Dickens

*Jane Eyre* Charlotte Bronte

*Northanger Abbey* Jane Austen

*Pride and Prejudice* Jane Austen

*Frankenstein* Mary Shelley

*The Turn of the Screw* Henry James

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Thomas Hardy

*The Mayor of Casterbridge* Thomas Hardy

*Vanity Fair* William Makepeace Thackeray

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Hopefully this will all get you ready for starting your English Literature course next year!

Should you want to go even further, you could watch a production of *The Duchess of Malfi* and/or *Hamlet* online – both are available from the Globe, and *Hamlet* has many versions on YouTube.

Happy reading!