



Christopher Whitehead Sixth Form

A-level English Literature Summer Bridging Tasks



Congratulations on choosing to study AQA English Literature A-level at CWLC!

This is a challenging, inspiring and exciting course for students with a passion for literature: it's also a course which can really take you places in the future. **To enable you to read this booklet properly, please download it and save it to your home and / or school computer or print out your own copy.**

Please begin by reading the information below carefully:

Purchasing your texts:

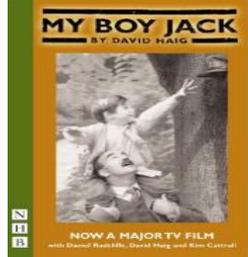
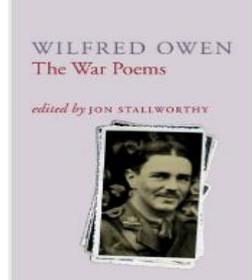
To ensure that you are well-prepared to start your A level studies in September, there are some different texts you will need to purchase in time for the beginning of the course. All students are expected to purchase their own copies of the set texts so that they are able to annotate and highlight them as part of their exam preparation. CWLC will then provide clean copies for use in the exams. These texts are listed on the next page; you do not need to purchase all of these texts in time for September – only some of them and we have included below roughly when you will need these other texts as the course progresses.

Students can purchase copies of these texts independently from somewhere like the Amazon website and as long as the books are the specified editions below, it's fine to purchase second-hand copies, or, students can purchase their books through CWLC by going onto Parent Pay on CWLC's website.

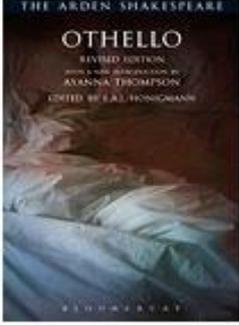
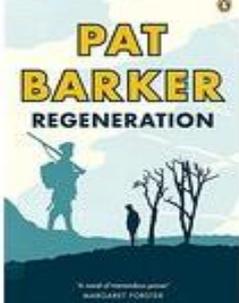
To purchase texts through CWLC, simply access the school website at:

<https://christopherwhitehead.co.uk/>, and select the 'Parent Pay' option. You can then log on using your individual User Name and Password (the same used for making school lunch payments). Select the relevant texts you wish to purchase and make the payment using either your debit or credit card. If you do not know your User Name and Password, please email Mrs. Nicholls in the Finance Department for assistance: s.nicholls@cwlc.email

Texts you will need for the start of the course in September 2019:

Text title and details:	What the front cover of the text should look like:
'The Great Gatsby' by F. Scott Fitzgerald ISBN-13: 978-1853260414	
'My Boy Jack' by David Haig ISBN/EAN: 9781854595836	
'Wilfred Owen: The War Poems' edited by Jon Stallworthy ISBN/EAN: 9780701161262	

Other texts you will need later on in the course:

'Othello' by William Shakespeare ISBN / EAN 9781472571762		Needed in April 2020 roughly
'Regeneration' by Pat Barker ISBN/EAN: 9780141030937		Needed in April 2020 roughly

Please make sure that you purchase these exact editions as these are the editions prescribed by the exam board.

A-level English Literature Summer Bridging Tasks

In the rest of this booklet, there are the summer bridging tasks you need to complete before you start your English Literature A level course in September. The aim of these tasks is to prepare you for the start of the course in the best way possible and introduce you to some of the themes and topics you will be studying.

Once you have completed these tasks, you should bring them with you to your first A Level English Literature lesson in September. You can complete the tasks in writing or complete them on the computer and print them out – the choice is yours – if you choose to complete them on the computer, you will need to print them out yourself; please do not email them.

Task 1: Literature from World War I: 'My Boy Jack'

A significant component of the English Literature A level course is studying literature written about World War I and your first task links to this type of literature.

One of the first texts you will be studying at the beginning of the course is 'My Boy Jack' written by David Haig. This is a play about the famous writer Rudyard Kipling, whose son was killed in WW1.

Although you are being asked to purchase a copy of this text, please don't start reading it as we will be reading the play in class together in September.

Your first task is to complete some background reading about Rudyard Kipling and what happened to his son, John, during World War I. Below you have a series of research questions to answer. You need to write about 150 words in response to each one. You could visit The Hive to find out some information to help you to write your answers, or complete some internet research. However, if you use the internet to complete your research DO NOT copy and paste. It will be very obvious if you do this and would also make us concerned as to whether you have the skills and commitment to be an A level literature student! To help you with this task, there are also two articles about Kipling for you to read in the Appendices section of this booklet.

Here are your research questions:

1. At the beginning of the war, what attitudes did Kipling have towards the war? What did he write which shows us what these attitudes were?
2. In your opinion, how does the story of Rudyard Kipling's son John illustrate both the courage and the suffering of those men who fought in World War I?
3. Why was the Battle of Loos so significant during World War I?

Task 2: Literature from World War I: Wilfred Owen's poetry

You will have heard of Wilfred Owen before – he is the author of the poem 'Exposure' which you recently studied for your GCSE literature exam. Wilfred Owen was both a poet and a soldier who fought in WW1; his raw, realistic poems left its mark on humanity and that is why they are still studied so many years later. Your next task will focus around this essay title:

'Wilfred Owen's poetry gave the common soldier a voice and showed the suffering and desperation of the soldiers who fought and died in the trenches. Find a poem by Wilfred Owen which you feel shows this and write a short analysis explaining why.'

To complete this task, you will need to do the following:

- Find and read some different poems written by Wilfred Owen. Choose one which you feel shows the suffering and desperation of the soldiers in the trenches and copy and paste it onto a Word document (Do not use the poem 'Exposure'!)
- Then, underneath, write no more than three paragraphs where you analyse the poem and explain why you feel it illustrates the themes of suffering and desperation. Ensure you support your opinions and ideas with quotations taken from the poem.

Task 3: Love through the Ages: the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald

And now for something a bit more light-hearted! The other side of your literature course is centred around the theme of 'Love through the Ages' and one of the texts you will be reading at the beginning of the course is 'The Great Gatsby' by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This incredibly popular and influential novel is often described as a tale of 1920s America: 'the roaring twenties' or 'The Jazz Age'.

To help you begin to understand the significance of this period and what life was like in those times, we would like you to choose and read any of the texts below. If the text you choose is a collection of short stories, you can either read a couple of the short stories only or read all of them – it's up to you!

Text choices:

- 'The Beautiful and Damned' by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- 'Tender is the Night' by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button and other tales of The Jazz Age' by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- 'The Diamond as big as the Ritz and other stories' by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- 'Z: A novel of Zelda Fitzgerald' by Therese Anne Fowler
- 'Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald'

After you have read your chosen text, we want you to do something very simple: we want you to come up with a list of 10-15 bullet points which show what you have learned about life in 1920s America. Think about what you have learned about the importance of social class; the effects of WW1; prohibition; Jazz music; technological and economical growth; the flappers or anything else you think is interesting. Obviously, if you get stuck, you can always supplement your reading with some research carried out on the internet.

To get hold of a copy of your chosen book, either try The Hive or buy a cheap second-hand copy from Amazon. This additional background reading will help you massively when you start reading 'The Great Gatsby' in class in September.



Well done, you have now completed all of the English Literature A level summer tasks!

Please make sure you keep your work safe so that you can bring it to your first English Literature lesson in September. In the meantime, if you have any queries or questions about the course or about the summer tasks, please email Mrs Barham at k.barham@cwlc.email

We look forward to meeting you in September!
Thank you very much,
The English Department - CWLC

**English Literature A level
AQA Specification A
7712**

Appendices

Rudyard Kipling

Life:

Rudyard Kipling was born on December 30, 1865, in Bombay, India. He was educated in England but returned to India in 1882. A decade later, Kipling married Caroline Balestier and settled in Brattleboro, Vermont, where he wrote *The Jungle Book* (1894), among a host of other works that made him hugely successful. Kipling was the recipient of the 1907 Nobel Prize in Literature. He died in 1936.

Works:

Kipling's works of fiction include *The Jungle Book* (1894), *Kim* (1901), and many short stories, including "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888). His poems include "Mandalay" (1890), "Gunga Din" (1890), "The Gods of the Copybook Headings" (1919), "The White Man's Burden" (1899), and "If—" (1910). He is regarded as a major innovator in the art of the short story; his children's books are classics of children's literature.

Attitude towards the British Empire and WW1:

Kipling became known for harbouring a strong imperialist perspective, as well as views on certain cultures that would draw much objection and be seen as disturbingly racist if they were expressed by someone nowadays.

Moreover, Kipling was also an avid supporter of WW1, even travelling to report scenes in the trenches of France in 1915. He also encouraged his son, John Kipling, to enlist. Wanting to help his son enlist, Kipling drove his son to several recruitment offices. However, plagued with the same eyesight issues as his father, John struggled to be enlisted until Kipling used his connections to help him enlist with the Irish Guards as a second lieutenant. In October 1915, the Kiplings received the tragic news that their son had gone missing in France, which subsequently devastated them. Kipling, driven by his engrossing guilt from pushing his son to enlist, embarked to find his son in France. However, nothing came of the search and John's body was never recovered. A distraught Kipling retired to London to mourn the loss of another of his children and continued to write for two decades until his death from an ulcer in January 1936.

Reception of Kipling by both historical + contemporary audiences:

Despite his reputation being tainted by accusations of him being racist, Kipling was acclaimed as the 'Poet of the Empire', and received the Nobel prize for literature in 1907 (making him the first English-language writer to receive the prize, and its youngest recipient to date). He was also sounded out for the British Poet Laureateship and on several occasions for a knighthood, both of which he declined.

Kipling's subsequent reputation has changed according to the political and social climate of the age and the resulting contrasting views about him continued for much of the 20th century. George Orwell called him a "prophet of British imperialism". Literary critic Douglas Kerr wrote: "[Kipling] is still an author who can inspire passionate disagreement and his place in literary and cultural history is far from settled. But as the age of the European empires recedes, he is recognised as an incomparable, if controversial, interpreter of how empire was experienced. That, and an increasing recognition of his extraordinary narrative gifts, make him a force to be reckoned with." Contemporarily, Kipling is viewed as one of the greatest short story writers in history, and his most famous novel 'The Jungle Book' was adapted by Disney, which went on to become hugely successful.

The Great War and its aftermath: The son who haunted Kipling

It was only his father's intervention that allowed John Kipling to serve on the Western Front - and the poet never got over his death. Now a TV drama is to retell the story.

- [Jonathan Brown](#)
- Monday 28 August 2006 23:00 BST, The Independent

The British military top brass told their men they were about to take part in the "the greatest battle in the history of the world". What they were about to experience, however, was a "bloody great balls-up" on an industrial scale.

For Rudyard Kipling, the most famous author of the age, the carnage at Loos on the Western Front in September 1915 plunged him into inner darkness. His only son, John, for whom he had written his best-loved poem, 'If', had been killed in the action just six weeks after his 18th birthday.

Last seen on the second day of the ill-fated attack, stumbling blindly through the mud, screaming in agony after an exploding shell had ripped his face apart, the failure to find John's remains fuelled the author's obsession that his son had survived. But it was not to be. Kipling eventually came to accept John's fate. And despite a grief-stricken crusade to find them, the remains of his "dear old boy" were not officially "discovered" until 1992. Yet there are those who believe that the body interned in a grave bearing his name at plot seven, row D of St Mary's Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery, near Loos, are not those of the author's son.

John's death rocked his father's belief in the British military elite, particularly General Douglas Haig, who went on to lead the war effort as a result of the battle. Loos was also to transform the way Britain's war dead were remembered. But it did nothing to dent Kipling's deep and passionate patriotism.

It was more than a year into the First World War when the Anglo-French forces, bogged down on the Western Front, sought to deliver a long-awaited breakthrough.

The British offensive boasted six divisions under the leadership of General Haig, and despite outnumbering the opposition by seven to one, the surrounding countryside bristled with German machine-gunners.

Perceiving - rightly - that he had insufficient artillery, Haig ordered his officers to deploy 140 tons of chlorine gas, the first time chemical weapons were used in the war. After a four-day bombardment, in which 250,000 shells were fired, British troops took Loos, only to lose it the following day as the Germans launched a counter-offensive, driving them back to their original positions.

As the British fought back, they advanced without artillery support, and were cut down in their thousands by a blizzard of German machine-gun fire.

The reserves arrived too late and communications lines failed. The wind changed direction, resulting in the gassing of thousands of British troops.

By the end of the week there were some 75,000 casualties, two-thirds of them British. Among the dead was the poet Charles Sorley and the young brother of the future Queen Mother, Fergus Bowes-Lyon. The "balls-up" was recorded for posterity by one survivor, a young Robert Graves, in his autobiographical 'Goodbye To All That'.

Like many of those who fell alongside him, Loos was John Kipling's first taste of war. He joined the fray two days into the battle as part of a reinforcement contingent of Irish Guards.

John had been desperate to join up, and even before the war, the military had been his longed-for destiny. While Rudyard might have chosen the Navy, young John wanted to be a soldier. But his eyesight, like his father's, was appalling. His was so poor that he was unable to read the second letter on the chart, despite his thick glasses.

"John was extremely keen to join up. Like pretty much everyone else he thought it would be a short war and wanted to play his part," said Michael Smith, a vice-president of the Kipling Society. "He went at the beginning to try and enlist on his own, but was rejected. Later he tried again, this time accompanied by his father, but again he was rejected."

It was time to pull some strings. His father was at the height of his celebrity. The world's youngest Nobel literary laureate, his was the authentic voice of empire, whose work beat the drum for the jingoistic spirit of the times.

And the writer's military connections were at the very highest level. Rudyard had been life-long friends with Lord Roberts, commander-in-chief of the British Army, and colonel of the Irish Guards.

John was accepted into the regiment and began his training as an officer cadet at Warley Barracks. In many ways the young Kipling cut an undistinguished figure. He struggled to make it into Wellington School, relying on the services of a crammer to pass the entrance exam.

He was fond of cricket but not reading. Although he was brought up listening to his father reading the Just So stories at bedtime, he never willingly picked up a book.

The young Kipling found himself embarrassed by his father's celebrity, particularly aged 12 after the publication of *If* - the poem dedicated to him.

The close relationship between father and son grew out of Kipling's own unhappy childhood experiences. According to Tonie Holt, author of *My Boy Jack? The Search for Kipling's Only Son*, the youngster exerted a profound effect during his short life. "He was a sparky little guy and has been virtually ignored by everybody in the story of Rudyard Kipling," he said.

After the loss of his older sister, Josephine, who died during a violent Atlantic crossing in 1899 which nearly claimed Rudyard Kipling himself, John became the centre of his father's attentions. "He was besotted with his son," says Mr Holt. "They would correspond regularly, his 'dear dada' was always giving him advice on what to do."

When he finally joined up John lived the life of a typical upper middle-class subaltern. His military commitments scarcely interfered with his busy social life. Although he was not considered a playboy, young Kipling was a regular visitor to London night clubs, and loved the country house parties at the family home, Batemans in Sussex. Like his father, he was a motoring enthusiast, owned his own motor bike, and enjoyed mixing with the cream of Victorian society.

His parents remained realistic about his survival chances. After his mother, Carrie, waved him off, she wrote in her diary: "There is nothing else to do. The world must be saved from the German ... One can't let one's friends and neighbours' sons be killed in order to save us and our son."

Yet when it came to it, John's death was a hammer blow to Kipling, who was working as a war reporter in France at the time. The news was delivered by his friend, the Tory leader Andrew Bonar Law, and the author cried a "curse like the cry of a dying man".

According to Michael Smith: "The Kiplings were devastated. They thought with any luck he may have been kidnapped - even dropping leaflets over the frontline by plane seeking information about his whereabouts."

Tonie Holt described how the author carried out hundreds of interviews with his late son's comrades, building up a detailed picture of his last moments. He believes that it is through this research that the claim that John's remains are in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission can be disproved. Not only is the rank on the gravestone wrong - Kipling's promotion to Lieutenant had yet to be announced in the London Gazette - but the remains were found some two miles from where he fell, at a feature called Chalk-Pit Wood.

The devastated father threw himself into his work, becoming a prominent member of the commission. He took part in the creation of the pristine rows of Portland stone graveyards, which now honour Britain's fallen, selecting the Biblical phrase "Their Name Liveth For Evermore" as a fitting epitaph.

Yet his career was by now in decline, and his work failed to strike a chord with a generation traumatised by the memory of the slaughter of the trenches.

Rudyard Kipling remained unbowed in his political views and remained a vehement opponent of German rearmament. His love of the military was also undimmed - he wrote a regimental history of the Irish Guards, considered to be one of the finest ever and which contains a heartbreakingly brief description of his own son's death.

He was never able to write directly about John's loss. My Boy Jack is about a sailor - but still a thinly disguised poem about regret and mourning. Shadows of guilt have also been detected in his later work. "If any question why we died/ Tell them, because our fathers lied" is thought to refer to his role in helping his son to bypass the military eyesight rules.

Rudyard Kipling lived until January 1936. But father and son live on in the nation's consciousness. If remains Britain's favourite poem.

My Boy Jack (1916)

Have you news of my boy Jack?
Not this tide.
'When d'you think that he'll come back?'
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

'Has any one else had word of him?'
Not this tide.
For what is sunk will hardly swim,
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

'Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?'
None this tide,
Nor any tide,
Except he did not shame his kind -
Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,
This tide,
And every tide;
Because he was the son you bore,
And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!