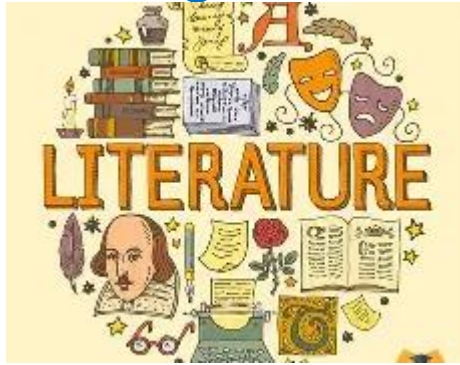


# A Level English Language and Literature & A Level English Literature



**Due Date: September 8<sup>th</sup> 2025**

## Summer Homework Task: Exploring the Portrayal of Women in The Handmaid's Tale.

Dear Students,

Welcome to A-Level English! We are excited to begin this academic journey with you. As part of your transition into the course, we are setting a short but thought-provoking summer homework task to prepare you for the themes and critical discussions we will explore in greater depth over the next two years.

You are required to either:

- Watch the televised adaptation of The Handmaid's Tale (available on Amazon Prime or Channel 4),
- OR
- Read the novel The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood.

This dystopian narrative offers a rich foundation for exploring gender, power, language, and identity—key areas of study within both A-Level English Literature and English Language & Literature.

After watching or reading The Handmaid's Tale, complete the following:

**Main Essay Question**  
**(Approximately 500–700 words):**

How are women portrayed in *The Handmaid's Tale*?

Discuss the ways in which the text reflects and critiques patriarchal values, gender stereotypes, and the control of women's bodies and identities. You should consider:

- How the society depicted in Gilead reduces women to reproductive roles.
- The use of language to restrict, manipulate, and define women's identities.
- The portrayal of women as passive, overly emotional, domestic, or submissive—and whether this representation is challenged or reinforced.
- How the narrative uses imagery, symbolism, or characterisation to reflect the stereotypical challenges that women face.
- Any parallels you can draw between the fictional world of Gilead and real-world social or historical contexts