**The Canon of English Literature – Yr 11-12 Summer Project 2020**

**Introduction:- In 1994, Harold Bloom published a study of what is commonly called the Canon: a list of authors who are generally acknowledged to be important due to the quality, innovation and influence of their writing.**

Task 1. Research the Canon and write down the names of at least ten famous authors and their texts. (N.B. do not use Wikipedia for any of your research as it can be unreliable.)

**Some of the most influential amongst this group are:-**

Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans), The Bronte Sisters, Dryden, Browning…

**Task 2. Write down a definition for each of the following time periods. When we talk about Literature, we divide it into periods to make it more manageable:-**

**AngloSaxon**

**Medieval**

**Renaissance**

**Neo- Classical**

**Romantic**

**Modernist**

**Look at the British Library bl.uk Interactive English Timeline** ‘This timeline includes a fascinating combination of texts: Anglo Saxon tales and medieval illuminations; iconic literary manuscripts…’

* 1400s The Canterbury Tales
* 1600s Shakespeare
* 1700s Blake
* 1800s Austen, Dickens
* 1900s Owen, Woolf
* 2000s- which modern authors do you think should be in the Canon? Name up to five modern authors who should be on the Canon list. (E.g. have they won prestigious awards?)

Task 3 Answer these Questions about the Canon of Literature (about a page). I am interested in your opinion!

1. What do you notice about this group of writers? Who seems to be missing or under-represented? (Clue- think gender and diversity)
2. Do you agree with the idea of some writers being more important than others?
3. Who should choose who is in the Canon? Which texts you ‘should’ study at A’ Level? Does it need re-visiting or updating?

Task 4 Choose two of the following writers and find out about them (one male and one female writer). You should aim to find out:

-relevant details about their life, background, influences

- what did they write about e.g. subject matter, themes

-why you think they may be considered to be important enough to feature on the canon

1 page on each author with 3 website sources e.g. StudyWise, The Victorian Web, Seneca, biography.com.

Virginia Woolf

Mary Wollstonecraft

Aphra Benn

Emily Bronte

Mary Shelley

Seamus Heaney

Philip Larkin

Oscar Wilde

George Orwell

Robert Browning

Final Task is not to hand in- Read something for pleasure! [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com) (recommends literary-canon worthy books such as ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’, ‘The Great Gatsby’, ‘Catcher in the Rye’…). You will be expected to read a lot so be prepared to discuss what you have been reading in your first A’ Level lesson! There are lots of classic short stories which are free to download online so you may choose to look at them too. E.g. ‘Tickets Please’ by D.H. Lawrence https://www.pseudopodium.org

Good luck and enjoy the summer.

Mrs Cunningham