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Dear Incoming English Student,

Welcome to Teddy Hall! We're very much looking forward to welcoming you in October. This letter is to give you a first glimpse into your studies here and to let you know what you should be doing this summer in preparation. In your first year at the college, you will be studying four courses: one is a broad introduction to the study of English Language and Literature (Paper 1), one will focus on early medieval literature (Paper 2), one will look at literature in English from 1830-1910 (Paper 3), and one will look at literature in English from 1910 to the present day (Paper 4). The three Oxford terms — Michaelmas, Hilary, and Trinity — are short and very busy, so it's absolutely vital that you read and prepare as much as possible *before* each term starts. You will need to use your weeks during term time to write essays and fine-tune your thoughts about the reading you have done over the vacation.

To make sure you hit the ground running this autumn, we have compiled summer vacation reading lists for each of the *three* courses you will be taking in Michaelmas Term (you will receive a full reading list for the fourth paper, Paper 4, prior to winter break in December). There's a lot of material here including some long novels, so it is crucial that you get started on this reading immediately and work steadily over the summer! We hope it will be fun.

For university-level study, it is important that you use well-edited and annotated editions of texts whenever available. We have included information on recommended editions for much of the reading listed below, and you should get your hands on these texts as soon as possible. If we have not specified particular editions, try to use series such as Oxford World's Classics, Penguin Classics, Norton Critical Editions, or Broadview editions — all of which include notes and reproduce faithful editions of texts. You should be able to find all of your texts on Amazon or at Blackwells (instore or online); cheaper, second-hand copies of many titles are available from abebooks.com or third-party sellers on Amazon, and you are welcome to purchase these — just be sure you are buying the most up-to-date/recommended edition.

PAPER 1: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

This paper will be taught in two parts across the entirety of your first year and is designed to provide you with the key skills, concepts and methodologies that you will need as you go through your degree. Part A—studied mostly in Hilary term—covers issues related to "Language"; Part B—studied in Michaelmas, and so, confusingly, before Part A—covers issues related to "Literature" (though obviously these concerns overlap). Here are some starting points for each section:

Approaches to Literature

This paper will mostly be studied in the first term (Michaelmas). The first thing to read for this paper is

- Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (2011)

You should also buy

- *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leitch, Cain, Finke, et al., third edition (2018)—it may be quite expensive, but it is extremely good value, given the range of material it contains. Before you come to Oxford, you should read the following selections from it: Aristotle (*Poetics*), Sidney, Pope, Burke, Wollstonecraft, Wordsworth, Shelley, Marx (extracts from *Capital*), Arnold, Nietzsche, Freud, Saussure, du Bois (*Souls of Black Folk* extract), Woolf, Eliot, Auerbach, Bakhtin, Jakobson, Brooks, Wimsatt and Beardsley, Austin, Barthes ('The Death of the Author'), Althusser, Jameson, Williams, Sontag, Bloom, Derrida (as much as possible), Todorov, Butler, Gilroy.

We will use three key primary texts for the study of theoretical ideas, so you should also read these before you come to Oxford (you will not have time to do this reading, particularly of the longer novels, during term):

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. The recommended edition is the revised Arden 3rd edition, edited by Vaughan and Vaughan.
Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*. The recommended edition is the Norton Critical Edition, edited by George Ford and Sylvère Monod.
George Eliot, *Middlemarch*. The recommended edition is the Norton Critical Edition, edited by Bert G. Hornack.

Approaches to Language
This covers various approaches to language, introducing you both to the study of the language of literary and non-literary texts in their historical and cultural contexts and to the analysis of form and meaning in language. It will mainly be studied in Hilary Term (the second term). The English Faculty suggests the following three books as introductory reading for Section A of Prelims Paper 1:

(1) Ronald Carter and Walter Nash, *Seeing Through Language: A Guide to Styles of English Writing* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1990)

(2) Jonathan Culpeper, *History of English*, Language Workbooks, second edition (London: Routledge, 2005)

(3) *The Language, Society, and Power Reader*, ed. Annabelle Mooney *et al.* (London: Routledge, 2011).

Whatever your prior knowledge of English grammar, you should prepare yourself by working through the whole of the UCL Internet Grammar of English at the following website:

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/

Each section of the Internet Grammar has useful exercises to test your understanding. You should complete all of these exercises before you arrive in Oxford and you will be expected to show knowledge and understanding of this basic grammatical material in our classes.

David Crystal's *Rediscover Grammar*, third edition (London: Longman, 2004) provides a similar introduction and reference manual in book form. Crystal has produced two other books which you may find useful: *The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language* (2002), and *Spell It Out: The Curious, Enthralling and Extraordinary Story of English Spelling* (2013).

Fuller reading lists and a course plan for both parts of the paper will follow when you arrive in October.

PAPER 2: EARLY MEDIEVAL LITERATURE, c. 650 – 1350

Course format

This paper allows you to study texts in Old English and Early Middle English. In Michaelmas term, we will be focusing on Old English. Old English literature was written in the period from the time that the Germanic settlers invaded Britain in the fifth century up to around the Normal Conquest in 1066, or shortly after. We will start by tackling the fundamentals of the Old English language, before studying two of the paper's set texts: *The Dream of the Rood* and *Beowulf*.

Required Texts

You will need these books:

R. Marsden, *The Cambridge Old English Reader* (Cambridge, 2015) [Get the second edition, which is blue, not the first edition, which is green!]

Laura Ashe, ed., *Early Fiction in England: From Geoffrey of Monmouth to Chaucer* (Penguin Classics, 2015)

Essential Summer Reading

In preparation for studying Old English, you should read through a translation of the whole of *Beowulf*. This exciting heroic poem features heroic deeds, monster fights, and dragons, and you will find it easier to study if you are already acquainted with it in modern English. Many editions and translations are available, but you will find facing-page translations particularly helpful for studying the poem:

- Prose translation: Michael Swanton, ed. and trans., *Beowulf* (Manchester, 1978)

- Verse Translation: R. M. Liuzza, ed. and trans., *Beowulf: Second Edition (with facing-page translation)* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2013). N.B. Take care to get the one with the Old English included, as Liuzza's translation is also available on its own.

You should also read some Old English poetry in *Old and Middle English,* ed. E. Treharne, to get a feel for the literary styles and subjects of the early medieval period. Sometimes medieval literature references events, biblical imagery, or ideas that you may be unfamiliar with.

Treharne's very short introduction before each poem will help you to understand what is going on:

- *The Whale*
- *The Battle of Maldon*
- *Judith*
- *The Dream of the Rood*

Further Summer Reading

Though we will be spending Michaelmas studying literature written in Old English, in Hilary term we will consider works written in Middle English, as well as some medieval texts (in modern English translation) that were originally written in Latin or Anglo-Norman. These narratives include tales of king Arthur and his knights; stories of saints fighting dragons; and texts written by and for women. These are fantastic narratives, and reading some of them in advance will not only whet your appetite for things to come, but will allow you to start thinking about the kinds of genres, tropes and ideas in medieval literature. There are plenty of texts for you to choose from in the books by Treharne and Ashe, but some suggestions are:

- Geoffrey of Monmouth: *History of the Kings of Britain* (Ashe)
- Marie de France: *Lais* (Ashe)

I would also like you to read a Latin text writtien in Ireland around 750AD, *The Voyage of St Brendan the Abbot*. You can read a good translation here:

https://www.arcus-atlantis.org.uk/horizons/irish/navigatio-sancti-brendani.html

Since you will probably not have studied any medieval literature before, you should also read some works discussing the historical and literary background.

John Blair, *The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000) offers a concise and manageable history of the period, and will be helpful to read over the summer.

Heather O'Donoghue, *Beowulf: Poem, Poet, and Hero* (Bloomsbury, 2024) – this is brand new and absolutely superb as an introduction to the major text.

You may also find it helpful to consult entries in ***The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2013)** – e.g. 'Trinity', 'Sacrament', 'Eucharist', 'Gospel', 'Liturgy', 'Office, Divine', 'Mattins', 'Vespers', 'Parish', 'Annunciation of the BVM', 'Incarnation', 'Harrowing of Hell', 'Sacrifice', 'Martyr', 'Saints, devotion to the', 'Anglo-Saxon Church'.

The Bible has had an enduring influence on English literature, from the medieval period to the present, so being well acquainted with it will be immensely useful not just for this paper, or indeed this year, but for your whole course. You can consult any version for free online at www.biblegateway.com. I also particularly recommend **E. Sutherland Bates, *The Bible, Designed to be Read as Living Literature***, which extracts all the best and most beautiful bits

from the biblical text and sets them out for you: you will need to get it from the library or secondhand on abebooks.co.uk, as sadly it is out of print.

You should also read three great classical epics. These are literally among the most famously thrilling stories ever told, so this should be no hardship; all three have excellent introductions:

• Homer, *The Iliad* (trans. Peter Green)
—*The Odyssey* (trans. Peter Green or Emily Wilson)
• Virgil, *The Aeneid* (trans. Shadi Bartsch)

For background to the classical material, try R. Jenkyns, *Classical Literature* (Penguin, 2015): an amazingly concise and eloquent survey of a thousand years of literary production.

If you don't know the classical myths, go for R. Graves, *The Greek Myths* (many editions)

PAPER 3: LITERATURE IN ENGLISH, 1830-1910

This paper is taught during Michaelmas term and covers literature — from both Britain and America — written between 1830 and 1910. Because this period encompasses both the Victorian novel and several long prose texts from the "American Renaissance" along with excellent poetry from both sides of the Atlantic, it is crucial that you do as much of this reading as possible *before* you arrive at Teddy Hall in October. There is simply too much else to do in eight weeks of term to leave this amount of reading until then. You can't read *Moby-Dick* in a week!

Please purchase the following two anthologies now; they are excellent collections of important works from the period—including poems, short stories, and prose writings. Dip in and out of them, and see what excites you. There will be plenty of scope for you to pick and choose your essay topics when you get here, so don't be afraid to form opinions and preferences—and to be guided by them. That is to say, follow your nose and dive into whatever moves you most!

- *The Norton Anthology of English Literature – Volume E: The Victorians*, general ed. Stephen Greenblatt (9th edition or later)
- *The Norton Anthology of American Literature – Volume B: 1820-1865*, general ed. Robert S. Levine (9th edition or later)

Please read as many of the following primary texts as possible *in advance of term*. Take note of the recommended editions, all of which can be found cheaply from second-hand booksellers (including abebooks.co.uk and Amazon marketplace).

Longer Fiction

- Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (Norton Critical Edition, 2nd edition 2002)
- Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady,* ed. Roger Luckhurst (Oxford World's Classics, 2009)

Shorter Fiction (many of these are in your Norton anthology):

- Edgar Allen Poe: "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Purloined Letter" plus his story-like poems "The Raven" and "Annabel Lee"

- Nathanial Hawthorne: "The Birth-Mark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter"
- Herman Melville: "Bartleby the Scrivener," and *Benito Cereno*
- Henry James: "The Private Life" and "The Middle Years"

Non-fiction Prose (selections included in your two Norton anthologies):

- John Ruskin, "Of the Pathetic Fallacy"
- John Stuart Mill, "What is Poetry"
- Matthew Arnold, "The Study of Poetry"
- Edgar Allen Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition"

Poetry

- Alfred Lord Tennyson: "Mariana," ""The Lady of Shallot," "The Lotos-Eaters," "Ulysses," "Tithonus," and *all* of the poems that make up *In Memoriam;* for Tennyson you should purchase the *Selected Poems* edited by Christopher Ricks (London: Penguin, 2007).
- Robert Browning (all selections in Norton)
- Christina Rossetti (all selection in Norton, and esp. "Goblin Market")
- Gerard Manley Hopkins (all selections in Norton)
- Walt Whitman (see especially "Song of Myself" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," both in Norton)
- Emily Dickinson (all selections in Norton)

These texts will form a useful foundation, but eventually (and for essays and exams) you should try read beyond them. For instance, if you like *Moby Dick*, see what other Melville looks like, or look into Melville's letters. If you like Browning's poems, look into his influence on others. If you like *The Portrait of a Lady*, look up James's essay "The Art of Fiction" and read excerpts from his autobiographical writings (published in *A Small Boy and Others*). Or try out other "realist" novels written during this period — something by George Eliot maybe (James writes an interesting piece about *Middlemarch*). That is to say, follow your nose and dive into whatever moves you most!

As you acquaint yourself with the primary literature, you may find it helpful to consult these general and classic studies of the period, which will give some historical and cultural context. They will likely become invaluable as you prepare for your examinations at the end of the year.

On the British material:

- Philip Davis, *The Victorians 1830-1880* (Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period* (1993)
- Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 (1957)

On the American material:

- Richard Poirier, *A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature* (1966)
- F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941)
- D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923; repr. Penguin, 1977)

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We hope you have a wonderful and productive summer. Happy reading! We are very much looking forward to having you here soon.

Sincerely,
The Teddy Hall English Tutors