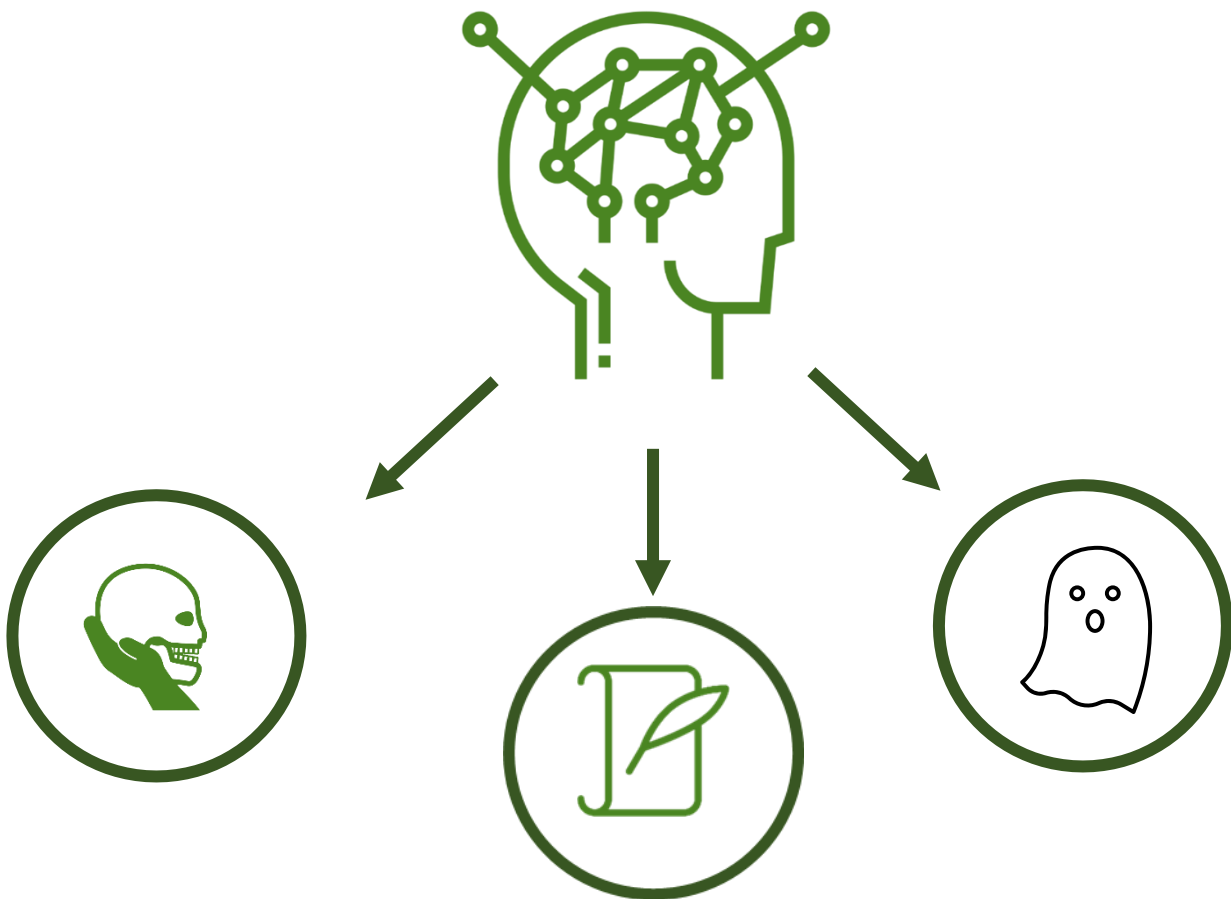




English Literature Preparation Work



Contents:

1. Shakespeare	2. Poetry	3. The Supernatural
----------------	-----------	---------------------



1) Shakespeare

Moving on from your study of Shakespeare at KS4 means that you have the opportunity to study his life and works in greater depth, and really discover the incredible impact and beauty of his writing! The links below will take you through a world of Shakespeare, and are recommended in preparation for your study of Othello. Make notes on any written resources (the Cornell method is most effective – explanation of how to do this [here](#)). Each icon below contains a link to the relevant website or documents.

The National Theatre
have given out free
access to their plays to
watch during
lockdown.
Username: **6Nf"ONx\$**
Password: **3Fb\$3Ps\$**



The British
Library – various
articles on
Shakespeare &
the Renaissance



The Shakespeare
book – a great
overview of
Shakespeare's
works



Overview articles
on Shakespeare
and Othello

2) Poetry



As with Shakespeare, your study of poetry at A Level changes and becomes more in depth. The more you understand about the changes in poetry over time, the more interesting it becomes! Below are some sources that will help you to explore poetry from the two different time periods that we study. As you read and engage with them, make mind-maps about them in preparation for September.

Victorian Poetry (19th Century) –
click [here](#)

Modernist and Postmodern poetry
(20th Century) – click [here](#) for
modernism, and [here](#) for
postmodernism



3) The Supernatural



Now you have an overview of Shakespeare and the poetry we study, it's time to start thinking about your prose unit: the supernatural. This explores the genre and conventions of the supernatural in literature, focusing on texts from both Pre 1900 to modern times. We consider the effect of gothic setting, psychological terror, socio-historical factors like Victorian science and gender, amongst many other things. It is an exciting component of the course and one that proves to be very popular.



Task 1: Read The Signalman by Charles Dickens:

<https://dailystep.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DailyStep-English-The-Signalman-By-Charles-Dickens.pdf>

Motif and Pattern Tracking: analytical task

Context:

Historical Context: Victorian Britain

- Written in 1866, during a time of rapid industrial change.
- Railways were expanding across Britain and seen as symbols of progress and modern technology.
- However, they also caused fear and anxiety: Railway accidents were relatively common.
- Many people worried about the dangers of machines and loss of human control.

👉 This helps explain why Dickens sets the story on a railway line — a place where modern progress meets danger and uncertainty.

Fear and Uncertainty in the 19th Century:

Victorian society was deeply interested in the unknown.

There was growing fascination with:

Ghosts and spirits

Premonitions and warnings

Life after death

At the same time, science and technology were advancing quickly, creating tension between:

Rational thinking (science)

The supernatural (things that can't be explained)

👉 Dickens' story sits right in the middle of this tension.

What is the Supernatural?

The supernatural refers to:

Events or forces that cannot be explained by science or natural laws.

Examples include:

Ghosts or spirits

Visions

Premonitions (seeing the future)



Task 2: Tracking the Supernatural Signals

Track the following motifs throughout the story:

- The red light
- The bell
- The figure / apparition
- The repeated cry: "Halloa! Below there!"

Complete the table below:

Motif	Where it appears	What happens	Effect on reader
The red light			
The bell			
The figure/apparition			
Repeated cry			

Pattern Thinking

Consider the following questions:

- When do these motifs appear?
- Do they warn, predict, or cause events?
- Are the signals clear or confusing?
- What patterns can you identify?

Task 3: Analytical Writing Task

Write a paragraph answering the question:

"How does Dickens use recurring motifs to present the supernatural as uncertain or difficult to interpret?"



Montsaye Academy
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Further Reading:

[Ghost stories: why the Victorians were so spookily good at them | Horror books | The Guardian](#)

[Victorian Gothic: An Introduction | Great Writers Inspire](#)

[Yellow Wallpaper Writings](#)

[f129f0852d1641439cb5a64fe280c03a.pdf](#)