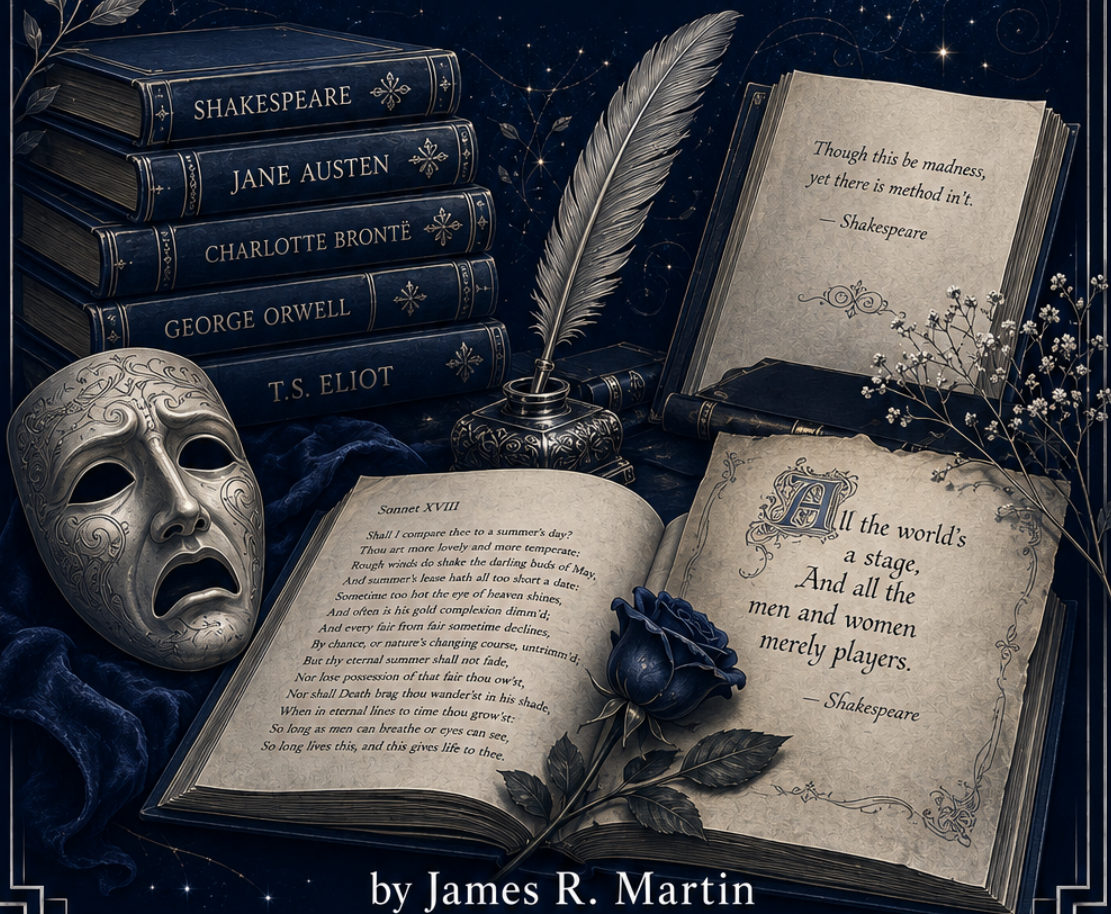


A-LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

100 AI PROMPTS

for Smarter Revision *and* Exam Prep

*Active recall, exam technique, and mark-scheme
thinking — without cheating.*



by James R. Martin

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How to Use This Book

For a long time, high-quality tutoring has been a major contributor to elite academic achievement. Used well, AI can now act as a powerful tutor that most students and parents could not previously afford.

This book is a **starting point**, not a rulebook. Each prompt is designed to help you revise, test your understanding, and think more clearly — not to give perfect answers. You are encouraged to **adapt, improve, and remix** these prompts.

You are learning how to think carefully about the questions you ask — a skill that will matter far beyond these exams.

Note on Exam Boards and Syllabi

A-Level English Literature is offered by AQA, Edexcel, OCR, and WJEC/Eduqas, and while each board prescribes different set texts and organises its specification differently, the core analytical skills, critical thinking, and literary knowledge required are remarkably consistent. Whether you are studying AQA English Literature A or B (7712/7717), Edexcel English Literature (9ET0), OCR English Literature (H472), or WJEC/Eduqas, you will be assessed on your ability to read closely, analyse writers' methods, engage with literary contexts, and construct sustained critical arguments.

The prompts in this book have been carefully designed to target the analytical skills and literary knowledge that are common across all A-Level English Literature specifications. Because different boards prescribe different texts, every prompt is deliberately text-agnostic — rather than asking about a specific character or passage, prompts invite you to apply skills to your own set texts, your studied poetry, your chosen novels, or the plays on your specification. This ensures the prompts are equally useful regardless of which texts you study.

All A-Level boards assess students against similar assessment objectives: AO1 (informed personal response using textual references), AO2 (analysis of writers' methods including language, form, and structure), AO3 (understanding of contexts — historical, social, cultural, political, and literary), AO4 (connections across texts), and AO5 (exploration of different interpretations and critical perspectives). The weighting of these objectives varies between boards, but the underlying skills are the same.

The prompts focus on active retrieval practice, close textual analysis, application of critical theory, and structured essay technique. They are written so that you interact with an AI chatbot as if it were a knowledgeable literature tutor — asking it to quiz you, challenge your interpretations, test your close reading skills, and mark your responses against A-Level expectations. This makes your revision far more effective than passively re-reading texts or notes.

Remember to check your own specification and past papers to confirm exactly which texts are examined, how the papers are structured, and what the coursework or NEA requirements are for your board. Keep your set texts and annotations close at hand when using these prompts. Use them as a powerful revision tool, but always cross-reference with your exam board's official specification and any guidance your teacher has given you about assessment objectives, mark schemes, and question styles.

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Section 1

Poetry – Anthology and Unseen

Poetry at A-Level demands close, precise, and sustained analysis of how poets use language, form, and structure to create meaning. Whether you are studying an anthology of poems by a single poet, a thematic collection, or preparing for unseen poetry comparison, you need to demonstrate the ability to read carefully, analyse specific effects, and connect your analysis to the poem's broader themes and contexts. The skills required go significantly beyond GCSE — you are expected to analyse how poetic form itself creates meaning, not just identify techniques and label them.

Examiners reward students who can discuss metre and rhythm, enjambment and caesura, stanza form, rhyme scheme, sound patterning, and structural choices with confidence and precision. You also need to engage with how poems relate to their historical and literary contexts, how they connect to other poems in an anthology, and how different critical interpretations can illuminate different aspects of a poem's meaning.

These prompts will develop your close reading skills, test your ability to analyse unseen poems under pressure, and push you to construct analytical arguments that integrate detailed textual analysis with contextual and theoretical understanding. They will help you move from describing what a poem does to explaining how and why it does it.

Prompt 1: Close Reading – Language Analysis

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I will provide a quotation of two to four lines from a poem I am studying. Ask me to analyse the language

choices in detail: word connotations, imagery (metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism), sound effects (alliteration, assonance, sibilance, plosives), and how these choices contribute to the poem's meaning and the reader's emotional response. Push me to explain why the poet chose these specific words rather than alternatives, and how individual word choices connect to the poem's broader themes. Wait for my quotation and then ask questions one at a time. Assess whether my close reading would meet AO2 requirements — am I analysing methods and their effects, or just identifying features?

What this helps you practise:

Detailed close reading of poetic language with analysis of connotation, imagery, and sound effects.

How to use it well:

Choose quotations you find rich and complex — the best analysis comes from engaging with language that rewards close attention.

Prompt 2: Form and Structure in Poetry

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a poem from my set texts and analyse how its form and structure create meaning. I should discuss: the poem's form (sonnet, dramatic monologue, free verse, ballad, villanelle, etc.) and why the poet chose it, the stanza structure and what it contributes, the use of enjambment and caesura and their effects on pace and emphasis, the rhyme scheme (or lack of one) and its relationship to content, and how the poem's structural organisation reflects or enacts its themes. Wait for my answer and check that I explain how form creates meaning rather than just labelling features.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of poetic form and structure as meaning-

making choices, not just technical features to identify.

How to use it well:

Form is not just a container for content — it actively shapes meaning. Ask yourself why this poem is a sonnet, or why the poet breaks from regular metre at a specific point.

Prompt 3: Metre and Rhythm

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on metre and rhythm in poetry. Ask me to define and identify the following metrical feet: iamb, trochee, spondee, dactyl, and anapaest. Then present me with a line of poetry and ask me to scan it, identifying the stressed and unstressed syllables and naming the dominant metre. Then ask me to explain why the poet's metrical choices matter — how does the rhythm reinforce the poem's meaning or mood? Where does the poet depart from regular metre, and what effect does this create? Wait for each answer and check for accurate scansion and meaningful analysis.

What this helps you practise:

Identification and analysis of metrical patterns in poetry and understanding of how rhythm creates meaning.

How to use it well:

Many students avoid discussing metre because they find it technical — but confident metrical analysis is one of the most impressive skills you can demonstrate in an A-Level literature essay.

Prompt 4: Unseen Poetry — First Response

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a poem I have not seen before (approximately 14-20 lines). Give me five minutes to read it, then ask me to write an analytical response

discussing: what the poem is about (subject and themes), how the poet uses language to create specific effects, how form and structure contribute to meaning, and what the poem's tone and mood are and how they are established. After I write my response, assess whether I have engaged with the whole poem, supported my points with specific textual references, avoided paraphrase, and demonstrated genuine analytical insight. Mark my response against the AO1 and AO2 criteria an examiner would apply, and provide detailed feedback on which band my response falls into.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing an unseen poem under timed conditions with close textual reference and integrated discussion of language, form, and structure.

How to use it well:

Read the poem at least twice before writing — the first reading gives you the gist, the second reveals the details and techniques that will form the basis of your analysis.

Prompt 5: Comparing Poems

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select two poems from my anthology that share a common theme or technique. Then quiz me on my comparison by asking: what are the key similarities and differences in how the two poets approach the shared theme? How do their language choices, imagery, and tonal approaches differ? How do differences in form and structure reflect different perspectives on the theme? Do the poems belong to different literary periods, and if so, how does context shape their treatment of the theme? Wait for my answer and check that I compare throughout rather than writing about each poem separately.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis of two poems, integrating comparison of theme, language, form, and context throughout.

How to use it well:

Comparison means weaving the two poems together in every paragraph — never write a separate block on each poem and call it comparison.

Prompt 6: Unseen Poetry — Comparison

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with two short unseen poems (each approximately 10-14 lines) on a similar theme. Ask me to compare how the two poets present the theme, focusing on their different uses of language, imagery, form, and structure. I should write a comparative response that deals with both poems throughout rather than analysing them separately. After I write my response, assess whether I have made genuine comparative points, supported them with specific textual references from both poems, and avoided simply describing what each poem says. Provide detailed feedback.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis of two unseen poems under timed conditions with integrated discussion throughout.

How to use it well:

Use comparative connectives — 'whereas', 'in contrast', 'similarly', 'by contrast' — to signal to the examiner that you are comparing, not just describing.

Prompt 7: Poetry and Context

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a poem from my anthology and discuss how its meaning is shaped by its historical,

social, political, or literary context. I should explain the relevant contextual factors (the period in which it was written, the poet's biography and beliefs, the literary movement it belongs to, the political or social issues it engages with) and analyse how these contexts are reflected in the poem's language, imagery, form, and themes. Push me to integrate context into my analysis rather than bolting it on as a separate paragraph. Wait for my answer and check for genuine integration.

What this helps you practise:

Integrating contextual understanding into close textual analysis of poetry rather than treating context as a separate topic.

How to use it well:

Context should illuminate your analysis, not replace it — always connect contextual points back to specific language and form choices in the poem.

Prompt 8: Analysing a Poet's Voice and Persona

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the concept of voice and persona in poetry. Ask me to distinguish between the poet and the speaker of a poem, and then ask me to analyse how a specific poem from my set texts constructs its speaking voice. I should discuss: who the speaker is (if identifiable), what the speaker's attitude and tone are, how the poet uses language and form to create this voice, whether the speaker is reliable or whether the poet creates ironic distance between themselves and the persona, and what the effect of this voice is on the reader. Wait for my answer and push me to avoid simply equating the speaker with the poet.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing between poet and persona and

analysing how poetic voice is constructed through language and form choices.

How to use it well:

Never assume the speaker of a poem is the poet — dramatic monologues and persona poems are common, and recognising the distinction demonstrates critical sophistication.

Prompt 9: Imagery and Symbolism in Poetry

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a poem from my set texts that uses sustained or complex imagery (such as an extended metaphor, recurring symbol, or pattern of natural imagery). Then quiz me on: what imagery the poet uses and what it represents, how the imagery develops or shifts across the poem, how individual images connect to the poem's broader themes, and whether the imagery can be interpreted in more than one way. Push me to go beyond identifying images to analysing how they work — what associations they carry, what emotional responses they evoke, and how they connect to the poem's overall meaning. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of sustained imagery and symbolism in poetry, including how images develop across a poem and carry thematic weight.

How to use it well:

Look for patterns of imagery across a poem — when the same type of image recurs, it usually carries significant thematic weight.

Prompt 10: Tone and Mood in Poetry

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a short poem or extract (approximately 8-12 lines) with a complex or shifting tone. Ask me to identify the tone and mood, explain

how specific language choices, sound effects, rhythm, and structural features create that tone, and discuss whether the tone shifts within the poem and what the effect of any tonal shift is. Wait for my answer and check that I move beyond simply naming the tone ('sad', 'angry') to explaining precisely how the poet creates it through their craft choices.

What this helps you practise:

Identifying and analysing tone and mood in poetry through precise analysis of language, sound, rhythm, and structural choices.

How to use it well:

Tone is not just an adjective — it is the cumulative effect of many craft choices working together.

Explain the how, not just the what.

Prompt 11: Poetry Essay — Full Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level style essay question on poetry — either a single poem analysis or a comparison question — and instruct me to write a full response. Tell me I have 45 minutes. After I submit my answer, mark it against A-Level assessment objectives: quality of close textual analysis (AO2), informed personal response (AO1), integration of context (AO3), comparison skills if applicable (AO4), and quality of written expression. Give me a band indication using the mark scheme descriptors and detailed feedback on what I did well and what I would need to do to reach the next band boundary.

What this helps you practise:

Writing a full poetry essay under timed conditions and receiving detailed feedback against A-Level assessment objectives.

How to use it well:

Simulate exam conditions as closely as possible — write with your text if it is an open-book exam, or

from memory if it is closed-book, and time yourself strictly.

Section 2

Prose – Including Pre-1900 Texts

Prose study at A-Level requires sustained, detailed analysis of how novelists construct narrative, create character, explore themes, and engage with the social and intellectual contexts of their time. You need to move beyond character-level discussion to analyse narrative technique, prose style, structural choices, and the relationship between form and meaning. Pre-1900 texts demand particular attention to the literary and linguistic conventions of their period, and to the historical contexts that shape both the novel's content and its reception.

Examiners at A-Level expect you to discuss novels as crafted artefacts, not just stories. You should be able to analyse narrative voice and point of view, structural organisation (chronological, fragmented, circular, epistolary), prose style (sentence length, syntax, register, diction), and how novelists use specific techniques such as free indirect discourse, unreliable narration, symbolism, and intertextuality to create meaning and shape the reader's experience.

These prompts will develop your ability to analyse prose fiction at A-Level depth, focusing on how writers use language, form, and structure to create effects. They will test your knowledge of your set texts, challenge you to analyse passages closely, and push you to construct arguments that integrate close reading with contextual and theoretical understanding.

Prompt 12: Narrative Voice and Point of View
Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to identify and analyse the narrative voice in my studied novel. I should explain: what point of view the novel uses (first person, third person limited, third person omniscient, second person, or multiple narrators), how the narrative voice shapes the reader's access to information and characters' thoughts, whether the narrator is reliable or unreliable and what evidence supports this, and how the narrative voice contributes to the novel's themes. Push me to discuss specific passages that demonstrate the narrative technique and to explain why the author chose this particular narrative approach. Wait for my answer and challenge any superficial analysis. Assess whether my discussion of narrative voice would satisfy AO2, where the examiner specifically looks for analysis of how the writer's choice of method shapes meaning.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of narrative voice and point of view as deliberate authorial choices that shape meaning and reader response.

How to use it well:

Always consider narrative voice as a choice — ask yourself what would change if the novel were narrated differently, and you will understand why the author chose this approach.

Prompt 13: Close Reading of Prose Style

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I will provide a passage of approximately 100-150 words from my studied novel. Ask me to analyse the prose style closely: sentence length and variation, syntax (simple, compound, complex, periodic, loose), diction (register, formality, connotation), use of imagery and figurative language, and how these stylistic choices create effects such as tension, pace, atmosphere, or characterisation. Push me beyond

identifying features to explaining how specific stylistic choices create specific effects for the reader. Wait for my passage and then ask questions one at a time.

What this helps you practise:

Close stylistic analysis of prose passages, focusing on how sentence structure, diction, and imagery create specific effects.

How to use it well:

Choose passages that are stylistically distinctive — moments of crisis, description, or emotional intensity often showcase the writer's craft most clearly.

Prompt 14: Character as Construct

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the concept of character as a literary construct rather than a real person. Ask me to select a character from my studied novel and analyse: how the writer constructs the character through specific methods (description, dialogue, action, thought, other characters' reactions, narrative commentary), what the character represents thematically (do they embody a particular idea, social position, or moral perspective?), how the character develops or remains static across the novel and why, and how the character relates to the novel's broader concerns. Push me to discuss the character as a product of the writer's craft rather than describing them as if they were a real person. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing literary characters as constructs serving thematic and structural purposes rather than treating them as real individuals.

How to use it well:

Use phrases like 'the writer presents...', 'the character functions as...', and 'through this

characterisation, the author explores...' to demonstrate that you understand characters are deliberate creations.

Prompt 15: Structure and Narrative Organisation

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse the structural choices in my studied novel. I should discuss: how the narrative is organised (chronological, non-linear, circular, epistolary, frame narrative), how the novel is divided (chapters, parts, volumes, sections with different narrators), how the writer uses structural techniques such as foreshadowing, parallelism, juxtaposition, and narrative framing, and how the structure relates to the novel's themes and meaning. Present me with a specific structural feature from my text and ask me to explain its significance. Wait for my answer and check that I discuss structure as a meaningful choice, not just a feature to identify.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of narrative structure as a deliberate meaning-making strategy, connecting structural choices to thematic significance.

How to use it well:

Structure is often overlooked in favour of language analysis — but discussing how the novel is organised and why can produce some of the most sophisticated analytical points.

Prompt 16: Pre-1900 Prose — Period and Convention

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the literary conventions and contexts relevant to my pre-1900 set text. Ask me the following one at a time: what literary period or movement does the novel belong to (Victorian,

Romantic, Augustan, etc.) and what are its characteristic features? What social, political, or cultural issues of the period are reflected in the novel? How does the novel's prose style reflect the conventions of its time? How does its narrative form relate to the development of the novel as a genre? Are there ways in which the novel challenges or subverts the conventions of its period? Wait for each answer and push me to connect context to specific textual evidence.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding the literary period, conventions, and historical context of a pre-1900 prose text and connecting them to textual analysis.

How to use it well:

Pre-1900 texts require confident contextual knowledge — research the social and literary context of your text so you can discuss it with authority.

Prompt 17: Free Indirect Discourse

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain what free indirect discourse (also called free indirect style or free indirect speech) is and how it works. I should define the technique, explain how it differs from direct speech, indirect speech, and pure narration, and give examples from a novel I have studied. Then ask me to analyse the effects of free indirect discourse: how does it blur the boundary between narrator and character? How does it create irony or sympathy? How does it allow the writer to simultaneously present and comment on a character's thoughts? Present me with a passage and ask me to identify and analyse any free indirect discourse. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding and analysing free indirect discourse

as a narrative technique and its effects on reader positioning.

How to use it well:

Free indirect discourse is one of the most important narrative techniques in prose fiction — if your set text uses it, being able to identify and analyse it will significantly strengthen your essays.

Prompt 18: Setting and Atmosphere in Prose

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse how the writer creates a sense of setting and atmosphere in my studied novel. I should select a passage where setting is particularly significant and discuss: what specific language choices create the atmosphere (word connotations, imagery, sensory detail, pathetic fallacy), how the setting functions symbolically or thematically (does it reflect characters' psychological states? Does it represent social conditions?), and how the setting relates to the novel's broader concerns. Push me to go beyond describing the setting to analysing how it is constructed and what it means. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of how writers construct setting and atmosphere through language choices and how setting functions symbolically and thematically.

How to use it well:

Setting is never just background — it is always doing something thematically. Ask yourself what the setting reveals about the characters, the social world, or the novel's ideas.

Prompt 19: Themes and Ideas in Prose

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse the ending of my studied novel. I should discuss: whether the ending provides

resolution or ambiguity, how the ending relates to the novel's opening (circularity, contrast, development), what the ending reveals about the writer's thematic intentions, how the ending positions the reader (satisfaction, discomfort, reflection), and how the ending might be interpreted differently by different readers or from different critical perspectives. Push me to consider whether the ending reinforces or subverts the expectations established by the genre and the narrative. Wait for my answer and challenge any analysis that treats the ending as simply 'what happens last'. Check whether my engagement with multiple interpretations would satisfy AO5 at the higher bands.

What this helps you practise:

Identifying and analysing thematic development in prose, connecting themes to methods, context, and critical perspectives.

How to use it well:

Themes should be discussed through specific textual evidence and analysis of methods — avoid writing abstract thematic paragraphs that do not engage with the writer's craft.

Prompt 20: Endings and Their Significance

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse the ending of my studied novel. I should discuss: whether the ending provides resolution or ambiguity, how the ending relates to the novel's opening (circularity, contrast, development), what the ending reveals about the writer's thematic intentions, how the ending positions the reader (satisfaction, discomfort, reflection), and how the ending might be interpreted differently by different readers or from different critical perspectives. Push me to consider whether the ending reinforces or subverts the expectations

established by the genre and the narrative. Wait for my answer and challenge any analysis that treats the ending as simply 'what happens last'.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of narrative endings as deliberate structural and thematic choices, considering their effects on interpretation and reader response.

How to use it well:

The ending of a novel is one of the most significant structural choices — it determines what the reader takes away. Analyse it as carefully as you would analyse any key passage.

Prompt 21: The Novel and Social Commentary

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on how my studied novel functions as social commentary. Ask me to identify the specific social issues the novel engages with (class, gender, race, imperialism, industrialisation, morality, justice), explain how the writer uses character, plot, and setting to comment on these issues, analyse how the writer's own social position and context shaped their perspective, and evaluate whether the novel challenges or reinforces the social norms of its time. Present specific textual evidence and push me to distinguish between what the novel says and what it does — how its form and methods enact its social critique. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of the novel as social commentary, connecting specific textual evidence to broader social and historical contexts.

How to use it well:

Discussing how a novel engages with social issues is essential for AO3 — but always ground your contextual discussion in specific analysis of the writer's methods.

Prompt 22: Prose Essay — Full Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level style essay question on my studied novel — such as a passage-based question with a wider discussion component, or a thematic essay question. Instruct me to write a full response in 50 minutes. After I submit my answer, mark it against A-Level band descriptors: quality of close textual analysis and use of references (AO1/AO2), understanding of the writer's methods (AO2), integration of relevant context (AO3), exploration of different interpretations where relevant (AO5), and quality of sustained argument and written expression. Give me a band indication and explain specifically what I would need to add or change to move into the next band.

What this helps you practise:

Writing a full prose essay under timed conditions and receiving detailed feedback against A-Level assessment objectives.

How to use it well:

Practise writing under timed conditions regularly — the ability to construct a coherent argument under time pressure is a skill that improves with repetition.

Section 3

Drama – Including Shakespeare

Drama at A-Level requires you to analyse plays not just as texts on a page but as works designed for performance. You need to consider how dialogue, stage directions, dramatic structure, and theatrical conventions create meaning for an audience, and how the experience of watching a play differs from reading it. Shakespeare is a required component of every A-Level specification, and you need to engage with Shakespearean language, verse, and dramatic conventions with confidence.

Examiners expect you to discuss dramatic methods – soliloquy, aside, dramatic irony, entrances and exits, staging, dialogue, silence, and the manipulation of audience response – with precision and analytical depth. You should be able to analyse how dramatists structure their plays (the five-act structure, the use of subplots, the building and release of dramatic tension), and how the genre of a play (tragedy, comedy, history, tragicomedy, absurdist) shapes its conventions and the audience's expectations.

These prompts will develop your ability to analyse drama as a performative art form, test your understanding of Shakespeare's language and dramatic craft, and push you to construct arguments that integrate close textual analysis with awareness of theatrical effect, genre, and context.

Prompt 23: Dramatic Methods – Soliloquy and Aside

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a soliloquy or aside from my studied play and analyse it closely. I should explain:

what the speech reveals about the character's inner thoughts, motivations, or conflicts, how the dramatist uses the convention of speaking directly to the audience to create dramatic irony or intimacy, how the language of the speech (verse or prose, imagery, syntax, rhetorical devices) contributes to characterisation and theme, and how the soliloquy functions within the dramatic structure — does it mark a turning point, build tension, or provide a moment of reflection? Wait for my answer and check that I discuss theatrical effect as well as textual meaning. Assess whether my analysis demonstrates the AO2 skill of analysing the writer's methods — the examiner expects discussion of dramatic technique, not just content summary.

What this helps you practise:

Close analysis of soliloquy and aside as dramatic conventions, considering both textual meaning and theatrical effect.

How to use it well:

Soliloquies are gift passages for analysis — they combine close language analysis with discussion of dramatic convention and audience positioning.

Prompt 24: Shakespeare's Language — Verse and Prose

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on Shakespeare's use of verse and prose. Ask me to explain: when and why Shakespeare uses blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) versus prose, what the shift between verse and prose signals about a character's status, emotional state, or the nature of a scene, how Shakespeare uses rhyming couplets and what they signal (scene endings, formality, heightened emotion), and how Shakespeare's use of shared lines (split lines between characters) can indicate pace, tension, or

intimacy. Present me with short passages from my studied Shakespeare play and ask me to identify whether they are verse or prose and explain the significance. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding Shakespeare's deliberate shifts between verse and prose and analysing their dramatic significance.

How to use it well:

The verse-prose distinction is one of the most important tools in Shakespeare's dramatic toolkit — always note when and why characters shift between the two.

Prompt 25: Dramatic Structure and Tension

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse the dramatic structure of my studied play. I should discuss: how the play is organised (acts, scenes, or other structural units), how the dramatist builds dramatic tension across the play (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution or catastrophe), how subplots relate to the main plot and what they contribute, and where the key turning points occur and how the dramatist creates them. Push me to explain how structural choices create effects on the audience rather than just describing the sequence of events. Wait for my answer and check for analytical depth.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of dramatic structure as a deliberate means of building tension, creating effects, and shaping audience response.

How to use it well:

Think about the audience's experience across the whole play — how does the dramatist control what they know, what they expect, and when tensions are released?

Prompt 26: Dramatic Irony

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the use of dramatic irony in my studied play. Ask me to identify at least two moments of dramatic irony — where the audience knows something that one or more characters do not — and analyse their effects. I should explain: what information the audience possesses, how this knowledge shapes their emotional response to the scene, how the dramatist creates tension, sympathy, or dark humour through the ironic gap, and how dramatic irony contributes to the play's themes. Push me to connect my analysis of dramatic irony to the play's broader exploration of knowledge, deception, or fate. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Identification and analysis of dramatic irony, its effects on audience response, and its connection to thematic concerns.

How to use it well:

Dramatic irony is a powerful analytical tool — when you identify it, always explain the emotional and thematic effect it creates for the audience.

Prompt 27: Character and Dialogue

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse how a specific character in my studied play is revealed through their dialogue. I will select a character and provide examples of their speech. Ask me to discuss: how the character's language (vocabulary, register, sentence structure, verse or prose) establishes their personality, status, and emotional state, how their language changes in different contexts or in response to different characters, what subtext or pragmatic meaning lies beneath the surface of their words, and how the

dramatist uses dialogue to develop the character across the play. Wait for my answer and push me to quote specific lines and analyse them closely.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of dramatic dialogue as characterisation, considering language choices, register, subtext, and development.

How to use it well:

In drama, dialogue does almost all the work of characterisation — every line a character speaks is a deliberate authorial choice that reveals something.

Prompt 28: Tragedy — Genre Conventions and Expectations

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the conventions of tragedy if my studied play is a tragedy (or tragic elements if it is a tragicomedy). Ask me to discuss: the concept of the tragic hero (noble status, hamartia, peripeteia, anagnorisis, catharsis) with reference to Aristotle's Poetics, how my studied play conforms to or departs from these conventions, the role of fate, free will, and moral choice in the play's tragic trajectory, and what the audience is meant to feel and learn from the tragic experience. Push me to evaluate whether the play is a straightforward tragedy or whether it complicates the genre. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding and applying the conventions of tragedy to a studied play, including critical engagement with Aristotelian theory.

How to use it well:

Understanding genre conventions allows you to discuss how a play fulfils or subverts audience expectations — this is a sophisticated analytical approach.

Prompt 29: Comedy — Genre Conventions and Social Function

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

If my studied play is a comedy (or contains comic elements), test me on the conventions of the genre. Ask me to discuss: the typical structure of comedy (disorder to order, confusion to resolution, marriage as social restoration), how the playwright uses comic techniques (mistaken identity, wordplay, physical comedy, incongruity, satire, irony), the social function of comedy (reinforcing social norms, exposing folly, providing release, subverting authority), and how my studied play uses or subverts these conventions. Wait for my answer and push me to go beyond describing what is funny to analysing how and why comedy works in the play.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding and applying the conventions of comedy to a studied play, analysing both technique and social function.

How to use it well:

Comedy is not just entertainment — it has a social function. Consider what the play is laughing at, who is laughing, and what the laughter reveals about the values of the play's world.

Prompt 30: Staging and Performance Interpretation

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a key scene from my studied play and discuss how it might be staged in performance. I should consider: how the physical staging (positioning of characters, use of space, entrances and exits) affects meaning, what choices a director might make about tone, pace, and emphasis, how different staging interpretations could change the audience's understanding of characters and themes,

and what the stage directions (if present) reveal about the dramatist's intentions. Push me to discuss at least two different interpretive possibilities for the scene and explain what each would reveal. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Considering the performance dimension of drama and how staging choices affect meaning and audience interpretation.

How to use it well:

Discussing staging demonstrates that you understand drama is a performative medium — even in an essay about a written text, showing awareness of performance possibilities strengthens your analysis.

Prompt 31: Shakespeare — Close Language Analysis

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I will provide a passage of approximately 8-12 lines from my studied Shakespeare play. Ask me to analyse the language in close detail: the imagery and its patterns (chains of imagery running through the play), the use of figurative language and its thematic significance, the effects of word choices including archaic or unfamiliar vocabulary, how Shakespeare's syntax creates emphasis and rhythm, and how the passage connects to the play's major themes. Wait for my passage and then ask questions one at a time. Check that I demonstrate confident handling of Shakespeare's language rather than paraphrasing.

What this helps you practise:

Detailed close analysis of Shakespeare's language, including imagery patterns, figurative language, and syntactic effects.

How to use it well:

Do not paraphrase Shakespeare — engage with the actual words. If you find the language difficult, work through it line by line until you can explain what it means and how it means it.

Prompt 32: Drama and Context

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to discuss how my studied play relates to its historical, social, and political context. I should explain: the key contextual factors relevant to the play (the period it was written, the social issues it engages with, the political climate, the theatrical conventions of the time), how these contexts shape the play's content, characters, and themes, how the play would have been received by its original audience versus a modern audience, and whether the play challenges or reinforces the values of its time. Push me to integrate context into my analysis of specific scenes or speeches rather than writing a separate context paragraph. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Integrating contextual understanding into dramatic analysis, considering both original and modern reception.

How to use it well:

Context should always be connected to specific moments in the text — avoid writing general historical paragraphs that are not linked to the play's methods and effects.

Prompt 33: Drama Essay — Full Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level style essay question on my studied play — either a passage-based question or a thematic/character question. Instruct me to write a full response in 50 minutes. After I submit my

answer, mark it against A-Level band descriptors: quality of close textual analysis (AO1/AO2), understanding of dramatic methods and their effects (AO2), integration of context (AO3), awareness of the play as a performed text, exploration of different interpretations (AO5), and quality of sustained argument and written expression. Give me a specific band for each AO with detailed feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.

What this helps you practise:

Writing a full drama essay under timed conditions and receiving detailed feedback against A-Level assessment objectives.

How to use it well:

When writing about drama, always remember you are discussing a performance text — refer to 'the audience' rather than 'the reader', and consider theatrical as well as literary effects.

Section 4

Literary Theory and Critical Perspectives

A-Level English Literature increasingly requires students to engage with literary theory and different critical perspectives. Assessment Objective 5 (AO5) on most specifications asks you to explore the significance of different interpretations of literary texts, and this means going beyond your own personal response to consider how different theoretical lenses reveal different aspects of a text's meaning. You need to understand what each perspective focuses on, what questions it asks, and what aspects of a text it illuminates.

The major critical approaches you should be familiar with include feminist criticism, Marxist criticism, post-colonial criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, ecocriticism, new historicism, reader-response theory, and structuralist and post-structuralist approaches. You do not need to be an expert in all of these, but you should be able to apply at least two or three confidently to your set texts and understand how they generate different readings.

These prompts will introduce you to key critical perspectives, test your ability to apply them to your set texts, and push you to evaluate the strengths and limitations of different theoretical approaches. They will help you develop the interpretive sophistication that characterises the strongest A-Level literature candidates.

Prompt 34: Feminist Criticism

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on feminist literary criticism. Ask me to explain the key concerns of feminist criticism — how texts represent gender, how female characters are

constructed, how patriarchal values are reinforced or challenged, and how gender affects authorship and readership. Then ask me to apply a feminist reading to one of my set texts: how does the text represent women? Does it challenge or reinforce gender norms? Are female characters given agency and voice, or are they marginalised? How does the text's historical context shape its gender politics?

Wait for my answer and push me to support my reading with specific textual evidence. Remind me that AO5 at the highest band requires me to engage with alternative interpretations, not just describe them — I should show how a feminist reading generates specific insights that other readings might miss.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding feminist critical approaches and applying them to a set text with specific textual evidence.

How to use it well:

A feminist reading asks 'how does this text represent gender?' — apply this question to any text, even those not obviously about gender, and you will often discover revealing insights.

Prompt 35: Marxist Criticism

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain the key concerns of Marxist literary criticism — how texts represent class, how economic structures shape characters' lives and choices, how ideology operates within texts, and how literature can both reinforce and challenge the dominant social order. Then ask me to apply a Marxist reading to one of my set texts: how does the text represent class relations? Whose interests does the text serve? How does economic status shape characters' opportunities and identities? Does the

text naturalise inequality or expose it? Wait for my answer and check for specific textual evidence and genuine analytical engagement.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding Marxist critical approaches and applying them to a set text with specific textual evidence.

How to use it well:

A Marxist reading asks 'whose interests does this text serve?' and 'how does it represent economic and class relations?' — these questions can illuminate any text, not just those explicitly about class.

Prompt 36: Post-Colonial Criticism

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on post-colonial literary criticism. Ask me to explain: what post-colonial criticism focuses on (representation of colonised peoples, the politics of language and cultural identity, the legacy of empire, concepts of othering and exoticism), key concepts such as Said's Orientalism and Spivak's idea of the subaltern, and how post-colonial readings can reveal assumptions in texts that were previously taken for granted. Then ask me whether a post-colonial reading can be applied to any of my set texts and, if so, what it reveals. Wait for my answer and push for specific textual evidence.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding post-colonial critical approaches and identifying how they can illuminate set texts.

How to use it well:

Post-colonial criticism is relevant not only to texts about empire but to any text that represents cultural encounter, otherness, or power relations between groups.

Prompt 37: Psychoanalytic Criticism

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain the key concepts of psychoanalytic literary criticism — including the unconscious, repression, the Oedipus complex, the id/ego/superego, dream symbolism, and the uncanny. I should discuss how psychoanalytic criticism reads texts for hidden desires, anxieties, and conflicts, and how it can be applied to characters, authors, or readers. Then ask me to apply a psychoanalytic perspective to a character or situation in one of my set texts. What unconscious desires or repressions might be at work? What does the text's imagery or symbolism reveal from a psychoanalytic perspective? Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding psychoanalytic criticism and applying it to character analysis and textual interpretation.

How to use it well:

Psychoanalytic readings can feel speculative — ground them firmly in textual evidence and present them as one possible interpretation rather than the definitive reading.

Prompt 38: Reader-Response Theory

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on reader-response theory. Ask me to explain: the idea that meaning is created through the interaction between text and reader, Iser's concept of gaps and indeterminacies that the reader must fill, Fish's idea of interpretive communities, and how different readers in different contexts produce different meanings from the same text. Then ask me to consider how my own reading of a set text might differ from a reading produced by someone from a different historical period, social background, or cultural context, and what this

reveals about the text's openness to interpretation.

Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding reader-response theory and applying it to consider how different readers produce different meanings from the same text.

How to use it well:

Reader-response theory reminds you that your interpretation is not the only valid one — acknowledging this in your essays demonstrates the interpretive sophistication that AO5 rewards.

Prompt 39: Comparing Critical Perspectives

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a specific passage or scene from one of my set texts and read it from two different critical perspectives — for example, a feminist and a Marxist reading, or a psychoanalytic and a post-colonial reading. For each perspective, I should explain what the reading reveals about the text, what evidence supports it, and what aspects of the text it highlights or ignores. Then ask me to evaluate which reading is more convincing and why, or whether the two readings are complementary rather than contradictory. Wait for my answer and push me to engage genuinely with the different perspectives rather than superficially applying labels.

What this helps you practise:

Applying and comparing multiple critical perspectives to the same text, evaluating their relative explanatory power.

How to use it well:

Being able to read the same passage through different theoretical lenses and evaluate the results is one of the most sophisticated skills you can demonstrate at A-Level.

Prompt 40: New Historicism

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain the new historicist approach to literature — the idea that literary texts are products of their historical moment and cannot be understood apart from the cultural, political, and ideological forces that shaped them. I should discuss how new historicism differs from traditional historical criticism (it treats all texts, literary and non-literary, as equally significant cultural documents), the concept of the text as both reflecting and shaping its historical context, and the idea that our own reading of the text is itself historically situated. Then ask me to apply this approach to one of my set texts. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding new historicist approaches and applying the concept of text-as-cultural-document to a set text.

How to use it well:

New historicism is particularly useful for contextual analysis — it goes beyond 'this is what was happening historically' to ask how the text actively participates in the cultural conversations of its time.

Prompt 41: Ecocriticism

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on ecocriticism as a literary approach. Ask me to explain: what ecocriticism focuses on (representations of nature, human-nature relationships, environmental consciousness, the natural world as more than backdrop), how it challenges anthropocentric readings that treat nature as merely setting or symbol, and how ecological concerns can illuminate texts from any period, not just contemporary ones. Then ask me whether any of my set texts can be productively read

through an ecocritical lens and what such a reading would reveal. Wait for my answer and push for specific textual evidence.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding ecocritical approaches and identifying how environmental concerns operate in literary texts.

How to use it well:

Ecocriticism is an increasingly relevant critical perspective — consider how your set texts represent the natural world and what their representations might reveal about the relationship between humans and their environment.

Prompt 42: The Death of the Author

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain Barthes's concept of the death of the author and its implications for literary interpretation. I should discuss: the idea that the meaning of a text is not determined by the author's intentions, that the text becomes independent once published and is open to multiple interpretations, and how this concept relates to reader-response theory and to the practice of reading texts through different critical lenses. Then ask me to evaluate the concept: is it useful or does it go too far? Should we consider authorial intention at all? Wait for my answer and push for a nuanced evaluation.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding Barthes's 'death of the author' concept and evaluating its implications for literary interpretation.

How to use it well:

This concept underpins much of modern literary theory — understanding it helps you engage with the idea that texts can mean more (or differently) than their authors intended.

Prompt 43: Applying Theory to Exam Questions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level essay question about one of my set texts and ask me to plan a response that incorporates at least one critical perspective. I should explain: which perspective I will use and why it is relevant, how I will integrate theoretical discussion with close textual analysis rather than bolting theory on as a separate section, what specific textual evidence supports the theoretical reading, and whether I will present the theoretical perspective as my own reading or as one of several possible interpretations. After I present my plan, evaluate whether my use of theory is genuine and productive or superficial and formulaic. Assess my plan against AO5 band descriptors — does my engagement with critical perspectives demonstrate the evaluative sophistication the examiner expects at the top bands? Provide specific feedback.

What this helps you practise:

Integrating literary theory into exam essay planning in a way that is genuine, productive, and grounded in textual evidence.

How to use it well:

Theory should enhance your analysis, not replace it — use it to generate insights about the text, not to display knowledge for its own sake.

Prompt 44: Structuralism and Binary Oppositions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to identify and analyse the binary oppositions at work in one of my set texts — such as light and dark, civilisation and nature, reason and passion, or self and other. I should explain: what the key binary oppositions are, how they structure the

text's meaning and organise its conflicts, whether the text reinforces or destabilises these oppositions, and what a structuralist reading reveals about the text that a purely thematic reading might miss. Push me to connect my analysis to structuralist ideas about how meaning is created through difference and opposition. Wait for my answer and check for genuine analytical depth beyond simple identification of contrasts.

What this helps you practise:

Identifying and analysing binary oppositions through a structuralist lens to reveal how texts create meaning through systems of difference.

How to use it well:

Structuralist analysis gives you a precise vocabulary for discussing how texts organise meaning — identifying binary oppositions is a powerful starting point for deeper critical engagement.

Section 5

Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis is a core skill at A-Level, tested across most specifications through questions that require you to connect two or more texts. Whether you are comparing thematic concerns, writers' methods, narrative techniques, or contextual influences, the key skill is the same: you must sustain comparison throughout your essay, weaving your texts together at every point rather than writing about each one separately and adding a concluding sentence about similarities and differences.

Effective comparison requires you to find meaningful points of connection and divergence between texts — not just superficial similarities but genuine analytical insights into how different writers approach similar concerns in different ways, and how their different contexts, genres, and styles lead to different effects. You need to be able to compare across genres (poetry with prose, drama with fiction), across periods (pre-1900 with modern), and across literary traditions.

These prompts will develop your comparative skills across different text types and assessment contexts. They will push you to identify productive points of comparison, sustain comparative analysis throughout a response, and construct arguments that illuminate both texts through the act of comparison.

Prompt 45: Comparing Themes Across Texts

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to identify a theme that appears in two or more of my set texts — such as love, power,

isolation, identity, class, justice, or mortality. Then quiz me on how the different writers treat this theme: do they agree or disagree? How do their literary methods (language, form, structure, genre) create different effects? How do their different contexts (historical period, social background, literary tradition) shape their treatment of the theme? Wait for my answer and check that I sustain comparison throughout rather than writing separate paragraphs about each text. Assess whether my comparative approach would satisfy AO4, where the examiner expects sustained, analytical comparison — not just superficial similarity-spotting.

What this helps you practise:

Sustained thematic comparison across two or more texts, integrating analysis of methods and contexts.

How to use it well:

Use a consistent comparative structure — for each point, discuss how Text A handles it, then immediately how Text B handles it, before moving to the next point.

Prompt 46: Comparing Writers' Methods

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to compare how two writers from my set texts use a specific literary method or technique — such as imagery, narrative voice, dialogue, symbolism, or structural organisation — to achieve their effects. I should go beyond identifying that both writers use the technique to analysing how they use it differently and what different effects this creates. Push me to explain how the difference in method relates to the different purposes, contexts, or genres of the two texts. Wait for my answer and check that I provide specific textual references from both texts throughout.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis of specific literary methods across texts, explaining how different approaches create different effects.

How to use it well:

Comparing methods is more analytically productive than comparing content — it keeps your discussion focused on AO2 (writers' methods) rather than just AO1 (content).

Prompt 47: Comparing Across Genres

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on comparing texts from different genres — for example, how a theme is treated in a poem versus a novel, or in a play versus a short story. Ask me how the genre conventions of each text shape the way the theme is explored. I should discuss how the affordances and constraints of each genre (the compression of poetry versus the expansiveness of the novel, the performative dimension of drama versus the interiority of prose fiction) lead to different treatments of similar concerns. Push me to analyse specific examples from each text. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis across genres, understanding how generic conventions shape thematic treatment.

How to use it well:

Cross-genre comparison demonstrates sophisticated awareness of how form and genre are not neutral containers but active shapers of meaning.

Prompt 48: Comparing Across Time Periods

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to compare how two texts from different historical periods approach a shared theme or concern. I should analyse how the different contexts

(social norms, political climate, literary conventions, language conventions) lead to different treatments, and whether certain aspects of the theme are timeless while others are historically specific. Push me to avoid anachronism — judging older texts by modern standards without acknowledging the historical context — while still being able to discuss how modern readers might respond differently from the original audience. Wait for my answer and check for genuine historical sensitivity.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis across historical periods, demonstrating historical awareness and avoiding anachronistic judgement.

How to use it well:

Cross-period comparison requires you to hold two historical contexts in mind simultaneously — research both periods thoroughly so you can discuss each with authority.

Prompt 49: Comparative Essay Structure

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level comparative essay question involving two of my set texts. Before I write the full essay, ask me to produce a plan showing: the comparative thesis I will argue, three or four analytical paragraphs each built around a point of comparison (not a text-by-text structure), the specific textual evidence I will use from both texts in each paragraph, and how I will integrate contextual discussion into my comparison. After I present my plan, evaluate whether my comparison is genuinely sustained, my points are analytically productive, and my structure avoids the text-by-text trap. Suggest improvements before I write.

What this helps you practise:

Planning comparative essays with a sustained

comparative structure, avoiding separate text-by-text discussion.

How to use it well:

The biggest mistake in comparative essays is writing about each text separately — plan your paragraphs around points of comparison, not around texts.

Prompt 50: Comparing Characters Across Texts

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to compare two characters from different set texts who occupy similar roles or face similar situations — such as two protagonists, two outsiders, two women constrained by social expectations, or two characters who exercise power. I should compare: how each writer constructs the character (methods of characterisation), what each character represents thematically, how each character is shaped by their text's context and genre, and what the comparison reveals about each writer's concerns and values. Wait for my answer and check that I discuss the characters as literary constructs, not real people.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative character analysis across texts, focusing on methods of characterisation and thematic significance.

How to use it well:

When comparing characters, avoid simply comparing their personalities — focus on how the writers construct them and what they represent within their respective texts.

Prompt 51: Comparing Openings

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to compare the openings of two of my set texts — the first chapter or scene of a novel or play, or the opening lines of two poems. I should analyse:

what each opening establishes (setting, character, tone, themes, narrative voice, dramatic situation), how the writer's methods in the opening shape the reader's or audience's expectations, and what the similarities and differences between the two openings reveal about the writers' different purposes, genres, and styles. Push me to provide close textual analysis of specific language and structural choices in each opening. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis of textual openings, focusing on how writers establish tone, theme, and reader expectations through craft choices.

How to use it well:

Openings are rich for comparison because they reveal each writer's priorities — what they choose to establish first tells you a great deal about the text's concerns.

Prompt 52: Comparing Representations of a Social Issue

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on comparing how two texts represent a specific social issue — such as gender inequality, racial injustice, class conflict, or the abuse of power.

Ask me to analyse: how each text positions the reader in relation to the issue, what methods each writer uses to engage the reader's sympathy, anger, or understanding, how each text's historical context shapes its representation of the issue, and whether the texts offer hope for change or present the issue as intractable. Wait for my answer and check for sustained comparison, specific textual evidence, and awareness of how context shapes representation.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis of social issues across texts,

examining how different methods and contexts shape representations.

How to use it well:

Comparing representations of social issues is a productive way to combine AO2 (methods), AO3 (context), and AO4 (connections) in a single comparative discussion.

Prompt 53: Comparative Essay — Full Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level style comparative essay question involving two of my set texts and instruct me to write a full response in 50 minutes. After I submit my answer, mark it against A-Level band descriptors: quality of sustained comparison (AO4), close textual analysis of both texts (AO1/AO2), understanding of writers' methods (AO2), integration of context (AO3), exploration of different interpretations (AO5), and quality of argument and written expression. Give me a specific band for each relevant AO with detailed feedback, paying particular attention to whether my comparison was genuinely sustained throughout or whether it lapsed into separate text-by-text discussion at any point.

What this helps you practise:

Writing a full comparative essay under timed conditions and receiving detailed feedback on the quality of sustained comparison.

How to use it well:

After receiving feedback, rewrite any paragraphs that were not sufficiently comparative — learning to restructure your analysis around comparison points rather than texts is the key skill to practise.

Prompt 54: Comparing Form and Structure

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to compare the form and structural choices of two of my set texts. I should discuss: how each text is organised (chronological, non-linear, verse structure, act structure, chapter organisation), why each writer chose this form and what it enables them to do, how structural features such as foreshadowing, repetition, juxtaposition, or circularity function in each text, and what the comparison of formal choices reveals about each writer's artistic purposes. Push me to explain how form creates meaning in each text rather than simply describing the structures. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis of form and structural choices across texts, explaining how formal decisions create meaning.

How to use it well:

Form and structure are often the most neglected aspects of comparison — discussing them demonstrates the kind of analytical sophistication that distinguishes the best candidates.

Prompt 55: Comparing Endings

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to compare the endings of two of my set texts. I should analyse: whether each ending provides closure or ambiguity, how each ending relates to the text's themes and the questions it has raised, how the genre of each text shapes the expectations the ending fulfils or subverts, how the endings position the reader or audience (satisfied, disturbed, reflective, challenged), and what the comparison of endings reveals about each writer's worldview or artistic purpose. Wait for my answer and check that I provide specific textual analysis and

avoid simply summarising what happens at the end of each text.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative analysis of textual endings, considering closure, genre expectations, and thematic significance.

How to use it well:

Endings crystallise a text's meaning — comparing them often reveals the most fundamental differences between writers' perspectives and purposes.

Section 6

Gothic Literature and Genre Study

Genre study at A-Level requires you to understand how literary genres operate as sets of conventions, expectations, and traditions that writers both use and subvert. The Gothic is one of the most commonly examined genres, with a rich tradition stretching from Walpole and Radcliffe through Shelley, the Brontes, Stevenson, and Stoker to modern and contemporary writers. Understanding how the Gothic works — its conventions, its cultural functions, and its evolution — exemplifies the kind of genre awareness that A-Level examiners reward.

Gothic literature is characterised by specific conventions: confined and oppressive settings, the supernatural or uncanny, doubling and the doppelganger, transgression and taboo, psychological extremity, the blurring of boundaries between reality and nightmare, and the exploration of fear, desire, and the unknown. At A-Level, you need to go beyond identifying these conventions to analysing how individual writers use, adapt, and subvert them, and to understanding what cultural anxieties the Gothic addresses.

These prompts will develop your understanding of Gothic conventions and their significance, test your ability to analyse how specific texts engage with the genre, and push you to consider how genre study enriches your reading of individual texts. Even if your specification focuses on a different genre, the analytical approach — understanding conventions, tracing influences, and analysing innovation — is transferable.

Prompt 56: Gothic Conventions and Their Functions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the key conventions of Gothic literature. Ask me to identify and explain the following one at a time: the confined or oppressive setting (castles, monasteries, old houses, labyrinthine spaces), the supernatural or uncanny, the double or doppelganger, transgression and taboo, the Byronic or villainous hero-figure, the persecuted heroine, the blurring of boundaries (life/death, sane/insane, natural/supernatural, male/female), and the exploration of repressed desires and fears. For each convention, I should explain its typical function in Gothic texts and give a specific example from a text I have studied. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Comprehensive knowledge of Gothic conventions and their typical literary and cultural functions with specific textual examples.

How to use it well:

Understanding conventions allows you to discuss how a specific text uses, adapts, or subverts them — this is more analytically productive than simply identifying that conventions are present.

Prompt 57: The Gothic Setting

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse the role of setting in a Gothic text I have studied. I should discuss: how the setting creates an atmosphere of enclosure, threat, or psychological pressure, how the physical space reflects or externalises characters' psychological states, how the setting functions symbolically (what does the house, the landscape, or the confined space represent?), and how the writer uses language — imagery, sensory detail, pathetic fallacy — to construct the setting's oppressive or uncanny quality. Push me to quote specific descriptive

passages and analyse them closely. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of Gothic settings as symbolic, psychological, and atmospheric constructions created through specific language choices.

How to use it well:

Gothic settings are never just backdrops — they are active elements of the text's meaning. Analyse them with the same attention you would give to character or theme.

Prompt 58: The Uncanny and the Supernatural

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the concept of the uncanny in Gothic literature. Ask me to explain Freud's concept of the uncanny (das Unheimliche) — the strange within the familiar, the return of the repressed — and how it operates in Gothic texts. Then ask me to identify moments of the uncanny in a Gothic text I have studied and analyse how the writer creates the uncanny effect through language and structural choices. I should also discuss whether the supernatural elements in my text are presented as genuinely supernatural or psychologically explicable, and what the ambiguity (if present) contributes. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding Freud's concept of the uncanny and analysing how writers create uncanny effects in Gothic literature.

How to use it well:

The uncanny is a powerful analytical concept — it allows you to discuss how Gothic texts disturb by making the familiar strange rather than simply presenting monsters.

Prompt 59: Doubling and the Doppelganger

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain the Gothic convention of doubling and the doppelganger. I should discuss: what doubling means in Gothic literature (dual characters, split selves, mirror images, psychological doubles), famous examples (Jekyll and Hyde, Frankenstein and his creature, Heathcliff and Edgar, Bertha and Jane), what doubling represents thematically (the divided self, repressed desires, social hypocrisy, the boundary between civilised and primitive), and how the writer uses doubling to explore questions about identity and human nature. Then ask me to analyse doubling in a text I have studied. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding the Gothic convention of doubling and analysing its thematic significance in specific texts.

How to use it well:

Doubling often reveals a text's deepest concerns about identity, morality, and the boundaries of the self — look for how apparently opposing characters illuminate each other.

Prompt 60: Gender and the Gothic

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the relationship between gender and the Gothic. Ask me to discuss: how Gothic texts represent women (the persecuted heroine, the monstrous feminine, the madwoman, the femme fatale), how the genre explores anxieties about female sexuality, agency, and power, how male characters embody patriarchal authority or transgressive desire, and how feminist critics have read Gothic texts as expressions of women's experience of confinement and patriarchal

oppression. Ask me to apply this lens to a specific Gothic text I have studied. Wait for each answer and push for specific textual evidence.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding and applying feminist readings of Gothic literature, analysing how the genre engages with gender politics.

How to use it well:

The Gothic is deeply engaged with gender — many of its conventions (the confined heroine, the threatening male figure, the locked room) directly relate to women's experiences of patriarchal control.

Prompt 61: The Evolution of the Gothic

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

*Ask me to trace the evolution of Gothic literature from its origins to the present day. I should discuss: the origins of the Gothic novel (Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Radcliffe's *explained supernatural*), the Romantic Gothic (Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Polidori's *The Vampyre*), Victorian Gothic (Stevenson, Stoker, Wilde, the Brontes), the Southern Gothic (Faulkner, O'Connor, McCarthy), and modern/contemporary Gothic (Carter, Morrison, contemporary horror). For each period, I should identify what is distinctive about its Gothic characteristics and what cultural anxieties it addresses. Wait for each answer.*

What this helps you practise:

Understanding the evolution of the Gothic tradition and how it has adapted to express different cultural anxieties across periods.

How to use it well:

Tracing how the Gothic evolves demonstrates that genre is not static — understanding how conventions change shows sophisticated literary historical awareness.

Prompt 62: The Gothic and the Body

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on how Gothic literature represents the body. Ask me to discuss: how the body is a site of horror, transformation, and transgression in Gothic texts (monstrosity, disease, decay, vampirism, bodily transformation), how bodily horror relates to cultural anxieties about science, sexuality, death, and contamination, and how specific writers use descriptions of the body to create visceral effects and explore themes of identity and alienation. I should analyse specific passages from a Gothic text I have studied where the body is central. Wait for my answer and push for close textual analysis.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of bodily representations in Gothic literature and their connection to cultural anxieties and thematic concerns.

How to use it well:

The Gothic body is always symbolic — when a text describes physical horror or transformation, ask what social or psychological anxiety the bodily image expresses.

Prompt 63: Gothic and Psychology

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to discuss how Gothic literature explores psychological states — madness, obsession, paranoia, guilt, desire, and the unconscious mind. I should analyse how specific Gothic writers use narrative techniques (unreliable narration, fragmented structure, dream sequences, first-person confessional) to represent disturbed psychological states, and how the Gothic externalises internal psychological conflicts through its settings, characters, and supernatural elements. I should reference specific examples from a text I have

studied and connect my analysis to relevant psychoanalytic concepts where appropriate. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of psychological dimensions of Gothic literature, connecting narrative technique to the representation of disturbed mental states.

How to use it well:

The Gothic is essentially a literature of psychological extremity — understanding this helps you see settings and supernatural elements as projections of internal states.

Prompt 64: Subverting Genre Conventions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse how a text I have studied subverts or challenges the conventions of its genre. I should identify the specific conventions being subverted, explain how the writer departs from expectations (through parody, inversion, hybridisation, or deliberate frustration of generic expectations), analyse the effects of these subversions on the reader, and discuss what the subversions suggest about the writer's attitude towards the genre and its conventions. Push me to support my analysis with specific textual evidence. Wait for my answer and check for genuine analytical insight rather than just identifying what is 'different'.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of how writers subvert genre conventions and what their departures from generic expectations reveal.

How to use it well:

Subversion is often where the most interesting analysis happens — when a writer breaks from convention, ask why and what effect it creates.

Prompt 65: Genre Essay — Full Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level style essay question about genre in one of my set texts — for example, asking me to discuss how the text uses, adapts, or challenges the conventions of its genre. Instruct me to write a full response in 45 minutes. After I submit my answer, mark it against A-Level criteria: knowledge of genre conventions (AO1), analysis of how the writer uses genre as a method (AO2), understanding of the genre's cultural and historical context (AO3), and quality of sustained argument and written expression. Give me a mark indication with detailed feedback.

What this helps you practise:

Writing a full genre-focused essay under timed conditions and receiving detailed feedback on genre knowledge and analytical quality.

How to use it well:

Genre questions reward students who understand conventions well enough to discuss how specific texts engage with them — generic knowledge is the foundation, specific textual analysis is the building.

Prompt 66: The Gothic and Race

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse how a text I have studied uses Gothic conventions to explore issues of race, otherness, or cultural anxiety. I should discuss: how the figure of the racial or cultural 'other' functions within the Gothic framework, whether the text reproduces or critiques anxieties about racial difference, how Gothic tropes such as monstrosity, contagion, or invasion map onto racial discourse, and what a post-colonial reading of the text's Gothic elements reveals. Push me to engage with the complexity of these representations rather than

offering a simple reading. Wait for my answer and assess whether I engage critically with how Gothic conventions intersect with racial discourse.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing how Gothic conventions intersect with representations of race, otherness, and cultural anxiety through a post-colonial critical lens.

How to use it well:

Some of the most rewarding Gothic analysis comes from examining how the genre's conventions encode cultural anxieties — race is one of the most significant and revealing areas of inquiry.

Section 7

Narrative Voice, Form, and Literary Technique

At A-Level, literary analysis must go beyond content to engage deeply with how texts are constructed. Narrative voice, literary form, and technique are not secondary features to be mentioned in passing — they are fundamental to how texts create meaning, and your ability to analyse them is central to your success, particularly in meeting AO2 (analysis of writers' methods). This section focuses on developing your analytical vocabulary and your confidence in discussing form and technique across all genres.

You need to be able to discuss a wide range of literary techniques with precision: narrative perspective and reliability, free indirect discourse, stream of consciousness, foreshadowing, symbolism, motif, allegory, irony, ambiguity, and intertextuality. But more than naming these techniques, you must explain how they create specific effects — how they shape the reader's understanding, sympathy, and interpretation. The strongest candidates treat technique not as decoration but as meaning.

These prompts will test your knowledge of literary techniques across genres, challenge you to analyse how form creates meaning, and develop your ability to write about technique with the precision and analytical depth that examiners reward.

Prompt 67: Unreliable Narration

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain what unreliable narration is and how it works. I should define the concept (a narrator whose account cannot be fully trusted), discuss the different types of unreliability (deliberate deception,

limited understanding, psychological disturbance, self-delusion), and explain the effects on the reader (active interpretation, suspicion, ironic distance, re-reading). Then ask me to identify and analyse any unreliable narration in my set texts: what makes the narrator unreliable? What clues does the writer provide? How does the unreliability affect the text's themes and the reader's experience? Wait for each answer and push for specific textual evidence.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding types of unreliable narration and analysing their effects on reader interpretation and textual meaning.

How to use it well:

Unreliable narration makes the reader an active participant in constructing meaning — always discuss what the reader discovers through the narrator's gaps and inconsistencies.

Prompt 68: Symbolism and Motif

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the use of symbolism and motif in my set texts. Ask me to distinguish between a symbol (an object or image that represents something beyond itself) and a motif (a recurring element that develops meaning through repetition). Then ask me to identify a significant symbol and a significant motif from a text I have studied and analyse: what each represents, how each develops or accumulates meaning across the text, how the writer draws the reader's attention to the symbolic significance through language and structural placement, and whether the symbol or motif is open to multiple interpretations. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing between symbolism and motif and

analysing how each creates meaning through development and repetition across a text.

How to use it well:

Track symbols and motifs across your whole text — their meaning often develops and shifts, and the strongest analysis discusses this development.

Prompt 69: Irony — Verbal, Situational, and Structural

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain the different types of irony relevant to literary analysis: verbal irony (saying one thing and meaning another), situational irony (when events contradict expectations), dramatic irony (when the audience knows more than the characters), and structural irony (when the overall structure of a text creates an ironic gap, such as an unreliable narrator). Then ask me to identify and analyse examples of irony from my set texts, explaining the effect each creates and how it contributes to the text's meaning. Push me to go beyond identifying irony to explaining why the writer uses it. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding different types of irony and analysing their functions in literary texts.

How to use it well:

Irony is one of the most important literary tools — it creates layers of meaning and engages the reader's critical intelligence. Always look for the gap between surface and depth.

Prompt 70: Foreshadowing and Prolepsis

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on foreshadowing and prolepsis (flash-forward) as narrative techniques. Ask me to explain how each works, what effects they create

(anticipation, tension, dramatic irony, thematic reinforcement), and how they differ from one another. Then ask me to identify specific examples of foreshadowing from a text I have studied and analyse: what is being foreshadowed, how the writer signals it without revealing it fully, what the reader's experience is on first reading versus re-reading, and what the foreshadowing contributes to the text's themes or structure. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding foreshadowing and prolepsis as narrative techniques and analysing their effects on reader experience and textual meaning.

How to use it well:

Foreshadowing rewards the attentive reader — when you identify it, discuss how it transforms the reading experience and reinforces the text's thematic concerns.

Prompt 71: Allegory and Parable

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain what allegory is (a narrative that works on two levels — the surface story and the underlying meaning it represents) and how it differs from symbolism (which operates through individual images rather than sustained narrative correspondence). Then ask me to consider whether any of my set texts can be read allegorically, and if so: what underlying meaning the narrative represents, how the correspondences between surface and deeper meaning work, whether the text functions purely as allegory or whether the surface story has independent value, and how an allegorical reading enriches interpretation. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding allegory as a literary form and evaluating allegorical readings of set texts.

How to use it well:

Not every text is an allegory — but considering whether a text works on multiple levels is always a worthwhile analytical exercise.

Prompt 72: Stream of Consciousness and Interior Monologue

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on stream of consciousness and interior monologue as narrative techniques. Ask me to define each, explain how they differ from traditional third-person narration, and discuss the effects they create (immediacy, psychological depth, fragmentation, blurring of external and internal reality). Then ask me to discuss how any of my set texts use interior perspectives to reveal character psychology, and what specific linguistic features (syntax, punctuation, tense, pronoun use) create the effect of unmediated thought. Push me to analyse specific passages closely. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding stream of consciousness and interior monologue and analysing how they create psychological depth through specific linguistic features.

How to use it well:

When analysing interior perspectives, pay close attention to syntax — the way sentences are constructed often mimics the flow and fragmentation of thought.

Prompt 73: Intertextuality in Literature

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to explain what intertextuality means in literary criticism and how it operates in my set texts. I should discuss: how texts reference, echo, respond to, or rewrite other texts, the difference between explicit allusion and more subtle intertextual connections, how intertextuality enriches meaning by creating resonances with other literary works, and specific examples of intertextuality in my set texts. Push me to go beyond identifying references to explaining what the intertextual connections add to the meaning of the text. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding intertextuality and analysing how connections between texts create meaning and enrich interpretation.

How to use it well:

Identifying intertextual connections demonstrates wide reading and analytical sophistication — always explain what the connection adds to your understanding of the text.

Prompt 74: Ambiguity and Openness

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on how writers create and use ambiguity in literary texts. Ask me to discuss: what kinds of ambiguity exist (linguistic ambiguity, narrative ambiguity, moral ambiguity, symbolic ambiguity), why writers might deliberately leave meanings open rather than resolved, how ambiguity engages the reader as an active interpreter, and how ambiguity relates to the concept of textual plurality and AO5 (different interpretations). Then ask me to identify a moment of significant ambiguity in one of my set texts and analyse what the ambiguity contributes to the text's meaning. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding how writers create and use ambiguity and analysing its effects on interpretation.

How to use it well:

Embracing ambiguity rather than trying to resolve it demonstrates critical maturity — the strongest candidates can discuss multiple possible meanings and evaluate which is most convincing.

Prompt 75: Time in Narrative

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse how time operates in a text I have studied. I should discuss: the relationship between story time (the chronological sequence of events) and discourse time (the order in which events are presented to the reader), the use of analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (flash-forward), the manipulation of pace (summary, scene, ellipsis, stretch, pause), and how the handling of time contributes to the text's themes and effects. Present me with a specific structural choice related to time in my text and ask me to explain its significance.

Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysis of temporal manipulation in narrative — flashback, flash-forward, pacing, and the relationship between story time and discourse time.

How to use it well:

How a text handles time is a fundamental structural choice — analysing it well demonstrates that you understand narrative as a crafted sequence, not just a story.

Prompt 76: Epigraphs, Titles, and Paratexts

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the significance of paratextual elements — features that surround and frame the main text.

Ask me to discuss: what the title of one of my set texts reveals about its themes or purpose, whether any of my texts use epigraphs and what they contribute, how chapter titles, dedications, or prefaces frame the reader's expectations, and how these paratextual elements guide interpretation.

Push me to treat these elements as deliberate authorial choices that merit analysis rather than incidental features to ignore. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding and analysing paratextual elements as deliberate framing devices that guide interpretation.

How to use it well:

Titles and epigraphs are often overlooked — but they are the first things a reader encounters, and they frame everything that follows. Analyse them.

Prompt 77: Literary Technique — Exam Application

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me a passage of approximately 150-200 words from a literary text (or ask me to provide one from my set text). Ask me to write a detailed analysis focusing specifically on the writer's technique — how the passage is constructed and what effects the construction creates. I should discuss at least four different aspects of technique (such as narrative perspective, imagery, syntax, symbolism, irony, or structural placement). After I write my analysis, assess whether I have moved beyond feature-spotting to genuine analysis of how technique creates meaning. Mark my response against the AO2 band descriptors and provide specific suggestions for how I could strengthen my analysis to reach the higher bands.

What this helps you practise:

Close analytical writing focused on literary technique, moving beyond identification to analysis of how techniques create meaning.

How to use it well:

In every essay, make sure you have at least one paragraph that focuses explicitly on technique — this is where AO2 marks are earned.

Section 8

Contexts — Historical, Social, and Political

Context is assessed through AO3 across all A-Level English Literature specifications, and it is one of the areas where students most commonly lose marks. The problem is not usually a lack of contextual knowledge but a failure to integrate that knowledge into textual analysis. Context should illuminate your reading of the text, not replace it. You need to move beyond adding contextual information as a separate paragraph to weaving contextual understanding into your analysis of language, form, structure, and meaning.

The contexts relevant to literary study include the historical and political events of the period in which a text was written and set, the social norms and cultural attitudes that shape characters and themes, the literary context (the traditions, movements, and genres the writer was working within), the biographical context (relevant aspects of the author's life), and the context of reception (how the text was received when first published and how readings have changed over time).

These prompts will test your contextual knowledge, challenge you to integrate context into textual analysis rather than bolt it on, and push you to consider how context shapes both the production and reception of literary texts. They will help you develop the seamless integration of context and analysis that earns the highest marks.

Prompt 78: Historical Context — Integrating Evidence

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a specific passage from one of my set texts and explain how knowledge of the historical context enriches our understanding of it. I should identify the relevant historical factors (political events, social conditions, cultural attitudes of the period), explain how these contexts are reflected in the passage's language, imagery, character behaviour, or thematic concerns, and demonstrate how contextual knowledge deepens the analysis rather than simply adding background information. Wait for my answer and check that I genuinely integrate context into my reading of the passage rather than discussing history and text in separate sections.

What this helps you practise:

Genuine integration of historical context into close textual analysis, using context to deepen rather than replace reading.

How to use it well:

Ask yourself 'what does knowing this context help me see in the text that I would not see otherwise?' — if context does not illuminate specific textual features, it is not being used effectively.

Prompt 79: Social Attitudes and Literary Texts

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on how my set texts reflect and respond to the social attitudes of their time. Ask me to identify a specific social attitude (about class, gender, race, morality, religion, or social order) that is relevant to one of my texts and explain: how the text represents this attitude through its characters, plot, and language, whether the text reinforces or challenges the prevailing attitudes of its time, how a modern reader might respond differently to these attitudes than the original audience, and how understanding the contemporary social context changes our

interpretation of specific scenes or characters. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing how literary texts reflect and respond to contemporary social attitudes and how reception changes across time.

How to use it well:

Be careful not to impose modern values anachronistically — discuss how attitudes have changed while showing you understand the values of the text's original context.

Prompt 80: Literary Context — Movements and Traditions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to place one of my set texts within its literary context. I should identify the literary movement or tradition it belongs to (Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism, the Gothic tradition, the Metaphysical poets, etc.), explain the key characteristics of that movement, and analyse how my text exemplifies, develops, or challenges the conventions of its literary tradition. I should also discuss how knowing the literary context enriches our reading of specific passages or techniques. Push me to be specific about what the literary context adds to my analysis. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Placing texts within their literary traditions and analysing how knowledge of literary movements enriches close reading.

How to use it well:

Literary context is just as important as historical context — knowing what other writers were doing and how your text relates to wider literary movements demonstrates sophisticated awareness.

Prompt 81: Biographical Context — Author and Text

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to discuss whether and how biographical information about the author of one of my set texts is relevant to interpretation. I should consider: what biographical facts are relevant and how they might inform the text's themes, characters, or settings, the dangers of reducing a text to autobiography (the 'biographical fallacy'), the difference between the author and the narrator or speaker, and when biographical context genuinely enriches interpretation versus when it limits or distorts it.

Push me to reach a nuanced position on the relationship between author and text. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the relevance and limitations of biographical context in literary interpretation.

How to use it well:

Biographical context can be illuminating but should never be reductive — use it to open up possibilities for interpretation, not to close them down by claiming the text 'really means' something autobiographical.

Prompt 82: Context of Reception

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the concept of reception — how a text was received by its original audience and how that reception has changed over time. Ask me to discuss one of my set texts: how was it received when first published (was it controversial, popular, ignored, censored?), how have critical opinions changed over time, what factors have driven these changes (shifts in social attitudes, new critical perspectives, changing aesthetic values), and what this tells us

about the relationship between a text's meaning and its audience. Wait for my answer and check that I understand reception as an ongoing process, not a fixed judgement.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding how the reception of literary texts changes over time and what this reveals about the relationship between text, context, and interpretation.

How to use it well:

Discussing changing reception demonstrates that you understand meaning as historically situated — the same text can mean different things to different audiences at different times.

Prompt 83: Political Context and Literature

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to analyse how one of my set texts engages with the political context of its time. I should identify the relevant political issues (monarchy and democracy, revolution, war, empire, social reform, political ideology), explain how these issues are reflected in the text's characters, plot, and themes, and evaluate whether the text takes a clear political position or presents multiple perspectives. Push me to connect political context to specific textual evidence rather than making generalised claims about the period. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing the political dimensions of literary texts with reference to specific contextual factors and textual evidence.

How to use it well:

Even texts that seem apolitical have political dimensions — consider what assumptions about social order, power, and justice underlie the text's worldview.

Prompt 84: Context and Form

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on how the historical and cultural context of a text shapes its literary form. Ask me to consider: how the literary forms available to writers are historically specific (the sonnet tradition, the rise of the novel, the development of free verse, the evolution of theatrical conventions), how social and technological changes affect literary form (printing, literacy, censorship, patronage, the market), and how the form of my set text reflects the literary and cultural possibilities of its moment. Push me to explain the connection between context and form specifically rather than in general terms. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding how historical and cultural contexts shape literary form and connecting formal choices to contextual factors.

How to use it well:

Form is not timeless — understanding why a writer chose a particular form at a particular moment adds historical depth to your analysis of method.

Prompt 85: Colonialism and Empire in Literature

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to discuss how colonialism and empire are represented in one of my set texts — either explicitly or implicitly. I should consider: how the text represents colonised peoples and places (if it does), how imperial power structures shape characters' identities and relationships, whether the text challenges or reinforces imperial attitudes, and how post-colonial criticism has changed the way we read texts from the colonial period. If my text does not

deal explicitly with empire, ask me to consider whether empire is present as an unspoken backdrop that shapes the world of the text. Wait for my answer.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing representations of colonialism and empire in literary texts using post-colonial critical awareness.

How to use it well:

Even texts that do not seem to be 'about' empire may be shaped by it — consider whose labour, wealth, or exploitation enables the world the text describes.

Prompt 86: Context in Essay Writing — Integration Skills

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an A-Level essay question about one of my set texts. Ask me to write three separate paragraphs — each one dealing with a different aspect of the question — and in each paragraph, I must integrate relevant contextual information seamlessly into my textual analysis. After I write the paragraphs, assess whether the context enhances my analysis or whether it reads as a separate bolt-on. Mark each paragraph against the AO3 band descriptors — does my contextual integration demonstrate the seamless connection between context and analysis that the examiner expects at the highest bands? For any paragraph where context is not well integrated, show me specifically how I could rephrase to weave context and analysis together more effectively.

What this helps you practise:

Integration of contextual knowledge into analytical paragraphs without bolt-on context, achieving seamless connection between context and analysis.

How to use it well:

The key phrase is 'seamless integration' — context

and analysis should feel like a single coherent argument, not two parallel discussions awkwardly joined.

Prompt 87: Contexts Across Texts — Comparative

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to compare how two of my set texts are shaped by their different contexts. I should discuss: how the different historical periods, social conditions, or literary traditions of the two texts lead to different treatments of a shared theme or concern, how contextual differences explain differences in form, genre, and style, and what the comparison reveals about how context shapes literary production. Push me to use context comparatively — not just as background to each text but as a point of analytical comparison. Wait for my answer and check for genuine comparative use of contextual knowledge.

What this helps you practise:

Comparative use of contextual knowledge across two texts, using context as a point of analytical comparison rather than separate background.

How to use it well:

Comparing contexts can be one of the most revealing analytical strategies — it shows that the same human concern is expressed very differently depending on when and where a text is produced.

Prompt 88: Context of Production vs. Context of Reception

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to distinguish between the context of production and the context of reception for one of my set texts, and to analyse how both shape interpretation. I should explain: what the specific

circumstances of the text's production were (historical moment, literary culture, author's position), how contemporary audiences would have received the text at the time, how modern readers might interpret the text differently given changed social attitudes, and what this gap between production and reception reveals about how meaning is historically contingent. Push me to give specific examples of how a passage or element of the text reads differently in its original context compared to now. Wait for my answer and assess whether I demonstrate genuine understanding of how contexts of production and reception generate different meanings.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing between contexts of production and reception, and analysing how the gap between them generates different interpretations of the same text.

How to use it well:

Examiners reward students who show awareness that texts are not fixed in meaning — demonstrating how different contexts produce different readings is a hallmark of sophisticated analysis.

Section 9

Independent Critical Study, Coursework, and Exam Preparation

This final section addresses the independent critical study or coursework component of A-Level English Literature and provides intensive exam preparation strategies for all components. The coursework or NEA requires you to demonstrate sustained independent critical thinking, close textual analysis, engagement with critical perspectives, and the ability to construct a coherent, well-argued extended essay. This is your opportunity to showcase your best analytical writing and your intellectual independence.

The coursework component varies between exam boards — some require a comparative study, others an analysis of a single text with a critical perspective, and others a creative-critical response. Whatever the format, the core skills are the same: choosing a focused and productive question, engaging deeply with your chosen text(s), drawing on relevant critical perspectives, and writing with analytical precision and academic rigour.

These prompts will guide you through the process of planning and writing your coursework, develop your exam technique across all paper components, and provide intensive revision and confidence-building strategies for the final weeks before your exams. They bring together all the skills developed throughout this book and focus them on achieving your best possible performance.

Prompt 89: Choosing a Coursework Text and Question

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to propose a text and a question for my independent critical study or coursework essay.

Then evaluate my choice by asking: is the text sufficiently rich and complex to sustain extended analysis? Is the question focused enough to allow sustained argument but open enough to avoid a predetermined conclusion? Does the question allow me to demonstrate close textual analysis, engagement with critical perspectives, and understanding of context? Is the question genuinely interesting to me — will I sustain motivation across the writing process? Suggest improvements to sharpen my focus. Wait for my answer before evaluating.

What this helps you practise:

Selecting and refining a productive coursework question that enables demonstration of close reading, critical engagement, and sustained argument.

How to use it well:

Choose a question you are genuinely interested in — the best coursework comes from genuine intellectual curiosity, not from choosing what seems easiest.

Prompt 90: Developing a Critical Argument

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to state the argument or thesis I plan to develop in my coursework essay. Then challenge it by asking: is this a genuine argument or just a topic? Does it take a position that could be debated? Is it supported by the text or am I trying to impose a reading? Am I engaging with critical perspectives that either support or challenge my position? Push me to refine my argument until it is clear, debatable, and genuinely analytical rather than descriptive. Wait for my answer before each round of challenge.

What this helps you practise:

Developing a clear, debatable, and analytically sophisticated thesis for extended literary argument.

How to use it well:

Your thesis should be something you can argue for, not something everyone would agree with — if your thesis is obvious, it is not analytical enough.

Prompt 91: Integrating Critical Material

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on how to integrate critical material (published criticism, theoretical perspectives) into my coursework essay. Ask me to explain: the difference between referencing a critic's view and merely quoting them, how to use critical views to support, challenge, or complicate my own argument, how to avoid letting critics' views take over my essay at the expense of my own analysis, and how to reference critical material accurately using appropriate academic conventions. Then present me with a critical view relevant to my text and ask me to write a paragraph that integrates it with my own analysis. Wait for each answer.

What this helps you practise:

Integrating published criticism and theoretical perspectives into coursework arguments without losing the primacy of personal analytical response.

How to use it well:

Critical material should serve your argument, not replace it — always make clear what your reading is and how the critic's view relates to it.

Prompt 92: Coursework Essay Structure

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to outline the structure of my coursework essay, including: my introduction (thesis statement, methodology, scope), the sequence of my analytical

paragraphs (what each will focus on and how they build my argument), how I will integrate close textual analysis with contextual discussion and critical perspectives, and my conclusion (how it draws together my argument and reaches a substantiated judgement). Evaluate whether my structure builds a coherent argument or whether it reads as a disconnected sequence of analytical points. Suggest improvements to create a more cohesive and persuasive structure. Wait for my outline before evaluating.

What this helps you practise:

Structuring a coursework essay as a coherent, building argument with clear logical progression between sections.

How to use it well:

Each paragraph should advance your argument — if you cannot explain how a paragraph moves your thesis forward, it probably does not belong in the essay.

Prompt 93: Close Reading for Coursework

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to select a key passage from my coursework text (approximately 100-150 words) and write a detailed close analysis of approximately 300 words. After I write my analysis, assess whether I have: engaged closely with the specific language of the passage, discussed form and structure as well as language, connected the passage to the broader themes and argument of my essay, referenced relevant critical or theoretical perspectives, and maintained a coherent analytical voice. Provide detailed feedback on the quality of my close reading and suggest how I could deepen my analysis.

What this helps you practise:

Writing sustained close analysis for coursework,

integrating language, form, and structure analysis with thematic and critical discussion.

How to use it well:

Close reading is the foundation of your coursework — every argument must be grounded in specific textual evidence, not general claims.

Prompt 94: Exam Revision — Text Knowledge Drill

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Conduct a rapid-fire quiz on my set texts. For each text I am studying, ask me: five key quotations and their significance, three major themes and how they are developed, two key scenes or passages and why they are important, the text's relationship to its historical and literary context, and one relevant critical perspective and how it applies. Give me a few seconds for each answer, then tell me if I am correct or if I have missed something significant. At the end, identify which texts and which areas of knowledge I need to revise most urgently.

What this helps you practise:

Rapid retrieval of key quotations, themes, contextual knowledge, and critical perspectives across all set texts.

How to use it well:

Use this in the final revision period to test whether you can recall essential material under pressure — the exam rewards students who can deploy knowledge confidently and accurately.

Prompt 95: Essay Planning Under Timed Conditions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me three different A-Level essay questions — one on poetry, one on prose, and one on drama — from my set texts. For each question, give me five

minutes to produce a plan that includes: my thesis, three to four analytical points with supporting quotations, relevant contextual references, and at least one critical perspective. After each plan, assess whether my argument is clear, my evidence is well-chosen, and my plan would lead to a coherent essay. Identify weaknesses in each plan and suggest how I could strengthen them.

What this helps you practise:

Rapid essay planning across all literary forms, practising the selection of arguments, evidence, and critical perspectives under time pressure.

How to use it well:

Planning speed is crucial in the exam — practise until you can produce a focused, evidence-rich plan in five minutes or less.

Prompt 96: Quotation Skills — Embedding and Analysis

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on my ability to embed and analyse quotations effectively. Give me a theme or character from one of my set texts and ask me to write a paragraph that embeds at least three short quotations smoothly into my analytical sentences — not as separate sentences preceded by 'this shows that', but as integral parts of my own syntax. After I write the paragraph, assess whether my quotations are well-selected, smoothly embedded, and analysed in detail rather than simply identified. Provide feedback on how I could improve my quotation technique.

What this helps you practise:

Embedding quotations fluently into analytical writing and analysing specific words and phrases within embedded quotations.

How to use it well:

Short, embedded quotations are far more effective than long block quotes — practise selecting the precise words that support your point and weaving them into your own sentences.

Prompt 97: Mock Exam — Full Essay Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me a full A-Level essay question on one of my set texts and instruct me to write a complete response in the time allocated by my exam board. After I submit my answer, mark it against A-Level band descriptors for all relevant assessment objectives: AO1 (informed personal response with textual references), AO2 (analysis of writers' methods), AO3 (understanding of contexts), AO4 (connections across texts, if applicable), and AO5 (different interpretations). Give me a specific band for each AO with detailed feedback covering the three most important improvements I could make to move into the next band up.

What this helps you practise:

Full mock essay under exam conditions with comprehensive feedback against all relevant assessment objectives.

How to use it well:

Treat this as the real thing — write under strict time conditions and without consulting notes. The practice of performing under pressure is as valuable as the feedback.

Prompt 98: Assessment Objectives — Understanding What Examiners Want

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on my understanding of the A-Level English Literature assessment objectives. Ask me to explain what each of the following requires: AO1 (informed

personal response using textual references), AO2 (analysis of writers' methods — language, form, structure), AO3 (understanding of contexts), AO4 (connections across texts), and AO5 (different interpretations). Then ask me to identify which assessment objectives are weighted most heavily on each of my exam papers and how this should shape my approach to each paper. Wait for my answer and check that I understand how AO weighting affects what the examiner is specifically looking for — and how I should adjust my emphasis accordingly.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding assessment objectives and how their weighting across different papers shapes effective exam strategy.

How to use it well:

Knowing the AO weighting for each paper allows you to allocate your effort strategically — give more attention to the objectives that carry more marks.

Prompt 99: Confidence Check — Final Preparation

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to be honest about which texts, skills, or question types I feel least confident about for my A-Level English Literature exams. Once I tell you, ask me targeted questions on those specific areas to test whether my lack of confidence is justified or whether I actually know more than I think. If I genuinely have gaps, give me a concise summary of the key points I need to remember and the most efficient way to fill the gap in the time remaining. If my knowledge is solid, tell me so and reassure me that I am better prepared than I feel.

What this helps you practise:

Honest self-assessment of exam readiness and targeted gap-filling in the final revision period.

How to use it well:

This prompt transforms anxiety into action — use it in the final days before the exam to identify exactly what you still need to do rather than worrying about everything at once.

Prompt 100: Key Quotations — Speed Recall

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on key quotations from my set texts by naming a theme, character, or moment and asking me to provide the most relevant quotation from memory. Do this for 15 different topics across all my set texts in quick succession. For each, ask me not only to recite the quotation but also to explain in one or two sentences why it is significant. If I cannot recall a quotation, provide it for me and tell me to learn it. At the end, list the quotations I missed so I can prioritise memorising them in my remaining revision time.

What this helps you practise:

Rapid recall of key quotations and their significance across all set texts.

How to use it well:

Quotation recall is the backbone of exam success — you cannot write effective close analysis without having precise quotations at your fingertips.

Final Closing Note

You have now worked through 100 prompts designed to help you think more clearly, revise more effectively, and prepare more confidently for your GCSE.

Remember: the goal was never to rely on AI for answers. The goal was to use it as a tool to test, challenge, and strengthen your own understanding.

The strongest students are not those who avoid difficulty, but those who engage with it deliberately. Each mistake you identified, each explanation you improved, and each gap you filled has strengthened your thinking.

As you continue your studies, aim to depend less on prompts and more on your own judgement. AI can support you — but your reasoning, clarity, and persistence are what earn marks.

Approach your exams calmly. Think carefully. Write clearly.

You are more prepared than you think.

Using AI Beyond This Book

The prompts in this book are starting points, not final forms.

As you grow more confident, begin modifying them:

- Add constraints (for example, “limit to three key points”).
- Increase difficulty gradually.
- Ask the AI to challenge your reasoning.
- Request alternative explanations.
- Ask it to critique your thinking rather than provide answers.

The most powerful use of AI is not asking it to tell you things — it is asking it to test and refine your thinking.

In the future, those who understand how to use tools intelligently will have an advantage. Treat AI as a tutor, not a shortcut. The skill of asking better questions will continue to matter long after your exams are over.

About the Author

James R. Martin holds an MSci in Physics from the University of Bristol and a PGCE with a Physics focus from the University of Oxford. He has over a decade of experience teaching and tutoring students aged 11–18 across a range of subjects, including Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Economics, and Electronics.

He has worked with multiple syllabi, including GCSE, A-Level, KS3, and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), supporting students of varying abilities to develop clarity, confidence, and exam success.

His work focuses on effective revision strategies, independent thinking, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence as a tool to strengthen — not replace — understanding.

Other Titles in This Series

The *100 AI Prompts for Smarter Revision* series supports students across GCSE, A-Level, and IB DP subjects.

GCSE

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Physics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Geography
- History
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Business Studies
- Religious Studies
- Psychology
- French
- Spanish
- German

A-Level

- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Economics
- History
- Geography
- English Literature
- Psychology
- Computer Science

- Politics
- Business

IBDP

- Mathematics: Analysis & Approaches
- Mathematics: Applications & Interpretation
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- English A: Literature
- English A: Language & Literature
- Psychology
- Business Management
- Computer Science