

# UPSC English Literature Optional Books

The UPSC English Literature Books contains the prescribed poem, stories, novels, drama from the core books. Reading from the original source texts always helps in the UPSC Mains because it is helpful in quoting direct sentences and instances. UPSC offers 48 optional subjects for the UPSC Mains Exam, out of which, 23 are the literature of languages. If a candidate has genuine interest in the English Literature Optional, he/she will surely enjoy the preparation journey.

The English Literature Syllabus for UPSC consists of two papers, designed to test a first-hand and critical reading of texts prescribed. The paper can be divided into two time-span, consisting of:

- Paper 1 : 1600 CE -1900 CE (start of modernism)
- Paper 2 : 1900 CE –1990 CE (post-modernism)

Both the papers are divided into sections A and B. Section A deals with drama and poetry while Section B deals with prose, in both papers.

Other than this, there will be two compulsory questions in each paper:

- A short-notes question related to the topics for general study.
- A critical analysis of unseen passages both in prose and verse.

## UPSC English Literature Books- Study Plan

The syllabus of the English Literature optional is very specific and defined. As it is a conventional Literature Optional, it does not need to be updated every year. Although, UPSC English Literature Books do not directly overlap with the GS papers, they can help as a value-added resource in understanding the history of Europe and can be beneficial in writing answers for GS 1.

The following study plan must be followed along with the preparation of UPSC Mains, so that the preparation remains streamlined. The study plan guides:

- To read the prescribed texts one at a time, not exceeding over week. Each and every book prescribed in the syllabus is to read cover to cover. No selective study is recommended for the English Literature Optional in UPSC.
- A candidate is expected to know the entire history of English Literature right from the origin of literature till the contemporary times, i.e., from the time of Geoffrey Chaucer to Post Modernism.
- Once a basic understanding is developed, and one is acquainted with the fundamentals of the subject, proceed with the literary theory. For example – Cultural Studies, Feminism, Deconstruction etc.
- Try writing the concepts or theories in the simplest language possible.
- One should also go through the last five years question papers of the optional subject.
- A good glossary is considered as Bible for literature students. For English Literature, A Glossary of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrahams is very much needed to understand any complex terms relates to the English Literature Syllabus for UPSC.

- Researching and complimenting from other verifiable sources is always suggested. It makes the answer more presentable.
- A good understanding of figures of speech, such as figures of speech, imagery, symbolism, etc. is desired because it helps in the compulsory question on unseen passage where an aspirant needs to critically analyze the given text.

## List of English Literature Books for UPSC Exam

The literature of English language optional has a reasonably good success rate. Individual clarity along with critical analysing of the questions helps in answering most of the questions. Below mentioned are the most trusted UPSC English literature Optional Books for both Paper 1 and Paper 2. Prepare them well, and you are good to go!

1. Bleaney - Philip Larkin
2. She dwelt among untrodden ways- William Wordsworth
3. A Prayer for my daughter- William Butler Yeats
4. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man- James Joyce
5. Ode on Intimations of Immortality- William Wordsworth
6. Lord Jim- Joseph Conrad
7. Lay your sleeping head, my love- W.H. Auden
8. Resolution and Independence- William Wordsworth
9. In Memory of W.B. Yeats- W.H. Auden
10. On his Mistress going to bed- John Donne
11. Kanthapura- Raja Rao
12. Tom Jones- Henry Fielding
13. Journey of the Magi- T. S. Eliot
14. Musee des Beaux Arts- W.H. Auden
15. Burnt Norton- T. S. Eliot
16. Tintern Abbey- William Wordsworth
17. The Routledge History of Literature in English
18. Paradise Lost, I, II, IV, IX- John Milton
19. The Good Morrow- John Donne
20. A Passage to India- E.M. Forster.
21. Three years she grew- William Wordsworth
22. Leda and the Swan- William Butler Yeats
23. Death be not proud- John Donne
24. The Second Coming- William Butler Yeats
25. Hard Times- Charles Dickens
26. Mundus Et Infans- W.H. Auden
27. Tess of the d'Urbervilles- Thomas Hardy
28. Afternoons- Philip Larkin
29. Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour- William Wordsworth
30. Consider- W.H. Auden
31. Look In Anger- John Osborne
32. The Tower- William Butler Yeats
33. Please- Philip Larkin
34. Pride and Prejudice- Jane Austen
35. Introduction to English Literature- W. H Hudson

36. The Rape of the Lock- Alexander Pope
37. Easter 1916- William Butler Yeats
38. Waiting for Godot- Samuel Beckett
39. The Tempest- William Shakespeare
40. The World is too much with us- William Wordsworth
41. Mrs. Dalloway- Virginia Woolf.
42. Meru- William Butler Yeats
43. Gulliver's Travels- Jonathan Swift
44. Michael- William Wordsworth
45. Obituary- A.K. Ramanujan
46. Sons and Lovers- D.H. Lawrence
47. Days- Philip Larkin
48. Deceptions- Philip Larkin
49. The Mill on the Floss- George Eliot
50. The Unknown Citizen- W.H. Auden
51. Looking for a Causim on a Swing- A.K. Ramanujan
52. A House for Mr. Biswas- V.S. Naipal
53. King Lear- William Shakespeare
54. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn- Mark Twain
55. Lapis Lazuli- William Butler Yeats
56. The Shield of Achilles- W.H. Auden
57. Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House- A.K. Ramanujan
58. Love Poem for a Wife- A.K. Ramanujan
59. The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock- T. S. Eliot
60. A River- A.K. Ramanujan
61. A short History of English Literature- Pramod K. Nayar
62. The relic- John Donne
63. Next- Philip Larkin
64. Among School Children- William Butler Yeats
65. Sailing to Byzantium- William Butler Yeats
66. Partition- W.H. Auden
67. Upon Westminster Bridge- William Wordsworth
68. Canonization- John Donne
69. Of Mothers, among other Things- A.K. Ramanujan