

BOOK LIST

English 4: British Literature & Writing

Fall 2024 / Spring 2025

Title	Edition	Author/Editor	ISBN	Available on the Academy's Bookstore?
The Weight of Glory	*	Lewis, C.S.	978-0060653200	Yes – Find it here.
The Great Divorce	*	Lewis, C.S.	978-0060652951	Yes – Find it here.
The Canterbury Tales	2003	Chaucer, Geoffrey trans. Nevill Coghill	978-0140424386	Yes – Find it here.
"Leaf by Niggle" (Short story; also in audiobook format)	*	Tolkien, J.R.R.	978-0547154114	Yes – Find it here.
Macbeth (Folger Shakespeare Library Edition)	*	Shakespeare, William	978-0743477109	Yes – Find it here.
Sense and Sensibility	*	Austen, Jane	978-0141439662	Yes – Find it here.
A Christmas Carol	*	Dickens, Charles	978-0486268651	Yes – Find it here.
Jane Eyre	*	Bronte, Charlotte	978-0451530912	Yes – Find it here.
The Picture of Dorian Gray	*	Wilde, Oscar	978-0486278070	Yes – Find it here.
Wind in the Willows	*	Grahame, Kenneth	978-1853260179	Yes—find it here.
Lord of the Flies	*	Golding, William	978-0140283334	Yes—find it here.
The Remains of the Day	*	Ishiguro, Kazuo	978-0679731726	Yes—find it here.
The Elements of Eloquence	2014	Forsyth, Mark	978-0425276181	Yes—find it here.
Letters to a Diminished Church	*	Sayers, Dorothy	978-0849945267	Yes—find it here.
Collected Poems 1909-1962	*	Eliot, T.S.	978-0151189786	Yes—find it here.
Six Centuries of Great Poetry	*	Warren, Robert Penn & Erskine, Albert	978-0440213833	Yes—find it here.

Title	Edition	Author/Editor	ISBN	Available on the Academy's Bookstore?
The Elements of Style (Optional)	*	Strunk, William & White, E.B.	978-0205309023	Yes—find it here.

Please note:

- Books and materials requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the instructors.
- Books marked with * do not have required editions. Page numbers differ between publishers.
- Book synopses and potential disclaimers can be found on the following pages of this PDF.

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The Weight of Glory by C.S. Lewis

SYNOPSIS: Lewis argues that beautiful moments here on earth are a foretaste of heavenly glory and that truth should motivate humans to love their neighbors more.

- ➔ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** This long essay reminds readers of the importance of faith. It is an excellent introduction to the lens through which all the texts in this course will be viewed.

The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis

SYNOPSIS: The narrator experiences the pains of becoming Christ-like in a fictional depiction of the afterlife where he meets different souls in various states of virtue and vice.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** Intended to be read as a parable for life in our current world, this text shows the fallen world in a state of redemption.

DISCLAIMER: Traditional sins such as lust, anger (murder), avarice, and gluttony are depicted along with their consequences, providing the groundwork for thinking through some of the ways humans fall short of the glory of God.

The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer (Other medieval selections provided with course material)

SYNOPSIS: Students read selections from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. *Canterbury Tales* is the only purchase required.

→ **REASONS FOR TEACHING:** These three literary masterpieces engage themes ranging from the fall of humanity to the road to redemption to the duplicity of human nature. All of this takes place within three distinct examples of medieval literature spanning from the humorous to the sublime.

DISCLAIMER: Some mature themes may be mentioned, but within a tasteful context.

"Leaf by Niggle" by J.R.R. Tolkien

SYNOPSIS: A painter attempts to paint a tree during his lifetime, but only manages to paint a leaf.

→ **REASONS FOR TEACHING:** This story shows the importance of small, diligent acts, even if they fall short of one's desired vision.

Macbeth by William Shakespeare

SYNOPSIS: Macbeth, encouraged by his wife, allows his ambition to lead him into making life-altering decisions that lead to tragedy

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** Shakespeare, widely considered the greatest playwright of all time, shows the consequences of unlawful ambition and explores natural versus unnatural ways of acting within relationships and communities.

DISCLAIMER: This play depicts themes of murder, supernatural evil, and just consequences.

Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen

SYNOPSIS: Witty, engaging, and enlightening of her culture, Austen writes a novel focusing on two sisters. The recently impoverished Dashwood women move to a small cottage, where the two oldest sisters react with opposite emotions to their similar romantic situations.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** An excellent study in a variety of human responses to relationships, the book shows character growth, balance, and a wide range of characters that are not so different from experiences today.

DISCLAIMER: Some sexual immorality is referenced in a non-graphic manner.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

SYNOPSIS: This story, set at Christmas time, follows the miserly Mr. Scrooge as several ghostly visitors teach him what he should value.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** This beloved tale introduces students to Dickens, an important Victorian author, via a classic story of redemption.

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

SYNOPSIS: This novel tells the compelling story of an orphan girl searching for love and belonging.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** This novel provides examples concerning what it means to live a good life. It demonstrates the rich beauty in romantic/Victorian texts, as well as highlighting themes important to the time period. *Jane Eyre* is widely considered to be one of the best British novels.

DISCLAIMER: Bronte addresses infidelity, but aptly shows the consequences. She also shows the reward that comes from doing what is right.

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

SYNOPSIS: Dorian Gray's portrait is painted during the height of his youthful beauty. Looking at the picture, he wishes that the picture would grow old and bear the marks of sin, instead of himself. As the years pass, people marvel that Dorian never outwardly changes.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** Wilde explores themes of inward versus outward beauty and the sobering power of a friend's influence. He also explores themes of vice when life is lived for the pursuit of pleasure and there appears to be no consequences to one's actions.

DISCLAIMER: Dissolute lifestyles are discussed, as well as some violent themes.

Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame

SYNOPSIS: Mole, Toad, Badger, and Rat cavort, adventure, learn, and grow as anthropomorphized friends in a winsome tale of adventure, misadventure, and the joy of the ordinary within the English countryside.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** Written for children, this classic novel allows readers to take well-written children's literature seriously. Thematically, the book engages with themes of friendship and simplicity, which offer an anti-dystopian view of the world.

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

SYNOPSIS: A group of young schoolboys stranded on an island attempt to create a society.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** An example of fiction used to comment on widespread societal issues. Also, one of the forerunners of the dystopian genre.

DISCLAIMER: Some violent themes are addressed.

Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro

SYNOPSIS: A butler reflects on his life's work serving a British noble with Nazi sympathies.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** A contemporary novel and 2017 winner of the Nobel Prize for literature, this complex narrative reveals themes of justice, loneliness, nobility, memory, and regret as old British values compete with modern sensibilities.

DISCLAIMER: Some non-explicit allusions are made to sexual activity.

The Elements of Eloquence by Mark Forsyth

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** This book demonstrates figures of speech with wit and excellence and will be used in the course for biweekly exercises to further students' appreciation for the beauty in a well-turned phrase.

DISCLAIMER: Some examples are not tasteful. Chapters containing these examples will be avoided.

Elements of Style by William Strunk & E.B. White

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** This book is an excellent resource for writers, reviewing correct usage of the English language.

Letters to a Diminished Church by Dorothy Sayers

SYNOPSIS: This book presents a collection of essays on theology, aesthetics, and issues facing twentieth-century Christians.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** Sayers was a contemporary of the Inklings. The essays read in this course will discuss work and art from a decidedly Christian—yet intellectually rigorous—perspective. They are simultaneously accessible and challenging.

Collected Poetry of T.S. Eliot by T.S. Eliot

SYNOPSIS: This book contains the major poetic works of T.S. Eliot.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** A modern poet, Eliot converted to Christianity later in his life. His poetry demonstrates the values and style of the early twentieth century. His early poetry shows the hopelessness characteristic of many writers who lived through World War I, and his later poetry examines the difficult questions of the time through a Christian lens. This course includes Eliot for his important contribution to poetry and his devotion to Christianity.

Six Centuries of Great Poetry by various British poets

SYNOPSIS: This collection provides a comprehensive sampling of British poetry from Chaucer to the twentieth century.

→ **REASON FOR TEACHING:** This text includes the majority of poems used during the course. It also provides students access to a wide range of British poetry to explore on their own.