ANGLAIS LVA[1] - LETTRES SUPÉRIEURES A/L

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David Hockney (1937-2026), *Pearblossom Highway* (1986), photocollage, 119.2cm x 153.8cm (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)

Foreword…Welcome to Hypokhâgne!

Welcome to *prépa* Pothier to all first-year students! First, you should know that the English course in *Lettres supérieures (aka Hypokhâgne)* is much more demanding than what you were used to in secondary school. The difference between this course and what is typically taught in sixth form (*lycée*) may come as a shock at first. The course is **taught entirely in English** and requires a good level of fluency—at least a **B1+-B2 level**. If you find grammar or expression difficult, we strongly encourage you to work on these areas over the summer. You might also consider taking **English as a Second Modern Language** (**LVB**), where smaller groups allow for more personalized support.

The **LVA English course** aims to help you achieve a high level of written and spoken proficiency. The **4 hours** of **weekly instruction** will cover the **history** and **literature** of English-speaking countries. You'll be trained in the academic exercises required for competitive exams such as:

→ **Literary analysis** (close reading)
→ Close reading of **press items** or **historical documents** (primary and secondary sources).
→ **Translation** into both English (***thème***) and French (***version***)

Summer Homework

If you're hoping to enroll in English LVA, please note that you're expected to **complete the following assignments** over the summer holidays. All students must have completed these steps by our first group meeting in September.

→ ***Step 1. Assess your English level***

[1] **LVA** = First Modern Foreign Language. Students must have reached at least a **B1+-B2 level** (CECRL) before they consider enrolling in this class. Students who need to strengthen their grammar and expression skills would greatly benefit from enrolling in English **LVB** (Second Modern Foreign Language).

https://www.efset.org/fr/

Unsure whether your English is already at a B1+/B2 level? Assess your current English level using this online test (**50m EF Set**) to gauge where you stand. As you work on your English and complete the assignments over the holidays, complete the test as many times as you like until you reach a B1+ or B2 level.

→ *Step 2. Work on your grammar*

Grammar is one of the pet peeves of many students in secondary school, and yet it is the bedrock of any successful communication. If errors do not always impede meaning, they may certainly result in a few tricky predicaments. In *Hypokhâgne*, linguistic accuracy is required and valued in papers. The following assignment will help you achieve a clearer and more accurate command of English.

In your *Mémo Anglais B2-C1* by Élise Peizerat (see *required textbooks*), review the following grammar entries and complete the online exercises (via the app / scan the QR code inside the book):

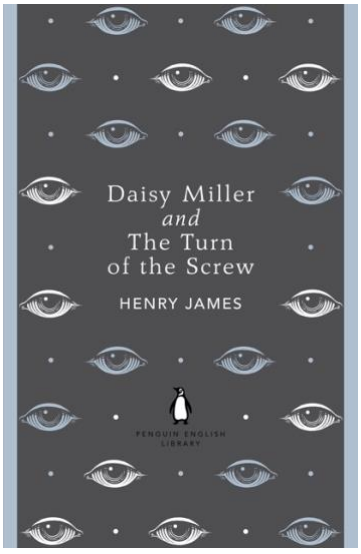
- N1 to N54
- V1 to V42
- Irregular verbs in English

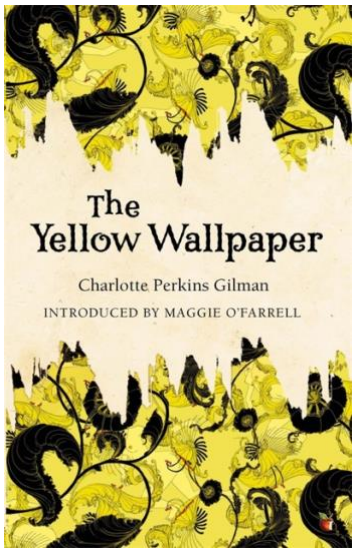
You'll be evaluated on these grammar points early in September!

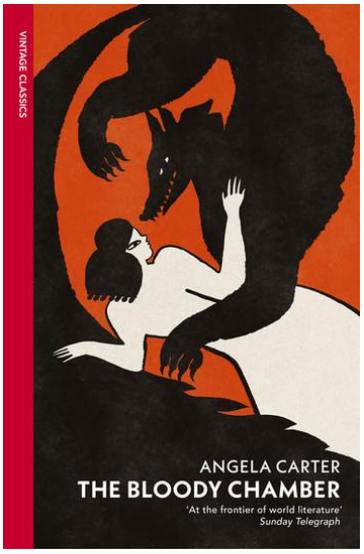
→ *Step 3. Read in English*

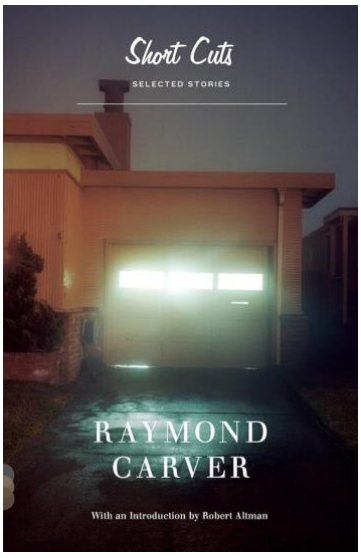
In the first half-term, the class will help you explore and analyse short fiction (micro-fiction, short stories, novellas…) from a range of authors hailing from both sides of the Atlantic. We will consider how each author uses the short form to achieve different effects, while considering the social, historical and literary context of each work.

Over the holidays, you're required to buy and read **at least <u>one</u>** of these novellas (short novels) or collection of short stories:









You may order one of these books at your local bookshop, online, or in one of the Parisian English bookshops (see below). Please, order the required edition:

- Henry James, *Daisy Miller* and *The Turn of the Screw* (Penguin English Library)
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, (Virago)
- Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* (Vintage Classics)
- Raymond Carver, *Short Cuts* (Vintage Contemporaries)

→ Q&A. It's my first time reading a book in English. Should I panic?

No! Reading a book in a foreign language may be a tricky exercise, yet it can be both entertaining and intellectually rewarding. You should not expect to read the book you've selected the same way you read material in your first language. Some words, if not passages, will elude you. Some syntactic structures will be unfamiliar. Some cultural references will be missed. You won't necessarily get the joke or the punchline the first time around. It will take more time to read in English than in French. So don't expect the same reading experience at first! Accept the frustration, don't give up at the first difficulty, accept it won't be easy. By following this strict reading routine below you'll finish the book with a sense of growth, a better grasp of the English language, stronger reading skills and pride for having read an exceptional work of fiction in the author's mother tongue.

→ **Reading routine (read like a detective!)**

Reading in English is a rewarding form of entertainment that you should embrace. Not only will you learn new vocabulary and encounter new syntactic structures, but you'll also appreciate ingenious narrative structures, clever denouements, and a specific writing style. By paying close attention to language and plot devices (that may trouble you at first) you'll understand the clever writing strategies the author employs to create particular effects.

Buy a small notebook and **note down** at the end of each reading session/chapter/short story:

- The **plot** (what is going on) in your own words
- A list of **characters** and what you know about them (moral traits / relationships / personal conflicts etc.)
- **Themes** (what does the text seem to suggest about gender issues, about politics, about love, friendship or family?)
- A list of **key words or expressions** – use wordreference.com to find the French of essential words you find in the text.
  - Look for unknown words that are often repeated in the text or words you find interesting/are curious about.
  - Do not look up every word you don't know as this may slow down the reading process and wear you down. Pleasure comes first! Remember: you don't need to know all the words to make sense of what is going on.

You will hand in your notebook during our first class in September.

→ ***Step 4. Watch and listen English material***

Listen to and watch as much English-language content as possible

- **Watch films, series, and documentaries in English**. DO NOT PUT THE SUBTITLES IN FRENCH! Use English subtitles so that you may connect spoken and written English.
- **Listen to podcasts and radio programmes** on political, social or cultural issues you may be interested in.
- **Read the press** in English!
- On **social media**, follow cultural, political and news accounts in English.

See below for a list of recommendations.

→ Note down the new vocabulary in a notebook and use **https://apps.ankiweb.net/**to memorise it!

Required textbooks and materials

All students must purchase before the start of term:

1. ***Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press (latest edition)**
   [This is the only monolingual dictionary authorized for the ENS entrance examinations.]

2. **Élise Peizerat, *Mémo Anglais B2-C1*, Génération 5 (édition 2020)**
   https://www.generation5.fr/379--memo-anglais-b2-c1-edition-2020.php

3. **At least <u>one</u> of these short works of fiction**:

- Henry James, *Daisy Miller* and *The Turn of the Screw*, (Penguin English Library)
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Virago)
- Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* (Vintage Classics)
- Raymond Carver, *Short Cuts* (Vintage Contemporaries)

4. **Required stationery:**

   - A large notebook (*cahier grand format*)
   - Two small notebooks (a reading journal + a vocabulary notebook)

Recommended textbooks

Here is a list of essential resources that are available in the school library and useful for reviewing specific topics throughout the year.

→ To refine your **translation skills**:

- Françoise Grellet, *Initiation à la version anglaise* (Hachette)
- Françoise Grellet, *Initiation au thème anglais* (Hachette)
- Hélène Chouquet & Michel Paillard, *Approche linguistiques des problèmes de traduction* (Ophrys)

→ To work on your **grammar** in more depth:

- Paul Larreya & Claude Rivière, *Grammaire explicative de l'anglais* (Pearson)
- Wilfrid Rotgé, *Bescherelle : Maîtriser la grammaire anglaise* (Hatier)

→ To expand your **vocabulary**:

- Bernard Bouchard, *Le mot et l'idée* (Orphrys)

→ To work on the **history** and **culture** of English-speaking countries:

- Françoise Grellet, *Crossing Boundaries: Histoire et culture des pays du monde anglophone* (Presse universitaire de Rennes)
- Françoise Grellet, *A Cultural Guide* (Nathan)
- Catherine Heyrendt-Sherman, *The United Kingdom Today* (Ellipses)
- Marie-Christine Pauwels, *Civilisation des États-Unis (*Hachette)

→ To develop your literary **close-reading skills**:

- Robin Wilkinson, *Le commentaire littéraire anglais* (Presse universitaire de Rennes)
- David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (Vintage)

The English specialist's tool case

The more English-language content you read, watch, and listen to, the more proficient you will become. Here is a list of films, news outlets and social media accounts you're encouraged to watch, read and learn from:

Films

Metropolis (1927), Fritz Lang
The Grapes of Wrath (1940), John Ford
Citizen Kane (1941), Orson Welles
Casablanca (1942), Michael Curtiz
Brief Encounter (1945), David Lean
Hamlet (1948), Laurence Olivier
The Third Man (1949), Carol Reed
Kind Hearts and Coronets (1949), Robert Hamer
Singin' in the Rain (1952), Gene Kelly et Stanley Donen
Vertigo (1958), Alfred Hitchcock
To Kill a Mockingbird (1962), Robert Mulligan
Lawrence of Arabia (1962), David Lean
Dr. Strangelove (1964), Stanley Kubrick
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1966), Mike Nichols
Kes (1969), Ken Loach
A Clockwork Orange (1971), Stanley Kubrick
The Godfather (1972), Francis Ford Coppola
Nashville (1975), Robert Altman
Taxi Driver (1976), Martin Scorsese
The Elephant Man (1980), David Lynch
Chariots of Fire (1981), Hugh Hudson
Blade Runner (1982), Ridley Scott
My Beautiful Laundrette (1985), Stephen Frears
Do the Right Thing (1989), Spike Lee
Dead Poets Society (1989), Peter Weir
The Silence of the Lambs (1991), Jonathan Demme
Howards End (1992), James Ivory
The Remains of the Day (1993), James Ivory
The Age of Innocence (1993), Martin Scorsese
Pulp Fiction (1994), Quentin Tarantino
Trainspotting (1996), Danny Boyle
The Truman Show (1998), Peter Weir
Brokeback Mountain (2005), Ang Lee
No Country for Old Men (2007), Joel et Ethan Coen
There Will Be Blood (2007), Paul Thomas Anderson
12 Years a Slave (2013), Steve McQueen
Moonlight (2016), Barry Jenkins
Get Out (2017), Jordan Peele
Nomadland (2020), Chloé Zhao
Oppenheimer (2023), Christopher Nolan

Series

The Twilight Zone (1959–1964), Rod Serling
Monty Python's Flying Circus (1969–1974), Monty Python
Brideshead Revisited (1981), John Mortimer
The Wire (2002–2008), David Simon
Mad Men (2007–2015), Matthew Weiner
Breaking Bad (2008–2013), Vince Gilligan
Downton Abbey (2010–2015), Julian Fellowes
Black Mirror (2011–), Charlie Brooker
Succession (2018–2023), Armstrong

News outlets

- **Press**

UK:

The Guardian / The Economist / BBC News / The Independent / The Spectator / The Scotsman

US:

The New York Times / Time / Newsweek / The New Yorker / The Atlantic

- **Radio programmes**

BBC's Woman's Hour (https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007qlvb),
BBC's In Our Time (https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qykl)
BBC's Witness History (https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004t1hd/episodes/player)
BBC's Americast (https://www.bbc.com/audio/brand/p07h19zz)
BBC's Political Thinking (https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04z203l)
The Economist (https://www.economist.com/podcasts)
NPR's Consider This (https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510355/considerthis)
NPR's Trump's Terms (https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510374/trumps-terms)
NPR's Ted Talks (https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510298/ted-radio-hour)

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<td>News

@nytimes
@theeconomist
@guardian
@theatlantic
@newyorkermag
@voxdotcom
@channel4news
@abcnews_au</td>
<td>Culture & Entertainment

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@britishgq
@womansworldmag
@bbciplayer
@ar_fables
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@oprahdaily</td>
<td rowspan="2">English bookshops in Paris

▪ Smiths & Son (Rue de Rivoli)
▪ Galignani (Rue de Rivoli)
▪ The Red Wheelbarrow (Rue de Médicis)
▪ San Francisco (Rue Monsieur le Prince)
▪ The Abbey Bookshop (Rue de la Parchiminerie)

Also:

→ The most touristic: Shakespeare & Co (Rue de la Bûcherie)
→ The cheapest (many secondhand books): Gibert (Bd St Michel)</td>
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