

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

READINGS FOR ENGLISH MAJORS: THE PARKIN LIST

This list, which was originally compiled by Rebecca Price Parkin, late Professor of English in this university, gives those readings that every English major, regardless of field of specialization, can be expected to have completed before taking the baccalaureate degree.

I. BACKGROUND

Homer (b. 1050 BC?) The Iliad; The Odyssey

Sophocles (496-406 BC) Oedipus the King

Virgil (70-19 BC) The Aeneid, Books I-VI at least

Plato (427-348 BC) Apology; Symposium

The Bible (King James Version, 1611) At least Genesis; Ruth; Job; Psalms; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon; Isaiah; Matthew; Mark; Luke; John; Revelation

II. ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

Beowulf (8th C. ?)

Geoffrey Chaucer (1345?-1400) The Canterbury Tales: "General Prologue"; "The Knight's Tale"; "The Miller's Tale"; "The Pardoner's Tale"; "The Wife of Bath's Tale"; "The Nun's Priest's Tale"

Sir Thomas Malory (d. 1471) Le Morte Darthur

Everyman (15th C.)

Edmund Spenser (1552?-99) The Faerie Queene, Book I at least

Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) "Of Studies"; other representative essays

Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) Tamburlaine; "Come Live With Me and Be My Love"

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) Sonnets; Richard III; Romeo and Juliet; Richard II; A Midsummer Night's Dream; The Merchant of Venice; Henry IV, Part I; Twelfth Night; Julius Caesar; Hamlet; Othello; King Lear; Macbeth; Antony and Cleopatra; The Tempest

Benjamin Jonson (1572-1637) Volpone; "Song, To Celia"; "To the Memory of My Beloved Master, Mr. William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us"

John Donne (1572?-1631) "Progress of the Soul"; "The Ecstasy"; "Death, Be Not Proud"; "Go and catch a falling star"; "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning"; representative sermons

John Milton (1608-74) "L'Allegro"; "Il Penseroso"; "Lycidas"; Paradise Lost, Books I and II at least; "When I consider how my light is spent"; "How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth"; Areopagitica

Andrew Marvell (1621-78) "The Garden"; "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland"; "To His Coy Mistress"

John Bunyan (1628-88) The Pilgrim's Progress

John Dryden (1631-1700) "MacFlecknoe"; "Absalom and Achitophel," Part I; "Song for St. Cecilia's Day"; "Alexander's Feast"; All for Love

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) Selections from his Diary

Daniel Defoe (1660?-1731) Robinson Crusoe; Moll Flanders

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) "A Modest Proposal"; Gulliver's Travels

William Congreve (1670-1729) The Way of the World

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) Selections from The Spectator

Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) "Essay on Criticism"; "Essay on Man"; "Rape of the Lock"; "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"; Dunciad, Book V.

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) Pamela

Jonathan Edwards (1703-58) "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

Benjamin Franklin (1706-90) Selections from The Autobiography

Henry Fielding (1707-54) Joseph Andrews; Tom Jones

Samuel Johnson (1709-84) Rasselas; "The Vanity of Human Wishes"

Lawrence Sterne (1713-68) Tristram Shandy

Thomas Gray (1716-71) "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"

Tobias Smollett (1721-71) Humphrey Clinker

Oliver Goldsmith (1730?-74) The Vicar of Wakefield; She Stoops to Conquer; "The Deserted Village"

James Boswell (1740-95) Selections from Life of Samuel Johnson

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) "The Declaration of Independence"

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) The School for Scandal

William Blake (1757-1827) "Tiger! Tiger! burning bright"; "The Sick Rose"; "Jerusalem"; "Milton"

Robert Burns (1759-96) "To a Mouse"; "Holy Willie's Prayer"; "Auld Lang Syne"; "A Red, Red Rose"; "To a Louse"; "John Anderson, My Jo"

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) "Lucy Gray"; "Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey"; "Intimations of Immortality"; "The World Is Too Much With Us"; Preface to Lyrical Ballads; "London, 1802"

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) Ivanhoe

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) "Christabel"; "Kubla Khan"; "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; selections from Biographia Literaria

Washington Irving (1783-1859) "Rip Van Winkel"

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) "She Walks in Beauty"; "So We'll Go No More A-Roving"; Don Juan, Canto I

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"; "Ozymandias"; "England in 1819"; "Ode to the West Wind"; "A Defence of Poetry"

John Keats (1795-1821) "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer"; "Ode to a Nightingale"; "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; "To Autumn"

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) Sartor Resartus

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) "Self-Reliance"; "The American Scholar"; "Concord Hymn"

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64) The Scarlet Letter

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49) "To Helen"; "Annabel Lee"; "The Philosophy of Composition"

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92) "Ulysses"; "Locksley Hall"; selections from In Memoriam A.H.H.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-65) "Gettysburg Address"; "Second Inaugural Address"

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63) Vanity Fair

Charles Dickens (1812-70) David Copperfield

Robert Browning (1812-89) "My Last Duchess"; "The Bishop Orders His Tomb"; "Prospice"

Charlotte Brontë (1816-55) Jane Eyre

Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) "Civil Disobedience"

Emily Brontë (1818-48) Wuthering Heights

Herman Melville (1819-91) Moby Dick

Walt Whitman (1819-92) "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans Cross) (1819-80) The Mill on the Floss

Matthew Arnold (1822-88) "Dover Beach"; selections from Culture and Anarchy

Emily Dickinson (1830-86) "Just lost when I was saved!"; "The soul selects her own society"; "After great pain a formal feeling comes"; "Because I could not stop for Death"

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) (1835-1910) Huckleberry Finn

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) "Channel Firing"; "The Convergence of the Twain"; The Return of the Native

Henry James (1843-1916) Portrait of a Lady

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) The Importance of Being Earnest

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) Pygmalion

Joseph Conrad (Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski) (1857-1924) Lord Jim

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"; "September 1913";  
"Easter 1916"; "Sailing to Byzantium"; "The Second Coming"

Stephen Crane (1871-1900) The Red Badge of Courage

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) An American Tragedy

Willa Cather (1873-1947) My Antonia

Robert Frost (1874-1963) "Birches"; "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) "Sunday Morning"

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) Mrs. Dalloway

James Joyce (1882-1941) A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

William Carlos Williams (1883-1963) "Tract"; "Queen-Ann's-Lace"

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) Hugh Selwyn Mauberley

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) Sons and Lovers

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; The Waste Land

Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) The Hairy Ape

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) The Great Gatsby

William Faulkner (1897-1962) The Sound and the Fury

Ernest Hemingway (1898-1961) A Farewell to Arms

W.H. Auden (1907-1973) "In Memory of W.B. Yeats"