

We're delighted you're thinking about studying at Brunel University London.

Our lecturers have put together the following information to help you prepare for your course. This will give you a snapshot of the materials and reading list you'll be using. You'll get a full breakdown of information before you enrol.

On our website you can also [find out more about your modules](#) and [chat to a current student](#).

If you have any more questions, [please get in touch](#).

We look forward to welcoming you to Brunel.

Task 1

To introduce English at Brunel, we want to start by offering you a Reading List. What follows are some of our own favourite novels, from a variety of genres, which we would encourage you to pick up and read:

- Normal People (2018), by Sally Rooney
- Kindred (1979), by Octavia Butler
- Ring (1991), Koji Suzuki
- Exit West (2017), Mohsin Hamid
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (2003), Mark Haddon

Some questions to get you thinking about what you've read

- As you read, consider both what you like and dislike about these novels.
- Which characters in the novel can you identify with? Or are there any characters who you like to read about, even while you don't identify with them?
- What is the setting of the novel? Is it familiar or strange? What makes it intriguing or disturbing?
- Who is the narrator(s)? Are they reliable or unreliable? Can you identify any signature aspects of their style or diction?
- What is the genre(s) of the novel? How do you know? Have you read any other works of this genre previously? How does this compare?
- Lastly, given that you are reading these texts during a global pandemic and national lockdown: are there any aspects of these fictions which speak to our current situation? Also, how has your reading experience of these texts been shaped by the lockdown?

Task 2

We would also like your input!

In the above, we have offered you some of our own preferred reads, but we would also like hear what you have been reading recently. With this in mind, we'd like to set you the following task:

Please compile a list of five of your favourite novels/short stories/poems for reading. Also tell us something about why you have chosen these texts in particular.

Following this, we invite you to participate in a larger department project by sending this in to us via email. (Please send to me at emily.horton@brunel.ac.uk.) I will then circulate your choices amongst our current students and fellow applicants, and we can begin a virtual discussion of our favourite lockdown reads.

Thanks in advance for your suggestions!

Task 3

Another key aspect of an English degree at Brunel involves an engagement with prominent cultural media. In particular, one popular section of The Guardian website that we often encourage students to read is entitled '[The Books that Made Me](#)'.

On this page, authors are interviewed to compile ideas about the books they are reading, the books they wish they'd read, the books they've given as gifts, and more.

Indeed, many authors use the interview to confess how difficult they find reading certain books, a confession which can be shocking or relieving, depending on what you yourself made of the book.

For inspiration, take a look at some examples of these interviews on The Guardian website. Think carefully about the books the authors cite as inspirational or even life changing, and then consider how your own reading experiences compare or contrast.

Task 4

For this task, we'd like to ask you to fashion your own '[The Books that Made Me](#)' page.

To do so, again, look closely at the interviews on The Guardian URL above, and then answer the following questions for yourself. If you'd like, send them in to me (at emily.horton@brunel.ac.uk) for feedback and/or for circulation amongst your peers.

- The book I am currently reading
- The book that changed my life
- The book I wish I'd written
- The book that had the greatest influence on my writing
- The book I think is most overrated
- The last book that made me cry
- The book I couldn't finish
- The book I'm most ashamed not to have read
- The book I most often give as a gift

Final Note

We hope that these tasks will provide you with some helpful ideas on how to expand your reading and hone your critical thinking in preparation for university.

Do feel free to pick and choose as best suits you and fit these tasks to your particular schedule. Remember that the idea is to be inspired and engaged, not stressed or overburdened!

It would also be great to hear back from you about your particular reading experiences and to engage your responses in a larger student discussion.

If you have any questions or concerns about these tasks or about English at Brunel more generally, please feel free to get in touch (emily.horton@brunel.ac.uk), and I will be more than happy to help. Looking forward to hearing from you!

