

We would like you to read at least four books over the summer holiday. We will be discussing them briefly at the start of next term, and they might be useful as texts for coursework later in the course.

The books are:

- *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid
- *The Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

Also, you should have a look at this website, which contains links to the opening paragraphs of hundreds of novels. Dip in at random and read a few. Choose one that you like. Copy and paste it, along with information about the author and the title of the novel into a word document.

<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/first/first-fiction.html>

Think about the following questions in relation to the paragraph that you have chosen.

- Where and when is it set? How do I know?
- What do I think about any characters that are mentioned so far? What has led me to form those opinions?
- How much time passes in the text? How do I know?
- How many different voices can I hear in the writing? Think about dialogue here, but also narrative voices.
- What can I say about the language of the text? Is it formal, conversational, simple or complex? Is a lot of imagery used? Or is there a lot of action?
- Is there a mystery to the text?
- What kind of genre would I now expect this text to be in? What has made me think this?
- Do I need to know anything more to fully understand the text?

The more notes that you can make about your texts, the better.