

# Contents

List of illustrations	xi
Acknowledgements	xiii
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Who is this book for?	1
What is it for?	2
How to use this book	3
<b>Part I</b>	
<b>How we read</b>	
<b>1 Where did English come from?</b>	<b>7</b>
The 'Chinese encyclopedia'	7
The history of English	9
English and the British in India	10
English in Britain	11
How modern English began	13
The 'Leavis method'	15
<b>2 Doing English today</b>	<b>17</b>
Changing world-views, changing English	17
Understanding the changes: reading and interpreting	18
What is literary theory?	21

Using theory 22  
 What does this mean for you? 24

### **3 English and 'the right answer' 27**

Is there a 'right way' to do English? 27  
 What's wrong with 'the right answer'? 28  
 So how can I 'do English' today? 32  
 Learning about different approaches 34  
 The future of English 35

### **4 Critical attitudes 37**

*Into the text or out from the text?* 37  
 Intrinsic attitudes: into the text 38  
 Extrinsic attitudes: out of the text 41  
 Contrasting these two attitudes 42

## **Part II**

### **What we read**

### **5 Literature, value and the canon 47**

Can literature be defined? 47  
 What is literary value? 49  
 What is the canon? 49  
 How does the canon affect you? 54

### **6 Doing Shakespeare 59**

Castle Shakespeare 59  
 Studying Shakespeare: the traditionalists' argument 62  
 Using Shakespeare: the cultural materialists' argument 64  
 The effects of this debate on studying Shakespeare 71

## **Part III**

### **Reading and meaning**

### **7 The author is dead? 75**

How important is the author in deciding what a work of literature means? 75  
 For 'authorial intention': the authority of the author 76  
 Against 'authorial intention': the death of the author 78

So why has the author always seemed so important?	83
Consequences of the death of the author	84
<b>8 Metaphors and figures of speech</b>	<b>87</b>
Figures of speech everywhere	87
Metaphors in literature	89
Metaphors in everyday speech	90
Basic conceptual metaphors	91
What metaphors mean and how they shape the world	92
<b>9 Narrative and closure</b>	<b>97</b>
How are narratives made?	97
Narrators	99
Closure	101
<b>Part IV</b>	
<b>English studies . . . ?</b>	
<b>10 English, national identity and cultural heritage</b>	<b>107</b>
Where does your national identity come from?	108
How does your national identity affect you?	109
English as cultural heritage	111
Theory and multicultural heritages	112
<b>11 English, literature and politics</b>	<b>117</b>
English and the <i>polis</i>	117
Critical attitudes and politics	120
Why has English been a political battleground?	122
<b>12 Interdisciplinary English</b>	<b>125</b>
Diffuse, fuzzy and interwoven	125
What are the consequences of this?	127
English and science: a special case?	128
Is English evolving?	131
<b>Conclusion – the importance of English</b>	<b>135</b>
Further reading	141
Index	157