

Curriculum Statement for English

Our curriculum is aimed to ensure all students enjoy their English studies, study a broad range of engaging and challenging texts that explore the human condition. We aim to develop empathetic individuals who have a keen sense of what it means to be human and can express themselves with clarity and sincerity. We will do this through high quality teaching and a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where ideas are explored, encouraged and developed. We will give students the opportunity to make progress and be educationally mobile for them to succeed beyond secondary school. We will inspire a love of reading. We will provide a curriculum that is knowledge-rich, sustainable and aspirational.

- Knowledge-rich – Specific and sequenced information imparted to students.
- Sustainable – Students can retain and maintain knowledge over time.
- Aspirational – Inspiring students to move beyond the standard expectations

Year 7

Term 1

Villains Through Time: Students will study a range of texts encompassing over a millennium of British literary heritage. They will consider how the fears and values of each society are reflected in the stories they tell, and the characters contained within them.

Term 2

Poetry: Diversity and Performance: Students will explore a range of poetry that reflects the society in which they live. They will be encouraged to create and perform their own poetry, drawing and the poetic forms, traditions and techniques that they have studied.

Terms 3 and 4

Students will study *Eleven* by Tom Rogers which is a touching story of a young boy who finds himself caught up in the tragic events of 911. Students will discuss topics based around this novel and themes such as friendship, family, ethical choices, justice, grief and heroism.

Term 5

Students will be introduced to **Shakespeare**, his life and times, tragedies and comedies, and his contribution to language and literature. They will also begin to consider the relevance of Shakespeare in the modern world. This unit is designed to prepare students for their studies of three whole Shakespeare plays across Key Stage Three and Four.

Term 6

Myths and Legends: Students will build on the ideas around context and diversity that they explored at the start of the year by studying a range of myths and legends from across the world. These myths and legends will develop their appreciation and understanding of a variety of cultures, including their own, and will allow them to see the similarities and differences between societies. They will be encouraged to start to consider, more deeply, the question 'what makes us human?', a question that underpins their study of English literature throughout all the key stages.

Year 8

Term 1

Conflicting voices: Students will build on their studies of poetry and performance in year 7 to consider how poetry as an art form has been used to convey political and societal criticism and commentary. They will start to explore the poetry of authors they will encounter at GCSE and A level, giving them a solid foundation on which to build for future success.

Term 2

Rhetoric: This unit will begin to prepare students for GCSE English Language Paper 2 and their Spoken Language endorsement. They will look at the Aristotelian triad: Pathos, Ethos and Logos and how this has been adopted and used effectively by the great rhetoricians of our age. They will start to employ the art of Rhetoric in their own writing enabling them to become eloquent and confident speakers.

Terms 3 and 4

Pupils will be introduced to the genre of dystopian literature as they read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. They will compare the differences between the portrayal of main characters and minor characters. In addition, they will be encouraged to think about the consequences of conflict. This will prepare them further dystopian study in year 9 and 12, should they go on to study English Literature at A Level.

Term 5

Pupils will be introduced to the comedy genre of Shakespeare's plays. They will be exploring themes of revenge and relationships as well as exploring gender and racial stereotypes and how characters challenge these. We have chosen *The Tempest* as being an accessible example of Shakespearean comedy. Students will have the opportunity to explore themes that they will revisit throughout their studies of literature, such as: deception, love, revenge, colonialism, gender and greed.

Term 6

Victorian Writings: Students will study a range of fiction and non-fiction texts produced in the 19th century. They will consider the social and political views of the writers at the time and learn about Victorian life. This unit will introduce students to the language and themes that are explored at GCSE level in both language and literature as well as continuing to develop their analytical skills.

Year 9

Term 1

Creative Writing: Students will study a range of fiction texts to better understand the writer's craft. They will use their findings to improve their own creative writing, focusing on characterisation, atmospheric description and elements of structure. They will also be exposed to sophisticated vocabulary and literary techniques allowing them to develop greater clarity of expression.

Term 2

Year 9 will build on their knowledge of Shakespeare by studying *Much Ado About Nothing*. They will build on their knowledge of the comedy genre as well as considering themes of gender equality and deception. They will also explore stagecraft, structure and character building as well as developing

an appreciation of Shakespearian language. The romantic elements in this play, and the deceptions will prepare students for the study of Romeo and Juliet at GCSE as well as providing an interesting and meaningful comparison with Othello at A level.

Term 3

Poetry: Form and Meter. Pupils will build on their knowledge of poetic structure and terminology studied in Years 7 and 8 by exploring specific poetic forms and conventions and considering where these conventions originated, why poets may have chosen to use them and then, having chosen them, why they might choose to break those same conventions. The themes and conventions explored in this unit will provide an excellent underpinning of knowledge to enable students to embark on the poetry components of the English Literature in years 10 and 11 and beyond.

Terms 4 and 5

Pupils will read *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman. This dystopian novel builds on ideas they encountered when reading *The Giver* in year 8. Through this critically acclaimed text, pupils will explore ideas about equality, social justice, legitimate protest. They will study the writer's craft and draw parallels between the fictional world that they have been studying and the real world in which they live. This novel also has parallels with Romeo and Juliet, which they will go on to study in year 10.

Term 6

Hidden Figures, non-fiction study: Pupils will look at the important contributions of a diverse group of people who have not been recognised due to societal prejudices. Students will develop their knowledge of transactional writing, building on their previous study of rhetoric and applying this to their own writing. This will form part of their preparation for English Language Paper 2, the Spoken Language endorsement as well as covering some of the themes that they will encounter in their English Literature studies.

Year 10

Term 1

The GCSE course will begin with a study of *An Inspector Calls* by JB Priestley. Pupils will explore the context in the first half of the 20th century in order to apply ideas about writer's intention to a modern playscript. They will also start to develop a personal response to essay questions in preparation for the English Literature GCSE examination. Students will also focus on their transactional writing skills as part of their exploration of context and themes, in order to prepare them for section B of English Language GCSE Paper 2.

Terms 2 and 3

Following on from the study of concepts such as the influence of societal beliefs and the importance of social responsibility, pupils will apply these ideas to a Victorian context to *analyse A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Students will be encouraged to deepen and refine their understanding of terminology and literary interpretation. They will continue to refine their essay-writing skills, developing a contextualised response to English Literature Paper 1 Questions. Understanding writers' viewpoints and perspectives will be interleaved throughout this unit in preparation for Language Paper 2 section A.

Terms 3 and 4

Students will draw on their prior studies of Shakespeare as they analyse *Romeo and Juliet*. Pupils will explore the context of the Renaissance and Elizabethan era, focusing on the rise of the individual, social comment and the particular audiences for whom Shakespeare was writing. They will explore the conventions of tragedy and the continuing relevance of Shakespeare for modern readers as they encounter the major themes of Love, Conflict and Fate and the language a structure used to convey this. They will learn how to compose a critical response and reflect on different interpretations of the play. This unit will be interleaved with an introduction to unseen poetry, which is examined on Paper 2 of the English Literature GCSE.

Term 5 and 6

Students will conclude their study of the English Literature set texts with the *Worlds and Lives Poetry Anthology*: The collection is both personal and political and explores concerns about the world we live in. It also looks at relatable universal themes, including our relationship with places and ideas about home, heritage, belonging and connection. Students will explore and compare the views of both classical and modern poets. They will consider the authorial intent of each poet through critical analysis and exploration. Alongside this, students will be looking at **Language Paper 2, perspectives and viewpoints**, as well as preparing for the **GCSE Spoken Language Endorsement** which will be assessed in term 6.

Year 11

Terms 1 and 2

Pupils will be able to become completely familiar with the format and expectation of both language papers. They will also prepare for Literature Paper 2: revising *An Inspector Calls* and the *Love and Relationships* poetry anthology and exploring *Unseen Poetry*. This will enable them to develop their own critical voice by drawing on their own experiences and understanding of the world around them. The focus will be on considering the effects of writers' choices and the possible intent behind these choices.

Terms 3 and 4

Pupils will recap plot, character and themes from *Macbeth* and *A Christmas Carol* as well as improving their crafting of essay answers in timed conditions. This unit specifically focuses on creating a concept and revises the importance of thesis statements in essay writing. Students will also be focusing on close analysis of the writers' methods working towards developing perceptive responses. In Term 4 the focus will shift to their honing their written expression.

Term 5 and 6

Pupils will recap plot, character and themes from both the novella and the poetry anthology, as well as improving their crafting of essay answers in timed conditions. By Term 6, teachers will plan revision content specific for the needs of their class in preparation for all four exams papers.

Year 12

If students choose to study English Literature with us at **A level** they will be following the **Pearson Edexcel English Literature** syllabus.

The aims and objectives of the Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in English Literature are to enable students to:

- read widely and independently set texts and others that they have selected for themselves
- engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and ways of responding to them
- develop and effectively apply their knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation
- explore the contexts of the texts they are reading and others' interpretations of them
- undertake independent and sustained studies to deepen their appreciation and understanding of English literature, including its changing traditions.

In this way, students can gain a solid understanding of how texts can be connected and how they can be interpreted in multiple ways so that students can arrive at their own interpretations and become confident autonomous readers. Students are then not only equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for both exams and non-exam assessment, but also experience a rich, challenging and coherent approach to English literature that provides an excellent basis for studying the subject at university.

The specification requires the study of a literary texts across three different forms: drama, prose and poetry. Three of these texts must have been written pre-1900.

Students will study aspects of the form of **drama** via two plays. The central focus of the drama study is the literary text. Students will need to explore the use of literary and dramatic devices and the shaping of meanings in their chosen plays. Students study a **tragedy** by Shakespeare and another tragedy drama.

Teaching and wider reading will address the significance and influence of contextual factors and engage with different interpretations of the chosen Shakespeare play.

Students' study of Shakespeare is enhanced by engagement with critical writing. Teaching of this is supported by **Shakespeare: A Critical Anthology – Tragedy**. This critical anthology includes four generic essays and three specific essays on each set text to encourage students to engage with different readings of their studied Shakespeare play.

Students will study aspects of **prose** via two **thematically linked texts**, at least one of which must be pre-1900. Literary study of both texts selected for this component incorporates the links and connections between them, and the contexts in which they were written and received. Our chosen theme is **science and society**.

Students will study a selection of poems from two published poetry texts. They will consider the concerns and choices of modern-day poets in a selection of contemporary poems. Students will apply their knowledge of poetic form, content and meaning, and develop their skills in comparing an unseen poem with an example of studied poetry.

Students will also develop depth of knowledge about poetic style by studying a selection from the work of a single named poet, or a selection from within a literary period or movement. Literary study of the chosen set poems should be enhanced by study of the contexts in which they were written and received. Our chosen literary movement is **The Romantics**

The set texts we have chosen are:

- ***Othello*** by William Shakespeare
- ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** by Tennessee Williams
- ***A Handmaid's Tale*** by Margaret Atwood
- ***Frankenstein*** by Mary Shelley

- **English Romantic Verse (selected poems)** editor David Wright published by Penguin Books 1973

Students will also be required to study a prescribed selection of modern poems from ***Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002–2011***.

In addition, there is a non-examination assessment, which will be assessed via two texts. There are no prescribed texts but students will select, with guidance from their teachers, complete texts which may be drawn from poetry, drama, prose or literary non-fiction. These will be different texts from those studied in Components 1, 2 and 3.

The selected texts may be linked by theme, movement, author or period. Literary study of both texts should be enhanced by study of the links and connections between them, different interpretations and the contexts in which they were written and received.

Year 13 (for examination summer 2024 only)

Our current year 13 **A level** students have been following the **AQA English Literature B** syllabus. This coherent specification has a distinct philosophy which centres on different ways of reading and on the connections, which exist between texts. Study of texts within the chosen literary and cultural genres in the examined topic areas is enhanced by the study of critical theory in the non-exam assessment. In this way, students can gain a solid understanding of how texts can be connected and how they can be interpreted in multiple ways so that students can arrive at their own interpretations and become confident autonomous readers. Students are then not only equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for both exams and non-exam assessment, but also experience a rich, challenging and coherent approach to English literature that provides an excellent basis for studying the subject at university.

The specification encourages the exploration of texts in a number of different ways:

- the study of texts within specific genres
- the study of texts through engagement with a range of theoretical ideas
- writing about texts in a number of different ways.

Genre study is at the heart of English Literature B and the two genres that we have chosen for study are tragedy, and political and social protest writing. Just as meanings of texts are not fixed, neither are definitions of genre, which frequently change and become blurred. The texts offered, therefore, are not necessarily classic examples of established genres and this is reflected in the modifying words 'aspects of' and 'elements of'. Indeed, the specification considers the fact that writers often subvert the genre in which they are writing.

Working with genre involves looking at ways in which authors shape meanings within their texts. It also involves thinking about a wide range of relevant contexts, some of them to do with the production of the text at the time of its writing, some (where possible) to do with how the text has been received over time and, most of all in this specification, contexts to do with how the text can be interpreted by readers now. Looking at texts as generic works involves connecting individual texts with others, as the whole idea of genre is a connective one. And finally, because genres and their qualities are not fixed, this means that interpretation is not fixed, and that multiple interpretations are possible.

The set texts we have chosen are:

- ***Othello*** by William Shakespeare
- ***Death of A Salesman*** by Arthur Miller
- Selected poems by **Keats**
- ***A Handmaid's Tale*** by Margaret Atwood
- ***The Kite Runner*** by Khaled Hosseini
- ***Songs of Innocence and Experience*** by William Blake

Students will be guided in their choice of text for the coursework components

If you require further information about the GCSE and GCE specifications, you can follow the links below:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-7716-7717-SP-2015.PDF>

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-8702-SP-2015.PDF>

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-8702-SP-2015.PDF>

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/English%20Literature/2015/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/gce2015-a-level-eng-lit-spec.pdf>

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