

A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

Awarding Body: Edexcel



Course content

The A Level English Literature course is both exciting and challenging, enabling students to explore and enjoy a range of complex and ambitious poetry, prose and drama drawn from the past 400 years. The academic study of English Literature develops precision and clarity in analytical thought and writing; it builds complexity and depth of knowledge about the world and how it has changed; it develops richness and variety of linguistic expression and encourages empathy. Examination Board: Edexcel/Pearson.

Component 1: DRAMA

Students study 'A Streetcar Named Desire' in Year 12 and 'Othello' in Year 13. They also explore an anthology of critical essays in Year 13, complementing the study of Othello and the tragic genre.

Component 2: PROSE

Students read two prose texts on the theme of 'Women and Society': 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' and 'A Thousand Splendid Suns'. Both texts are studied in Year 12.

Component 3: POETRY

In Year 12, students engage in the close reading of poetic form, language and structure from a selection of contemporary poems – 'Poems of the Decade'. Students are taught to compare an unseen poem with a named poem from the collection. They also study a collection of Metaphysical Poetry in Year 13.

Component 4: COURSEWORK

Students write one independent extended comparative essay exploring two texts worthy of A Level study. They are free to make their own choices of texts and topics. There are no genre or date restrictions, except that these texts should not have been studied previously by the Centre. They cannot use 'texts in translation'. This gives students the opportunity to immerse themselves in an exploration of a topic they are passionate about, comparing the treatment across two texts.

Entry requirements

Grade 7 in English Literature GCSE.

Future opportunities

Our students successfully apply to read English at the most competitive academic universities, including Oxbridge and the Russell Group. The study of English Literature offers an excellent foundation for reading any subject at university and is particularly important for those hoping to work in Law, the Media, Management, Politics, Medicine, Engineering, Accountancy, IT and any field where effective communication, empathy and analytical skills are a requirement.

Students in Year 12 are invited to apply for positions such as Student Subject Leaders and their role is to promote the subject across the school, mentor younger students, run revision sessions for Year 10 and Year 11 students, speak to parents at Open Evenings and generally be ambassadors for the subject across all Key Stages.

Further information

Our results are consistently high. Once again, the 2024 results were excellent: A*/B 93%; A*/A 66% and A* 33%. The English Department is blessed with exceptionally enthusiastic, skilled, and experienced staff. There are challenging and wide-ranging activities on offer that, apart from enabling our students to achieve excellent grades, also foster a lifelong love and enjoyment of literature. Numerous theatre trips have been organised, including 'Othello' and 'King Lear'. 'The Power of English', an event that showcases the way English empowers a range of professionals in their careers, takes place annually. A visit to the British Library helps students gain an interest in research. The 'Literary Festival' organised by the English department, encouraged many subjects to celebrate books that were relevant in their subject areas. Visits to universities enable students to understand the academic challenge of this wonderful subject. Oxbridge applicants are offered support sessions by the HOD, helping them prepare for the ELAT. A mock ELAT is carried out in school and marked by the HOD, who also offers feedback on performance. The team offers a programme of support, in preparation for the Oxbridge interviews. An annual revision programme supports students to go on and achieve their potential at the examinations. Every year, students go on to read English at Oxbridge and Russell group universities.