

# Course Information



## A Level English Literature

### What is A-Level English Literature?

English Literature is a traditional, highly regarded, academic course. Studying English Literature will help you think about the world around you in a new and different way. You will be encouraged to open your eyes to alternative ways of thinking and engage with writers whose viewpoints and ideas may be alternative, anti-establishment or even 'dangerous.'

### What does the course involve?

Students will develop a range of skills that will build on those learnt at Key Stage 4. You will be asked to engage in high-level debates, challenging the assumptions of critics, your classmates and also your own pre-conceived ideas. It is compulsory that students read a range of challenging texts and learn how to infer subtle meanings from complex ideas. Students will also learn how to structure effective essays and analyse and evaluate language in depth.

### What themes are studied?

For the first unit, students will read a range of texts made up of poetry and drama. Texts are studied across time periods with a focus on the genre of tragedy. The texts studied are: selected poems by John Keats, Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller and Othello by William Shakespeare.

After this, students study 'Elements of Political Writing' which helps to make up the second component of their course. Texts by authors such as William Blake, Tony Harrison and Khaled Hosseini are explored in relation to their particular genre along with various unseen texts. Students will also be expected to read independently in preparation for their non-exam assessment which is the third unit of the A Level.

### How is it assessed?

We follow AQA Literature Specification 'B'. The course is made up of 80% examined assessment and 20% non-examined assessment. Students take two exams – Unit One is a closed book exam and lasts 2 hours and 30 minutes and Unit Two is open book and lasts 3 hours. Students have to answer passage based questions, essay questions and have to link their study of multiple texts together to compare their presentation of the given genre. The non-exam assessment element of the course comprises of two essays which relate to critical theories such as Feminist Theory, Marxist Theory and Post-colonialism.

### Extra information

It is compulsory that students read widely for the duration of the course. It is compulsory that students read the set Year 12 texts before the course starts and that they read the Year 13 texts before they begin Year 13. It is also necessary to read independently in preparation for the non-exam assessment.

### What next?

As it is a rigorous, academic subject, English Literature is valued by virtually all employers and high-end universities. Obvious career paths are 'arty' and creative jobs such as journalism and research posts although many science and maths based jobs and courses also value English as it balances someone with a scientific/mathematic passion and shows that you have a full, well-rounded world view. Studying English Literature could set you apart from others!

For more information about the course, your suitability for it, and possible career paths for students with literature qualifications, talk to your English teacher or Mr Litt, Head of English.