

English Literature

Exam board: AQA

Summary of course content and assessment scheme

The course covers a wide range of texts from across genres and historical periods including novels, plays and poetry. The coursework unit at A level also allows for independent text choices.

The course builds on and develops skills used at GCSE English but you will find it more demanding. You will have to start considering how contextual information affects the way we read a text (for example how do Shakespeare's plays reflect the worries and controversies of Elizabethan London) – and relate your ideas to how other people have analysed the text in the past.

Year	Module	Assessment and weighting	Includes
	A Level Paper 1: Literary genres Written examination (closed book)	2 hours 30 minutes 75 marks 40% of A Level	Study of three texts: one Shakespeare text; a second drama text and one further text, of which one must be written pre-1900 Section A: one passage-based question on set Shakespeare text (25 marks) Section B: one essay question on set Shakespeare text (25 marks) Section C: one essay question linking two texts (25 marks)
	A Level Paper 2: Texts and genres (open-book) Written examination	3 hours 75 marks 40% of A Level	Study of three texts: one post-2000 prose text; one poetry and one further text, of which one must be written pre-1900. Exam will include an unseen passage. Section A: one compulsory question on an unseen passage (25 marks) Section B: one essay question on set text (25 marks) Section C: one essay question which connects two texts (25 marks)
	Non-exam assessment: Theory and independence Coursework	20% of A Level	Study of two texts: one poetry and one prose text, informed by study of the Critical Anthology Two essays of 1,250–1,500 words, each responding to a different text and linking to a different aspect of the Critical anthology

Why you should study English Literature in the Sixth form:

If you have enjoyed exploring, analysing and discussing texts at GCSE and have a real love of reading, then A Level English could well be for you. The course allows you to read widely and engage with a substantial selection of literary work, including drama, poetry and prose. You will get the chance to see how English Literature has developed over the course of history through studying literature from the 16th century such as Shakespeare, right through to modern works from the 21st century. The coursework allows you to have independence and a level of freedom, making your own choice of texts to explore. A Level English allows you to develop a critical awareness and understanding of these different texts and understand the significance of cultural and historical context in shaping both a text and the reader's response. The course enables you to become confident and skilled in using written English accurately to express your ideas and structure your arguments; an invaluable skill in many other A level courses.

Comments from students who have studied this subject in the past

- “The study of English at A level allows you to see fantastic literary shows, such as Shakespeare plays at the theatre!”
- “English offers the chance to study the diversity in literature through the ages. It becomes clear how language has developed; you find there is a meaning behind everything you say.”

Frequently asked Questions

- *What do I need to succeed at A Level English Literature?*
 - ⇒ The ability to write coherently and logically and structure your arguments carefully
 - ⇒ Commitment and motivation
 - ⇒ A real interest in and love of reading
 - ⇒ A desire to explore, analyse and dissect the language, themes and imagery of texts ⇒ A willingness to share your ideas in class discussion
- *How much work does the course involve?*

You will have four lessons a week with two different teachers; each teacher focuses on studying a different text. You can expect at least one piece of homework from each of your English teachers per week and you will have to keep up with the independent reading each week. Written homework could include research, writing notes, answering questions, or most often essays. You are also expected to read widely in your own time.
- *Which texts will I study?*

You will cover several novels, plays and poetry including authors such as Shakespeare, Keats, and Atwood. You will also study texts from more modern authors for coursework (at least one of which you will choose yourself).
- *Are there any opportunities for trips?*

When studying drama texts we always try to take A level students to see the text in performance whenever possible. Past trips have included seeing 'The Tempest' at the Globe Theatre in London and 'Macbeth'. We also arrange for students to attend A level study conferences where experts from universities give lectures and chair discussions on the key texts to broaden your knowledge and give you a taste of what studying for an English degree would be like.
- *What can I do with A Level English Literature?*

A level English Literature is well regarded by universities and employers as candidates are able to develop excellent analytical skills and generally have a good quality of written communication, being able to articulate informed and well structured responses. Professions which directly relate to English include jobs in journalism, teaching, publishing, advertising and the media but English graduates have gone on to be successful in many other careers.

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