

HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

ENGLISH

SUBJECT LEADER MR JACK MAY
jack.may@hollandparkschool.co.uk

CURRICULUM INTENT STATEMENT

The English department aims to prepare students for life beyond school through nurturing the key skills at the heart of the subject: reading for inference, interpretation, and enjoyment; writing creatively; writing discursively with purpose; and reading to understand perspective and bias. These core aspects are revisited each year, ensuring that skills are returned to with increasingly complexity and sophistication, and our curriculum provides opportunities for embedding the eight principles of pedagogy in English: outstanding oracy, ambitious vocabulary, subject-specific factual knowledge, written style, cultural capital, exemplar materials, developmental reading, and practice of skills (particularly extended writing). The broad range of our text and topic choices aims to expose students to a wide offering of canonical and more recent literature to compensate for gaps in students' cultural capital, as well as contributing to students' personal development and character education through the themes and concepts considered.

KEY STAGE THREE OVERVIEW | The Key Stage 3 curriculum prioritises spaced practice of the core skills foundational to progress in English: fiction reading (including poetry and drama), creative writing, non-fiction reading and discursive/persuasive writing. It is commensurate with the requirements of the national curriculum, encompassing whole texts and author studies, two Shakespeare plays, and opportunities to write creatively and discursively – and edit and redraft that writing – in response to a range of stimuli. The Key Stage 3 curriculum enables students to develop and hone the skills required for study of GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature, as well as developing literacy and reading fluency alongside promoting reading for pleasure.

Year 7 hinges on the concept of the self: Narnia provides opportunities for character education as well as the consideration of theme, whilst Gothic literature (with its questions of morality and the self) introduces students to genre and deliberate style in creative writing. Exploring war poetry introduces students to poetic conventions through accessible texts, building on notions of theme and genre, while *Lord of the Flies* and *Romeo and Juliet* position the self within broader context and invite considerations of characters in social contexts. Sandwiched between these reading-focused schemes is an introduction to purposeful discursive writing through speechwriting, again hinged on the concept of the self to encourage further personal development and character education.

Year 8 pivots towards society: the introduction to Dickens' writing prepares students to tackle complex 19th-century texts at GCSE whilst raising challenging questions about society, inequality and discrimination, considerations further explored in the subsequent non-fiction reading and writing scheme, revolving around social structures and issues such as crime and punishment. Students return to poetry through the theme of power, considering the social justice and injustice of the distribution of power, a notion further developed through study of Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*. A return to creative writing thus focusses on the skills of depicting characters in social settings, whilst the year finishes with *The Taming of the Shrew* to invite consideration of what texts reveal about their societies and which texts our society might find challenging. Year 9 begins the process of preparation for the two GCSE English examinations through similar texts and tasks. To prepare for GCSE Literature, students study *An Inspector Calls*, through which they develop their knowledge of dramatic terminology and conventions and develop an understanding of the social context of mid-20th century political writers. Subsequent study of *Frankenstein* offers students another opportunity to tackle a challenging 19th-century text while exploring some of the Gothic generic conventions and themes of ambition, hubris and power that underpin Year 11 study of Charles Dickens' work and *Macbeth*. In the

latter part of the year, students explore a range of texts to revisit and refine their skills of reading non-fiction texts critically, writing discursively for a purpose, and writing creatively, before beginning the GCSE English Language course with the speaking endorsement and their first foray into evaluation of fiction texts.

KEY STAGE 4 OVERVIEW | The Key Stage 4 curriculum focusses on the accrual of two qualifications: English Language and English Literature. In English Language, students analyse unseen extracts from texts (both fiction and non-fiction), and write creatively and discursively. In English Literature, students analyse full texts: a 19th-century novel, a Shakespeare play, a collection of 15 poems (written between 1789 and the present day) and a 20th-century text, along with analysing two unseen poems. It thus aims to deepen and refine the core skills students acquired at key stage three: reading for pleasure and for analysis across fiction and non-fiction, and writing discursively (whether in literary analysis or for other persuasive / informative purposes) and creatively.

In Year 10, students prepare for their GCSE English Language. They encounter a range of fiction texts as part of their analysis of fiction extracts (Paper 1 Section A of the specification) and to nurture reading for pleasure, before developing their creative writing skills (Paper 1 Section B) by revising analysis of – and stealing from – fiction extracts. Students then switch focus to non-fiction analysis, introducing the more complex element of comparison demanded by Paper 2 Section A of the specification, followed by discursive writing practice in Paper 2 Section B. Revision and consolidation of the core skills follows, with the time after the examination used to introduce GCSE English Literature skills by reading and understanding George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

In Year 11, students prepare for their GCSE English Literature. They start the academic year with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, with focus on the supernatural, *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth* as characters, and thematic foci on guilt, violence and loyalty. The cohort splits for study of their 19th-century novel, with five classes studying *Great Expectations* while four classes study *A Christmas Carol*. The aim here is for all students to prioritise high-level, high-quality analysis of the text, with some students better placed to apply this across a longer text given reading ability. Students finish the study of the full texts with the 15 poems in the *Power & Conflict Anthology*: poems are introduced in pairs to enable comparison straight away, and with each poem introduced as if it were an unseen poem to prepare students for this aspect of the specification. Students then return to George Orwell's *Animal Farm* to begin their revision (as it is previously studied in the final weeks of Year 10), of all the texts, alongside additional development of their unseen poetry analysis, prior to the summer examination.

Key Stage 4 Examinations

AQA GCSE English Language: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700>

Paper 1 (Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing)

Paper 2 (Writer's Viewpoints and Perspectives)

AQA GCSE English Literature: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702>

Paper 1 (Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel)

Paper 2 (Modern Texts and Poetry)

KEY STAGE 5 OVERVIEW | Our Key Stage 5 curriculum focusses more finely on the skills of literary analysis, engaging students with compelling texts across the genres of tragedy and crime, chosen for the lively dynamism of the texts offered and the broad variety of authors, periods, and styles they offer.

Students begin their A-Level Literature study by focussing on tragedy, chosen as a starting point for its relative clarity as a genre to facilitate the more complex textual and generic interrogation required for A-Level. Shakespeare's *King Lear* serves as our starting point throughout the Autumn Term as an exemplification of the genre, with additional teaching time devoted to it as it represents two-thirds of Paper 1A (Aspects of Tragedy). A selection of John Keats' poetry follows, allowing students to challenge and query their notions of what constitutes tragedy following their analysis of an archetypal tragic text, with Shakespeare's *Richard II* then introduced to provide fertile ground for comparisons without the immediacy of following *Lear*. Students finish their Year 12 study with Ian McEwan's *Atonement* to facilitate a transition: the text includes aspects of tragedy whilst also introducing elements of crime writing, preparing students for their further study in Paper 2A (Elements of Crime Writing). After summer examinations, students begin working on their non-exam assessment: this comprises a novel of students' own choosing, with teachers providing recommendations of texts and guidance on the process of developing ideas and arguments, and a selection of poetry selected by individual teachers based on their own expert subject knowledge. In recent years, selections have included Philip Larkin, W.B. Yeats and Andrew Marvell.

Year 13 begins with study of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* as an exemplification of archetypal golden-age crime writing and a text that students can easily read independently over the summer break. It thus facilitates a clear foundation point for students' closer understanding of crime writing as a discrete genre. A selection of 19th-century crime poems (George Crabbe's *Peter Grimes*, Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, and Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*, *The Laboratory* and *Porphyria's Lover*) follows, offering students an opportunity to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the crime genre with deviation and alternative iterations of crime writing across all five poems. Finally, the comparative element of the crime paper (Paper 2A, Section C) is made possible by students' knowledge of all three texts, with comparison also functioning as revision of those. The course finishes with revision of all texts (including a return to the tragic texts of Paper 1A), supplemented by an introduction to Paper 2A, Section A – analysis of unseen crime extracts – facilitated by students' prior learning on all the crime texts whilst also acting as revision of the genre.

Key Stage 5 Examination

AQA A-Level English Literature B: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-literature-b-7716-7717>

Paper 1A (Aspects of Tragedy)

Paper 2A (Elements of Crime Writing)

Non-exam assessment: Theory and independence
