



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Entry Requirement: At least grade 6 in both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature.

Examination Board: AQA – Specification B 7717

Course Content and Assessment:

Candidates are required to show knowledge and understanding of a range of literary texts and to evaluate them critically. Students will be expected to engage with the ways in which meaning is shaped, as well as demonstrating understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which these texts are written and received. Furthermore, they will be assessed on their ability to draw appropriate connections within and between texts and to explore alternative interpretations of meaning. The course is designed to enable students to build upon their existing analytical skills from their GCSE study, as well as immersing them in different genres and styles of writing, so that they can approach the unseen element of the examination with confidence.

Component 1 – Literary Genres: Aspects of Tragedy

Literary Genres: Aspects of Tragedy is an externally-assessed written paper (2 hours and 30 minutes). It represents 40% of the overall qualification. The examination is closed book and is made up of three sections (with the same text studied for Sections A and B).

- Section A: A passage based question on *Othello*
- Section B: An essay question on *Othello*
- Section C: An essay question linking together a second drama text (*Death of a Salesman*) with one other text from a prescribed list (Keats poetry)

Component 2 – Elements of Political and Social Protest Writing

Elements of Political and Social Protest Writing is an externally-assessed written paper (3 hours). It represents 40% of the overall qualification. The examination is open book (unannotated copies) and is made up of three sections. Students must study three texts, including one pre-1900 text (Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*), one post-2000 prose text (*The Kite Runner*) and one further text (*The Handmaid's Tale*). There is also a question on an unseen passage (which will display recognisable features and conventions of political and social protest writing).

- Section A: Compulsory question on an unseen passage
- Section B: An essay question focusing on one of the three texts studied

- Section C: An essay question that allows for connections to be made between the other two texts studied.

Component 3 – Independent Critical Study: Texts across Time

Independent Critical Study: Texts across Time is an internally assessed unit (formally known as coursework and now referred to as ‘non-examined assessment’). It is comprised of two separate tasks and represents 20% of the marks for the overall A level. The word count for each piece is 1250-1500 words. One piece must be focused on a poetry text and the other on a prose text. A critical anthology will be studied alongside the focus text and students will be required to apply their understanding of a particular critical approach to the text in their response. Some examples of the critical approaches that can be considered are ‘Narrative Theory’, ‘Feminist Criticism’, ‘Marxist Criticism’ and ‘Post-Colonial Criticism’.

Trips and Visits:

The English Department run a wide range of theatre trips, study days and visits to complement the texts covered. Previous theatre trips have included performances of *Othello*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Richard II*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *King Lear*, *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* and *The Turn of the Screw*. Examination revision sessions are also run by the department, incorporating material and resources from ‘A Level Sovereign’ courses and the examination board and where available, visiting academics also deliver revision lectures on the set texts.

Set Texts and Wider Reading:

Students are expected to purchase all of the set texts for the course and these are ordered for students at a discounted rate. Students will annotate their copies during lessons and clean copies will be provided by the school for the open book examination. Textbooks are available to borrow and use in lessons, although students will be encouraged to subscribe to relevant subject journals and to utilise the library for further academic reading.

Future Careers:

A Level English Literature is a well-respected qualification and is one of the facilitating subjects for a wide range of degree courses at the universities that comprise the Russell Group. With regards to future careers, it can lead to openings in the media, advertising, personnel management, local government, publishing, diplomacy, commercial and artistic administration, law, writing or teaching.

“You develop the insight of an
artist, the analytical precision of
scientist, and the persuasiveness
of a lawyer.”

– Prof. Maureen Moran, Brunel University