



# 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 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 – NEA: Theory and Independence**

This is an internally assessed NEA (non-examined assessment) unit. It is comprised of two separate tasks and represents 20% of the marks for the overall A Level. The word count for each task's associated essay is 1250-1500 words. One essay must be focused on a poetry text and the other on a prose text, with independence regarding text choices and associated study encouraged. A critical anthology will be studied alongside the focus texts and students will be required to apply their understanding of a different critical theory to each of their selected independent study texts in their responses. 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 runs a range of theatre and other enrichment to complement the texts covered. Previous theatre and cinema 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 Tempest* and *The Turn of the Screw*. Recent study trip venues have included Keats House and The British Library. Examination revision sessions are also run by the department.

### **Set Texts and Wider Reading:**

Students are expected to purchase all of the set texts for the course and students are advised as to the editions they should purchase when they start on the course. Students will annotate their copies during lessons and clean copies will be provided by the school for the open book examination. Wider reading resources are supplied to students, 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 include the Russell Group. With regards to future careers, it can lead to openings in the media, advertising, personnel management, local government, politics, publishing, diplomacy, commercial and artistic administration, law, writing and teaching or academia.

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

– Prof. Maureen Moran, Brunel University