

Key Stage 3 (and Year 9) Curriculum

The KS3 curriculum is designed to prepare students for the rigours of the GCSE examinations and to support them in developing the skills and resilience needed for all exam qualifications. As a result, each unit of study is designed to help foster a love for the subject in the students, introducing them to a variety of texts that explore a wide range of topics designed to build on the student's cultural knowledge. All units culminate in an exam style assessment which assesses how students have progressed, how they respond in exam conditions and how they meet the exam criteria.

Student success is also widely celebrated within the department through the use of merits, letters home, work used to model successful writing in other lessons and submitting student work into the whole school 'Book of Excellence'.

The Key Stage 3 (and Year 9) curriculum is designed so students can engage, succeed and enjoy the subject of English.

Year 7

Students begin Year 7 by exploring the play script *Antigone* by the ancient Greek tragedian Sophocles; this includes an analysis of the full text, introduction to new literary techniques, and development of creative writing skills. After half term Year 7 begin a unit exploring different types of poetry where students will explore how poets use aspects of written language to effect a reader, poetic expression and begin to develop their written analysis skills in more depth. During the spring term students will study Shakespeare's opening play at The Globe Theatre in 1599, *Julius Caesar*, and explore the themes of tyranny, democracy and liberty within the play.

A second play script, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, allows students to explore the concept of morality in great detail. In the final term students read and analyse Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black*, as an introduction to the Gothic genre, before ending the year studying a range of famous speeches, developing the student's cultural knowledge of the world around them; writers include Shakespeare, Winston Churchill, Maya Angelou and Michelle Obama. Each unit is assessed and student progress is monitored.

Year 8

Year 8 begins with students refreshing their poetic analysis skills by studying a range of poetry based on the theme of animals. Students will study poetry by Ted Hughes, William Blake and Maya Angelou among others, this leads to the students also continuing to develop their creative writing skills by taking on a persona from one of the poems studied. Following their poetry unit, Year 8 will move on to the study Pre 1914: Gothic Literature. In this unit includes authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, H.G. Wells, Horace Walpole and Charlotte Brontë, where students will study the themes and context that surrounded Gothic Literature of the 19th Century. In the spring term students will study the novel *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury and whilst exploring the theme of dystopian literature also explore concepts such as censorship and human relationships.

In Year 8 students study Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and explore the Jacobean play, character relationships and context. During the final term student will continue to build their cultural knowledge by analysing biographies of influential Tudor women within Renaissance England. This unit also includes the study and development of the student's grammar skills. The final unit of Year 8 finds the students exploring and analysing Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, from 1818, this includes developing their prior knowledge by comparing the original novel to the adapted play script (studied in Year 7). All units are assessed, as in Year 7, allowing teacher to monitor student progress.

Year 9

The Year 9 English curriculum is designed to fully prepare students for the demands of the GCSE course that they will undertake in Year 10. Students will develop their reading, inference and analytical skills by reading and responding to challenging ideas surrounding the texts they study. Pupils enjoy studying John Steinbeck's novel 'Of Mice and Men', the context of the Wall Street Crash, The Great Depression and gender/race inequality before being introduced to a GCSE style assessment. The creative writing of pupils is further improved by exploring the Sherlock Holmes short story *The Speckled Band* and by visiting the modern adaptation by the BBC. In the spring term students explore the concept of childhood in the Victorian era by explore novel extracts from Dickens, *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*, and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.

In addition students also study Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice' and students improve their analytical skills through a close focus on the character of Shylock and the language which Shakespeare uses to bring this complex character to life. In the final term writer's intentions, use of language form and structure are further explored in the study of writing based around the First World War; including the exploration of the conditions that soldiers of the war found themselves in. Finally students will explore the Apartheid era of South Africa's history by analysing extracts from Nelson Mandela's biography *A Long Walk to Freedom*, and exploring the film *Cry Freedom* which is based on the events surrounding the influential figure of Steve Biko and his affiliation with the journalist Donald Woods. As in previous years progress is monitored through end of unit assessments.