ENGLISH LITERATURE

Examination Board Specification: AQA Specification A; 7711/7712B

Why Study English Literature? Critical opinions of the texts are to be studied, and the texts placed in appropriate contexts by theatre-going and historical research. The course is designed to enable students to develop their knowledge, to enjoy and to be able to evaluate literature from the time of Chaucer to the present day. A variety of plays, novels and poetry will be studied, but students will learn most if they experience their lessons within the context of appropriate wider reading and cultural interests. During the course, students are encouraged to develop and to express their own informed insights.

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<tr><td colspan="4">Advanced Level</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paper 1</td><td>Love Through the Ages</td><td>3 hour examination</td><td>40%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The aim of this topic area is to encourage students to explore aspects of a central literary theme as seen over time, using unseen material and set texts. Students are expected to read widely within this topic area, reading texts from a range of authors and times. Students study three texts: a pre-1900 poetry collection from the AQA Anthology; F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, and Shakespeare’s Othello. They will also respond to two unseen poems in the exam.
In Section A, students explore Shakespeare's representations of one theme within a specific dramatic genre. In Section B, students answer one compulsory essay question on two unseen poems. This is prepared for through the study of the AQA Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages, which allows students to encounter a range of different types of poem as they study representations of a single theme over time. In Section C, students will study The Great Gatsby as a prose fiction literary heritage text, and compare this with one of the poems from the AQA Anthology.
Although not an exhaustive list of aspects of Love through the Ages, areas that can usefully be explored include: romantic love of many kinds; love and sex; love and loss; social conventions and taboos; love through the ages according to history and time; love through the ages according to individual lives (young love, maturing love); jealousy and guilt; truth and deception; proximity and distance; marriage; approval and disapproval.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paper 2</td><td>Texts in Shared Contexts: Modern times: Literature from 1945 to the present day</td><td>2 ½ hour examination</td><td>40%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">In this unit, students will study three texts: Margaret Atwood’s novel The Handmaid’s Tale, Carol Ann Duffy’s The Feminine Gospels, and Tennessee Williams’ post-2000 drama Cat On A Hot Tin Roof. In Section A, students will prepare for a choice between two questions on The Handmaid’s Tale. In Section B, students will be assessed through one essay question linking the poetry and drama texts. There will also be one essay question on an unseen literary extract.</td></tr>
<tr><td>NEA</td><td>Texts Across Time</td><td>Internal Assessment</td><td>20%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Students will produce a coursework folder of 2,500 words, containing one extended essay and a bibliography. The extended essay will be a comparative critical study of two texts, one of which will be taught by the school and the second of which will be of the student’s own choosing (guidance and support will be given to ensure that a helpful choice is made). One of these texts must be written pre-1900. In this unit, students compare texts on a theme of their choice. Possible themes might include the struggle for identity; crime and punishment; minds under stress; nostalgia and the past; the Gothic; satire and dystopia; war and conflict; representations of race and ethnicity; representations of sexuality; representations of women/men, and representations of social class and culture.</td></tr>
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Entrance Requirements: Students will be expected to have gained at least a grade 7 in both English Language and English Literature at GCSE. An enjoyment of reading and the ability to express oneself in writing, analytically and with suitable vocabulary, are necessary for success in this course.