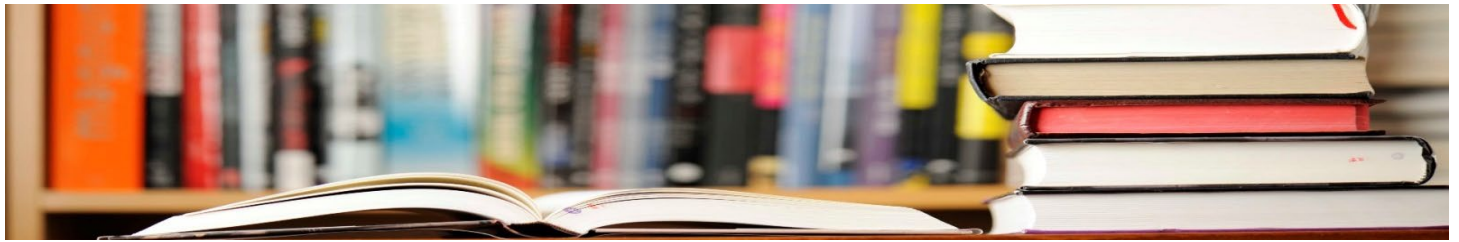




English

Curriculum Overview





English Department – Learning Journey

Vision:

Whilst all staff within the school have a responsibility to encourage and develop the key strands of literacy: reading, writing, speaking and listening; the English department aspires to be the school's driving force in this area. Motivated by a passion for literature and the arts, texts are studied from a broad canon; yet this is only one area that we focus on; the ability to express yourself with clarity in all arenas is vital, and as a department we aim to ensure that a student from FSG is given the tools required to thrive in the modern world. Wittgenstein says "The limits of my language means the limits of my world", we want to remove all obstacles, so that you can achieve great things for others and yourself. Our departmental ethos is to teach pupils the importance of listening, empathy and compassion, to consider others and their viewpoints, and to speak up for what you believe in.

Skills:

Reading and writing are cornerstones of any English curriculum. We inspire students to explore different modes of writing, focusing on Genre, Audience and Purpose; life skills such as letter writing and composing emails are taught; empowering speeches are studied and created to enrich oratory finesse; creative expression is always encouraged to inspire students to express themselves with cogency and flair. When reading texts, we analyse writer intentions, with teachers enhancing students' skills of inference; in a world of social media, fake-news and media-bias, these skills are crucial to every pupil. Fiction and Non-Fiction texts are explored, with the understanding that an optimistic and motivational autobiography can evoke as much inspiration as the crafted worlds of fiction. Our texts cover a variety of origins and cultures, we inspire pupils to value home and also explore the wider world. True expression knows no language barriers, so texts from any corner of the world have value to us. The third strand, Speaking and Listening, is of equal importance in the modern world; we create both group and personal presentations, considering the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication, with the hope that the young women educated in our school can enter an interview or lecture hall with an empowered sense of confidence, backed with the skills that will allow them to feel ten feet tall.

Curriculum

When driven by the national curriculum, we ensure that are areas of study meet two key criteria: will this content be enjoyable and beneficial to the social, moral and cultural capital of our students, and, will this text allow our students to reach their academic potential? With that in mind, at GCSE, we study "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", "The Merchant of Venice", "Blood Brothers", and "AQA Power and Conflict Poetry". It is a mere coincidence that these texts are written by men, and in response to this, we have created a bespoke scheme of work in Year 9 which focuses solely on "Women Writing". These texts celebrate the magnificent range of fantastic texts written by women, in the hope of broadening student knowledge and inspiring a new generation of female writers. These texts are not limited by time or culture, and are collated from a variety of different sources. At KS3, we aspire to develop a cumulative textual knowledge that is exciting and academically rigorous; these include "The Maze Runner", "Animal Farm" and "Macbeth" and a range of Gothic extracts. Furthermore, we also teach a scheme on current affairs; this ever-changing curriculum responds to recent cultural, social and political issues from across the world.

By its nature, KS5 has a wider range of texts on study, with a more fluid set of plays, poetry and prose responded to teacher knowledge. These may include a study on Science and Society, using "War of the Worlds" and "The Handmaid's Tale". In English Language and Literature, we analyse an anthology of Fiction and Non-Fiction texts based on Paris, it continues to engage and inspire, and is especially relevant considering Paris is one of our closest major cities and a vibrant centre of culture.

Enrichment:

Activities outside of the classroom contribute to the character development that we aspire to see in our pupils. Currently, two different drama companies visit the school to work with and inspire our students in KS3 each year. Additionally, we visit both the Globe Theatre and other West-End Theatres to enjoy performances, including in recent years "Othello" and "Macbeth". Our inspirational World Book Day celebrations incorporate new themes in each year, offering all a wealth of opportunities for expression, self-discovery and literacy development.

"Reading is a way for me to expand my mind, open my eyes, and fill up my heart."

English - Year 7

“Reading for me was as normal, as unremarkable as eating or breathing. Reading gave flight to my imagination and strengthened my understanding of the world, the society I lived in, and myself. More importantly, reading was fun, a way to live more than one life.” Malorie Blackman

Term 1:

Our first term of Key Stage 3 English focusing on integrating new students into secondary English; we will aim to clarify and assess a range of English skills, including Literature and Language, and therefore this term’s title is “Show us what you can do!” Students will analyse a range of texts based on Myths and Legends, and will complete a range of reading and writing activities. These will range from comprehension challenges where students are reading *between the lines* for inferred meaning, and eventually considering the craft of the writer when studying a longer extract. Narrative writing will also be a focus, and students will be encouraged to take inspiration from what they have studied, and to create their own masterpieces.

Terms 2 and 3:

James Dashner’s dystopian adventure novel, “The Maze Runner”, will be our chosen text for two terms. This gripping story will be a stimulus for creative writing and analytical reading, and we will begin to teach students how to read a text critically, and will challenge students to be evaluative in their analysis. The text also provides us with the opportunity to engage with other dystopian novels, such as *1984*, in order to develop the students’ understanding of literary inspirations. Additionally, this text, with vivid descriptions of character and setting, provides wonderful opportunities for original writing.

Term 4:

We introduce Shakespeare in Term 4, and look at a range of engaging extracts from “Henry V”. This text is full of engaging persuasive speeches, and we examine how Henry manages to motivate his troops before a battle. Opportunities arise for drama and creative activities, whilst we also study the attitudes and emotions of Henry V, who is thrust onto the throne at a young age. We will also study Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, and will discover what life was like when Shakespeare was writing. The barriers of Shakespeare’s language will be broken, and students will discover his true talents, immersing themselves in his character creation and vivid imagery.

Terms 5

Our focus moves into poetry in Term 5, and we will provide students with the opportunity to study a range of poetic forms, including ballads and sonnets. We will study both modern and classic poetry, and students will continue to hone both their analytical skills and the creative talents. Students will analyse and evaluate a fantastic range of poems taken from a huge range of superb writers, and will look to become writers themselves, using poetry as a stimulus.

Term 6:

The year concludes with current affairs, and moves into the study of Non-Fiction writing. The topics change each year, and are inspired by current affairs from across the world. Beyond the aims of developing students reading and writing skills, we also look to challenge them to build their own opinions, and to build a stronger sense of cultural capital. The aim of the Folkestone School for Girls is for our students to become independent women, with open minds and strong opinions, and this term offers the perfect opportunity for the students to find their own voice, and to open their eyes to the world that they live in.

English - Year 8

“Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors, and the most patient of teachers.”

Term 1:

George Orwell’s novella “Animal Farm” introduces students to the ideas of fable and morality, and is a fantastic opportunity to study a text which has a wide range of interpretations. We introduce the students to Orwell’s challenge to Totalitarianism, and teach students to decode the writer’s intentions. Additionally, we continue to develop our students’ ability to write analytically. This text also provides us with opportunities to create some fantastic pieces of non-fiction writing, as Orwell’s ideas are just as relevant today as they were when his novel was released.

Term 2:

With winter approaching, and the days getting darker, it feels appropriate to introduce gothic literature to the students. A range of extracts from “Frankenstein”, “Dracula” and “The Woman in Black” have been chosen in order to thrill our students and to inspire their imagination. Students will consider the intentions of the writer and will consider the potential effects on the read that these texts evoke. These classic texts give students a taste of GCSE and A-Level Literature, and should challenge them academically, whilst also sparking their imagination.

Term 3:

This term the students will be taught the art of persuasion; language can be a powerful tool when looking to motivate and inspire others, and we will learn to harness this power effectively. Famous speeches from Churchill and Chaplin to Obama and Emma Watson will be analysed, all with a focus on how they use language and persuasive devices to persuade their audiences. Students will be given the opportunity to write and analyse their own speeches, and independent thought will be encouraged – strong words are only useful if they are inspired by strong opinions.

Terms 4 and 5:

Shakespeare’s “Macbeth” provides us with the perfect opportunity to study a whole play, and to really dig our analytical teeth into this gripping play. The danger of immoral ambitions, and the ensuing madness created, is a thoroughly engaging topic that all students will enjoy. This is a challenging text, but one that provides the opportunities for the students to develop an analytical and critical eye, which will help them to hit the ground running in Year 9. Students will study the context of the play, and will consider the importance of drama and performance; they will use their knowledge from Year 7 as a base, and will look to make analytical strides throughout the term. The skills covered will include analytical writing, with a close focus on language and structural features.

Term 6:

Our final topic is poetry, with the main theme being “Place”. We explore the presentation of various locations; some are fictional or metaphorical, whilst others are more recognisable. Each new poem provides the students with a new perspective, and a new opportunity to analyse the writer’s craft. Students will respond to the poems in both critical and creative ways; some texts will be analysed in the form of a literature essay, whilst other texts will be used as a stimulus for a piece of creative writing. This flexible and enjoyable scheme of work has lots of scope for creativity, and is a thoroughly enjoyable way to end the Key Stage.

English - Year 9

“That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you’re not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.”

Term 1:

We begin Year 9 with a focus on “Women Writing”. Inspired by the centennial of the Suffragette movement and women finally being given the right to vote, the Department decided that it was our duty to display the fantastic writing of women across the ages. A range of extracts will be used, from classic novels and contemporary works through to modern poetry and influential speeches, all with the focus on demonstrating the power of language. These texts will be used to help develop a range of skills associated with both English Language and English Literature; students will be given the opportunity to develop their own voice through persuasive speeches and creative writing, whilst will also look to hone their analytical prowess, with a close focus on language and literary devices. These skills will be frequently assessed across the term in order to collect baseline data for the start of Year 9, which will allow us to monitor progress from Years 7 and 8, and to help us identify targets for future progression.

Term 2:

In order to develop both English skills and cultural capital, term 2 will focus on “The Real World.” A range of texts, but fiction and non-fiction will be studied, all based on a location or experience that we could consider to be a real world experience. Each text will be analysed, independently or as class, with the intention of developing analytical skills. Students will be encouraged to demonstrate their appreciation of the writer’s craft, and will look to understand the intentions of each writer. Not only will students complete a range of analytical tasks, but they will also be looking to write their own pieces about “real world experiences”, moving the focus from analysing a writer to becoming one. These skills will be vital later when preparing for their English Language GCSE, but more importantly, we hope to engender a passion for reading and writing that will live with the students for a life-time.

Terms 3 And 4:

We introduce poetry in Year 9, and build on the skills taught during Years 7 and 8. Students will first develop their independent analytical skills; they will be exposed to a wide range of poetry, covering a wide variety of genres and forms. Technical features of poetry will be taught, with a close focus on understanding the complex mechanics of language, whilst also discovering the beauty of imagery. Students will learn that poetry can have a range of different readings, and all students will be encouraged to make up their own minds when analysing texts. As we work through the scheme, we will begin to introduce the Power and Conflict poetry anthology. Students will be provided with their own copy to keep, and we will teach annotation skills. Our area of focus will be the war poetry, and students will begin to develop their ability to independently compare two poems of a similar topic. Eventually, students will complete an assessment which requires them to independently choose a poem to compare with a named text.

Terms 5 and 6:

J. B. Priestley’s morality play, “An Inspector Calls”, is the focus of our attention for the final two terms of Year 9. We study the play in close detail, with a focus on understanding Priestley’s Socialist message. We learn about life in England in 1912, when the play is set, and look at the changes in society which would have inspired the writer in 1945, when the play was written. We continue to develop our abilities to analyse the craft of the writer, and carefully incorporate contextual understanding into our analysis. This is an examined text, and so we will be completing a range of timed essays in order to build confidence and resilience. By the end of Year 9 all students will have improved analytical skills, and should be writing literature essay responses with a composed and critical style.

English - Year 10

“So Matilda’s strong young mind continued to grow, nurtured by the voices of all those authors who had sent their books out into the world like ships on the sea. These books gave Matilda a hopeful and comforting message: You are not alone.”

Term 1:

We begin Year 10 with Stevenson’s “The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde”. This Victorian classic is one of the assessed texts for English Literature, and students will be honing their essay writing skills. Pupils will be taught high-end critical writing techniques, and will even use a selection of critical essays, usually an A-Level skills, to help develop their writing and to appreciate the range of different interpretations of this classic tale of duality. Additionally, due to the texts complex historical background, pupils will learn about Stevenson’s chequered history, and will discover what life was like for a Victorian living in London.

Term 2:

Students will complete Jekyll and Hyde, and then the remaining weeks of the term will focus on developing students’ original writing skills. They will be taught a range of skills required to successfully write with originality and flair. Vocabulary, sentence structures and organisation will be a focus, as these technical skills are a key requirement of any strong piece of writing. However, they will also be encouraged to think freely, and creative licence will be given the opportunity to flourish. Original writing requires freedom and courage, and we will look to create opportunities for these skills.

Terms 3 And 4:

Shakespeare’s tragi-comedy “The Merchant of Venice” is another GCSE Literature set text. This engaging play of love, friendship, prejudice and revenge offers a plethora of opportunities for discussion and debate; we look to heighten students’ levels of empathy, whilst also educating them in the areas of Elizabethan life. The play’s unique contextual background, with anti-Semitism at the forefront, covers so powerful topics that will challenge the students. Students’ writing will continue to mature, and they will be encouraged to develop the originality of their written voice and also their ability to critically evaluate of the writer’s craft. Again, we will look to embed some challenging critical essays to reinforce our focus on understanding different viewpoints and the opportunities they create for discussion and comparison.

Term 5:

We return to poetry, with the aim of teaching the remaining poems from the AQA Anthology and preparing for the challenge of unseen poetry. With that in mind, we encourage our students to analyse texts with independence, and look to foster an environment of free-thinking and discussion. During this term we will continue to develop student essay writing skills, with a focus on comparing poetry.

Term 6:

The two English Language papers will be studied in this term, and a myriad of skills will be taught and assessed. We will be teaching students how to read for meaning, with a focus on surface meanings and metaphor ideas of inference, summary skills, structural understanding and writer intentions. This term will also provide students with the opportunity to create a range of different pieces of original writing. Students will use images as stimuli for descriptions, and will also look to create exciting narratives. Additionally, we will look to give students a persuasive and argumentative voice; students will be taught how to write speeches, newspaper articles, letters and blogs; all with the focus on persuading the reader.

English - Year 11

“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.”

The Year 11 course has two foci: mastery and revision. The course content should be completed by Christmas leaving time to help students to be well prepared for the challenges of the 4 exams. All texts need to be revised to a high level of detail, and staff will look to go beyond simple revision to instead incorporate a range of high challenge activities, which encourage analytical maturity and critical writing. Additionally, students need to be prepared for the challenge that closed book exams create, and so a range of revision activities would be very beneficial in terms of learning quotes and context.

The Language papers require some different approaches; students not only need the ability to write with a concise and detailed style, but also require the confidence and independence of thought to respond to a new text quickly and successfully. They should be exposed to a wide range of extracts so that these skills are well prepared. Additionally, the Section B of each paper is worth 50%, so we should be spending a good amount of time on student writing, with close attention being given to Genre, Audience and Purpose. Again, we should be encouraging independence and creativity, so students need to be given the opportunities to practice these qualities.

In order to develop a mature and sophisticated skillset, students will be taught some of the more stylish writing features that enhance the smaller details of their discourse. This will include a focus on eloquent and ambitious sentencing and paragraphing techniques, whilst also continued development of vocabulary. Year 11 is a time to add a level of gloss to everything that students do in literacy, and teachers will model the best practice at all times.

Students will sit through at least one formal mock exam for each GCSE, and a range of revision activities will be put in place for all students.

Exam Timings:

AQA GCSE Literature

Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel - 1 hour 45 minutes (Merchant of Venice / Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde) (40%)

Paper 2 – Modern texts and poetry - 2 hour 15 minutes (An Inspector Calls / Power and Conflict Poetry / Unseen Poetry) (60%)

AQA GCSE Language

Paper 1 – Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing - 1 hour 45 minutes (50%)

Paper 2 – Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives - 1 hour 45 minutes (50%)