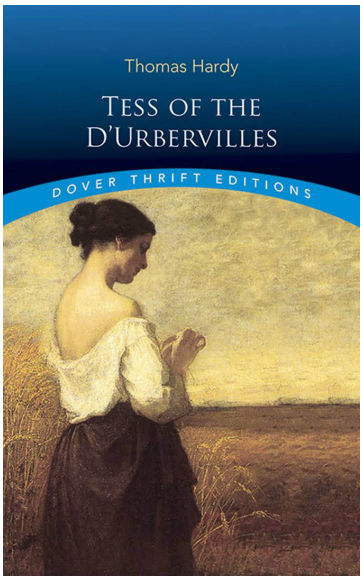
English Literature A Level

COURSE DESCRIPTION



If you study A Level English Literature you will read a range of texts from Shakespeare to the present day. The course will develop your understanding of all the major literary genres. You will sharpen your critical skills through wide-ranging discussion of texts as well as the historical and social contexts in which they were written. You will have many opportunities for discussion as well as developing your confidence as critical writers. A Level English Literature is a course which will equip you for a range of university courses and possible careers.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Jane Anthony

EXAM BOARD

EDUQUAS

SKILLS REQUIRED

- History and love of wide reading
- Ability to analyse and interpret unseen texts
- Ability to sensitively explore the connotations of language and imagery in detail
- Ability to read challenging texts independently
- Participation in critical discussions about texts
- Ability to support an interpretation with robust and wide-ranging evidence
- Ability to engage critically with other people's opinions about texts
- Interest in how the context in which a text is produced shapes the way it is written

EXAMINATION RESULTS

The examination results are consistently excellent and are significantly above the National average. Every year many students go on to study English related courses at university in 2025 students enrolled onto the following courses:
English Literature and History- Edinburgh University
English and Philosophy - Nottingham University
English - Exeter University
English and History - Queen Mary University

And in 2025 students enrolled onto the following courses:
Liberal Arts - University of Manchester
Linguistics - University of Cambridge
Comparative Literature - UCL

English Literature results in 2026: A*– A 45.5% A*– B 90% A*– C 100%

Greycoat Place
Westminster
London SW1P 2DY
www.gch.org.uk

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Poetry
Comparison of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes
John Milton: Paradise Lost Book 9

30% of total A Level

Exam paper
2 hours

Drama
Comparison of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and William's *A Streetcar Named Desire*

30% of total A Level

Exam paper
2 hours

Unseen
Prose texts from 1880-1910
Poetry from across the ages

20% of total A Level

Exam paper
2 hours

Prose Study
Comparison of pre- and post-2000 novels

20% of total A Level

Coursework essay
2500-3500 words

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Enrichment activities take place in and outside school. Throughout the year we run a programme of theatre trips. In the past these have included trips to Twelfth Night, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (Stoppard), while more recently we saw Brian Friel's Translations, Cush Jumbo's Hamlet and the recent National production of Small Island. In 2023 -2024 we visited the Black Cultural Archives to support our study of Andrea Levy's Small Island as well as two trips to the Globe in February for performances of The Duchess of Malfi and Othello. In the summer, as part of our Shakespeare Summer School we took Year 12 to see Richard III. We like to keep our finger on the cultural pulse of London so that our students can benefit from the central location of our school. We also run a Sixth Form book club with a view to exploring different genres or styles of writing. In recent years this is a club which has been run by students for students. We also organise creative writing trips to venues such as the Queen's Gallery. We end the year with two-day Shakespeare Summer School which involves guest speakers and gives students opportunities to study texts outside the curriculum. Many of our Year 12 students also participate in a Paired Reading scheme with Year 7 students in which they support the development of less confident readers.

FUTURE CAREERS

Studying English Literature opens up the possibility of a wide variety of career choices and will provide students with the skills and aptitude to work in almost any industry. English A Level will help you develop a range of transferable skills: for example, you will be able to summarise a huge amount of text, you will be able to draw out evidence to support broad arguments, you will be able to sustain a point of view in both extended writing and discussion. Such skills will enable you to consider careers in a wide variety of areas such as the legal profession, journalism and other areas of the media, education, advertising and marketing. Studying A Level Literature is counted as a 'facilitating' subject by the Russell Group of universities. With this A Level students go on to study Languages, Classics, History, Art, Law, Economics, Journalism, International relations and many other courses.

We offer a range of support for students studying this subject. As well as the Shakespeare Summer School, designed and delivered by members of the department, we also organised external speakers and online lectures. We work hard to take students to see the plays they are studying in performance – we have already seen the recent National Theatre production of Hamlet this academic year and will be attending a production of Othello before Christmas – as well as to relevant exhibitions and sites of interest. Each year, to complement our study of the novel Small Island by Andrea Levy we take Year 12 to visit the Black Cultural Archive in Brixton to deepen our understanding of the experiences of the Windrush generation. Teachers are approachable and keen to support students in one-to-one settings where appropriate. We also offer tailored support for students applying to study English at Oxford and Cambridge by offering support with the personal statement along with regular interview practice.