

English Year 8 Curriculum

Intent: The broad aims of our KS3 curriculum are to consolidate the skills learned at primary school, to prepare students for the demands of the GCSEs in English Language and English Literature, and to equip them with the tools to communicate in and engage with the world outside and beyond school. We believe that a strong English curriculum should provide a framework within which students can engage with big ideas; as such, we advocate a slow, deep approach to the subject which allows teachers and students to make connections with topical issues and debates. In addition, a strong emphasis on the wide-ranging benefits of reading for pleasure is central to our goals of enriching students culturally, encouraging empathy and promoting well-being for all.

Content: In Year 8 the curriculum is arranged into three term-long units, each with a specific literary and writing focus. Across the year, students learn how to read for meaning and understand the methods through which meanings are created; are encouraged to read widely and independently, and develop an appreciation for literature; develop their vocabulary and their ability to write clearly and accurately; learn to adapt their writing for different audiences and purposes; learn to make connections between texts and ideas; learn how to craft their writing, including how to structure whole texts; and develop confidence and proficiency in speaking and listening in a range of contexts, including drama. Across all units there is an emphasis on teaching the skills of proofreading, drafting and editing, and self and peer assessment, designed to promote both independence and an appreciation of writing as process and craft.

Autumn term: films and reviews

Students explore some of the key elements of film-making, including cinematography and sound editing, with a focus on how narratives are constructed in visual media; this is used as a stimulus for a range of other writing, including reviews.

Key content: technical concepts related to film; genre and audience; research skills; purpose and audience; features of reviews; use of humour; conveying opinion.

Spring term: 19th century novel & report writing

Students explore a whole novel, with a focus on character, setting, narrative voice and theme; this is used as a stimulus for a range of other types of writing, including non-chronological reports.

Key content: characterisation, setting, narrative voice, themes, direct and reported speech, formality, audience and purpose, features of report writing, introductions and conclusions.

Summer term: short stories, poetry & creative writing

Students explore a range of short stories and poetry, including important examples of world literature, with a focus on character, setting, narrative voice and theme. These are used as a stimulus for a range of other writing, including students' own creative work.

Key content: historical and social contexts; direct and reported speech; characterisation; setting; narrative voice; themes; mood, tone and atmosphere; narrative structure.

Whole Year

Conventions and features of critical / analytical writing – as Year 7 plus: explicit and implicit meaning, PEA, cohesive devices and discourse markers, writing concisely, conducting research.

Students will also have opportunities to speak in the context of presentation, discussion and role play, with a focus on developing language use, body language and gesture, planning and use of visual aids.

Key Objectives

1. Spell most words correctly.
2. Select vocabulary to create particular effects.
3. Confidently use subject specific terminology.
4. Use a range of sophisticated punctuation accurately.
5. Use an appropriate range of sentence structures for effect.
6. Manipulate sentence structure by varying order of grammatical elements.
7. Use and change tense appropriately, including perfect and progressive forms.
8. Paragraph for clarity and effect.
9. Sequence ideas using appropriate cohesive devices.
10. Accurately apply generic formal and structural features of a range of text types.
11. Write with a level of formality suitable for audience and purpose.
12. Develop detail to exemplify ideas and interest readers, using humour where appropriate.
13. Establish and sustain a viewpoint, conveying opinion where appropriate.
14. Use a range of persuasive techniques / rhetorical devices.
15. Use figurative language confidently, including metaphor, simile and personification.
16. Use a range of sensory imagery
17. Explain both explicit and implicit meanings in texts.
18. Use quotations to support ideas.
19. Explain authors' language choices and some of their effects.
20. Explain authors' use of form and structure.
21. Write about the significance of historical and social contexts.
22. Compare texts and ideas using appropriate linking devices.
23. Speak articulately, using Standard English, in presentation and discussion.

Key Performance Standards:

1. **Spelling & Vocabulary:** Most words are spelled correctly, including some subject terminology; an increasingly sophisticated range of vocabulary is employed
2. **Punctuation:** A range of sophisticated punctuation is used accurately.
3. **Grammar:** A range of sentence structures is used for effect; placement of grammatical elements is varied and tense is used appropriately and accurately.
4. **Crafting Writing:** Paragraphing is clear and purposeful; ideas are sequenced using appropriate linking devices; generic formal features are used appropriately according to task; writing employs an appropriate level of formality; ideas are developed to interest readers; viewpoints are established and sustained, conveying opinion where appropriate; a range of persuasive/rhetorical devices and figurative language is used as appropriate.
5. **Responding to Texts:** Explicit and implicit meanings in texts are explained; quotations support ideas; students can explain the significance of aspects of social and historical contexts.
6. **Authors' Choices and Methods:** Aspects of authors' language choices and use of form and structure are explained
7. **Comparison:** Ideas and texts are compared using appropriate linking devices.
8. **Speaking and Listening.** Students speak articulately, in Standard English, about a range of topics, including presenting and engaging in discussion