

A-LEVEL / AQA / 2 YEARS

# ENGLISH LITERATURE

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In English Literature, a wide range of exciting texts and genres will be explored including: at least one play by Shakespeare; work from the comedy genre; at least one pre-1900 text; at least one post-2000 text; work from the political/social genre; at least one poetry anthology and an exploration of critical perspectives applied to a text.

Texts are explored in a variety of ways, ranging from whole class to small group work, from preparing display material to close textual analysis of the works under discussion. Dramatisation of specific aspects of literature is another strategy employed. Video and live theatre performances of set texts or adaptations of them are utilised on a regular basis to enhance students' understanding. The resources of Durham Sixth Form Centre, in conjunction with the teaching methods used, enable students to respond through and beyond the traditional critical essay.

## ASSESSMENT

The A-level English Literature specification offers a course in which final exams are integral. There is a mixture of open- and closed-book exam papers. Students build upon the knowledge, understanding and skills they have acquired at GCSE. The course extends both the study and range of their reading as well as developing techniques of analysis, debate and comparisons of literary texts appropriate at these higher levels. Study will cover at least eight texts over the course of the two years. The first of the two A-level papers is concerned with the genre of comedy (worth 40% of the qualification). Students will study two dramatic comedies: *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde and *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare along with the prose text *Emma* by Jane Austen. The second paper (also worth 40% of the total qualification) is related to the genre of political and social protest writing: *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* by William Blake ( a poetry anthology) and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. The A-level also combines an element of coursework (20% of the qualification). This non-examined assessment (NEA) relates to an element of critical reading from an anthology which is applied to two texts; one prose, one poetry. This coursework reading is independent and affords the student an opportunity to read their own choice of texts (with an element of guidance from the teaching staff if required).

## EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

The course also requires the reading of recommended critical texts on chosen authors. Students are provided with a critical bibliography as they complete each text and will be expected to show evidence of wider reading in their written assignments. Students are encouraged to read widely around the prescribed texts. The Faculty supports general reading with a prepared Reading Handbook so that students acquire some knowledge of literature beyond the confines of texts studied solely for examination purposes. The Literature notice board is regularly updated with articles from contemporary sources to keep students informed of issues relevant to their study of Literature.

## CAREERS /HE INFORMATION

English Literature can lead to numerous arts-based courses in higher education as well as to a wide range of post-18 career options. A literature-based A-level is a most marketable A-level subject.