

RMGS

ENGLISH LITERATURE

A LEVEL

What are the aims of the course?

The course aims to encourage an enjoyment and appreciation of English Literature, based on informed personal response. We certainly welcome enthusiastic readers onto the course. However, we also welcome those who may not have read widely but have enjoyed discussing and exploring literature in English lessons at GCSE. We hope you will learn to understand, appreciate and analyse the writing of a range of writers, in a range of genres, from a range of periods. Lastly, we wish to foster a thought-provoking environment in the course, leading to perceptive and insightful discussion.

What does it involve?

English Literature teaches higher level English skills through the study of literary texts. There is a very wide and interesting range of texts for us to choose from. Students who take the course learn to recognise how writers use language to convey certain messages to their readers. This development of critical awareness is useful for students in the future because it gives an understanding of the ways in which texts may be designed to play on our feelings or previous beliefs.

How is it assessed?

The A Level is comprised of two examined units that focus on tragedy as a genre and political/social protest writing across the ages. Students will be expected to understand the conventional settings and the journey towards death of the protagonists, their flaws, pride and folly, their blindness and insight. They will evaluate the role of the tragic villain or opponent, who directly affects the fortune of the hero and is partly responsible for their demise. The study of political/social protest writing will explore ideas centred around, amongst other things, the abuse of power, questioning of authority, giving a voice to the voiceless and probing the intentions of writers in their presentation and challenging of the world around us. The central motifs of power, repression, inequality and protest will be central to the appreciation of the genre. At the end of the course candidates will take two examinations, one of which will be closed book; each of the papers represents 40% of the overall A level qualification.

In addition to the examinations, students will also produce non-exam assessment (NEA) that will comprise of two 1200-1500 words essays that use a critical anthology as a stimulus text. Students will engage with texts through feminist, Marxist, post-colonial and eco-critical theory amongst others. This unit supports the exploration of different meanings in literary texts and offers different ways of reading. Having explored their chosen text in the light of some critical ideas, students then demonstrate their understanding through their written work. The unit is worth 20% of the total A level.

Students can expect to study texts such as *Othello*, *The Kite Runner*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The poetry of Blake and Keats*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *the poetry of Phillip Larkin*. Each student will study eight texts plus the critical anthology across the course.

Are there any specific entry requirements?

Students are expected to have gained at least a grade 6 in GCSE English Literature and English Language.

Why is it a useful qualification?

Students who take English develop their writing skills, and learn to write convincingly, concisely and accurately. Employers seek people who are literate and can communicate effectively, and these skills are in demand for all graduates and in all professions. Students also learn how texts are linked to previous writings and also the beliefs of their time. This general cultural awareness helps lay the foundations for many Arts courses at university. Some students will go on to study English at degree level, and English graduates typically go on to professions such as journalism, the media, public relations or law, but many other routes are open to them. We also believe that the reading and study of eight texts over the two years will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, and will give you the ability to enjoy good books for the rest of your life. This is a 'Facilitating Subject' and, as such, a good pick for students who wish to maintain flexibility in their choice of course at university.