



English GCSE

Examining Board: AQA

The core skills of reading sensitively, writing accurately, and speaking articulately are the focus of the three years of the GCSE course. Universities demand a top grade in English and an ability to communicate clearly is an essential attribute in any career. At Shakespeare's School we seek to foster a love of reading by introducing students to a wide range of texts in poetry, prose and drama.

All students at K.E.S. prepare for two GCSEs: English Language and English Literature. The subjects are taught side by side because we believe they complement each other. The study of finely written literature will help students to gain an expertise in language; the development of a clear, expressive writing style will enable students to share their thoughts about a literary text in an engaging way.

Year 9:

GCSE English is a three-year course of study and Year 9 is regarded as the GCSE Foundation Year. Students in Year 9 will be introduced to the core skills they will need in their examinations and will be given a chance to develop them.

The main aims of the year will be:

- introducing students to the study of literature
- developing the ability to write for a range of different purposes, whether that is a persuasive speech, a description of an experience or an analytical essay
- taking part in a range of speaking and listening activities which develop individual, group and dramatic speaking abilities
- building on skills developed at KS3 by developing students' understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling

During the year, all students will study a full Shakespeare play and a range of poetry from different time periods. Novels currently studied in Year 9 include: *Lord of the Flies*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*.

Years 10 and 11:

English Language GCSE

Students will be assessed on the core skills of reading and writing non-fiction and fiction texts. The course is linear, with all exams taking place at the end of Year 11 and no coursework element.

Students will sit two examinations at the end of Year 11:

Paper 1 – Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

This paper focusses on reading one literature fiction text and producing one piece of descriptive or narrative writing.

Paper 2 – Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

This paper focusses on reading one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text as well as producing a piece of writing to present a viewpoint.

Students will be given regular opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussion, debate and by giving presentations to the class. However, speaking and listening will be separately assessed and will not contribute to their GCSE grade.

English Literature GCSE:

We want our students to develop a fascination with the way writers use language. They will be provided with a broad range of literary texts in poetry, prose and drama to develop the skills of reading and writing analytically. The course is linear with no coursework component.

Students will sit two exams at the end of Year 11:

Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel

This examination requires students to read and respond to one Shakespeare play and one 19th century prose text. Novels offered include *A Christmas Carol*, *Frankenstein*, *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*.

Paper 2 – Modern Texts and Poetry

This examination requires students to read and respond to one thematically linked cluster of poems from the AQA Poetry Anthology, including works by the Romantic poets. They will also answer two questions on unseen poetry. Additionally, they will write about their chosen modern prose or drama text. Texts offered include: *An Inspector Calls*, *The History Boys*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Animal Farm*, *Anita and Me* and *Never Let Me Go*.

We also offer a range of extra-curricular opportunities at Key Stage 4, including debating and creative writing. All of these encourage students to develop their passion for English. Students and teaching staff are encouraged to make use of our excellent School Library and call on the expertise of the School Librarian.