

The study of English Literature at A-Level helps you to develop subject specific and transferable skills by encouraging in-depth, critical and contextual thinking in response to a wide range of literary works.

English Literature is a highly respected A-Level and, as well as an English Literature degree itself, students of Literature might go on to study for University degrees in a wide range of subjects including History, Sociology, Psychology, Drama, Theatre Studies and Law. In turn, this could lead to a wide range of potential future careers, such as roles in Publishing, Editing, the Media, Law, Teaching, Journalism, Marketing, Arts Administration and Consultancy, Public Relations and Research.

Qualities and qualifications needed

You will be creative and analytical with a real enjoyment of reading and an interest in the social and historical influences on texts written over the years. You will need to be Interested in how literature makes sense of the world, and the human psyche and experience, through novels, poems and plays.

A minimum of Grade 6 in GCSE English Literature is required.

How will the course be assessed?



80% written examination
across two separate examinations
(one x 3 hours & one x 2 hours 30 minutes)



20% non-examination assessment
(independent comparative critical study)



Course Content

Paper 1: Love through the ages

Students explore aspects of a central literary theme – love through the ages – as seen over time, using unseen material (poetry) and set texts.

Set texts include:

- A Shakespeare play – focusing on representations of love.
- One poetry and one prose text – focusing on representations of love by a variety of authors across time.

Paper 2: Texts in shared contexts

Modern times: literature from 1945 to the present day – students explore aspects of literature connected through a period of time.

Set texts include:

- One prose text
- One drama text
- One poetry text

For both papers, students will:

- Read widely across a range of texts and connect them across time and topic.
- Analyse ways in which authors shape meanings within their texts.
- Investigate the influence of time (of production and reception) on a range of texts.
- Underpin analysis with understanding of critical theory.

Non-examination assessment: Independent Critical Study – texts across time

- Comparative critical study of two texts: a personal critical study comparing two texts, chosen by the student. These texts should maximise opportunities for writing about comparative similarity and difference, and allow access to a range of critical views and interpretations (2,500 words).
- Assessed by teachers.
- Moderated by AQA.



Examinations

Paper 1: Love through the ages
(3 hours)

40% of A-Level (75 marks)

Section A: Shakespeare

One passage-based question with linked essay (25 marks). This section is closed book.

Section B: Unseen poetry

One essay question on two unseen poems (25 marks).

Section C: Comparing texts

One essay question comparing two texts (25 marks).

This section is open book.

Paper 2: Texts in shared contexts
(2 hours 30 minutes)

40% of A-Level (75 marks)

Open book

Section A: Modern times

One essay question on set text (25 marks).

Section B: Contextual linking

One essay question on an unseen extract (25 marks) and one essay question linking two texts (25 marks).

Methods of curriculum delivery

Lessons involve reading and discussing texts in great depth, responding to texts with written answers, exploring aspects of texts such as their social and historical contexts and critical reception and approaches. Students may sometimes be asked to prepare material or research areas of a text independently or in small groups to feed back to the class.