

Bishop Vesey's Grammar School – English Department
English Language and Literature GCSE Curriculum Overview

What is GCSE English Literature?

At Bishop Vesey's Grammar school we offer English Language and Literature GCSE. English Language explores a range of fiction and non-fiction and prepares student with the skills to read for meaning and tackle unseen materials. It also prepares students to write creatively and confidently in a particular style and form. English Literature is the in-depth study of prose, drama and poetry including both taught and unseen materials. We begin with the Literature course, building on our Y9 curriculum, and then interweave the Language course across the two years of GCSE study.

What topics will I learn?

English Language

Students will explore a wide range of prose and non-fiction extracts. We take a methodical approach and explicitly teach students the skills required for each question type. The students become familiar and confident with the strategies for each of the reading skills - retrieval, inference, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and comparison. Students use their Key Stage 3 "Big Write" experience to improve their creative writing skills. Learning to write for a purpose, students experiment with the creative skills and reflect on their word and structural choices. The students are taught how to include linguistic, grammatical and structural devices into their own writing. Students also complete a Spoken Language endorsement presenting to the class on a topic of their choice. We emphasise the importance of effective communication as a life-long skill.

English Literature

Students study a range of Literature through the close and thorough study of novels, play and poetry. Students analyse the writers' presentation of character and themes by exploring authorial methods. In addition, students learn about context and examine writers' purpose. Students learn to compare materials exploring the similarities and differences between texts and writers' intentions. Students explore language and structure and learn to analyse the effect of language, structure and form on the reader. By learning to evaluate writer's purpose and impact, students learn to be perceptive and critical readers of literature.

How will I study?

English Language and Literature is taught over two years, building on the skills taught at Key Stage 3 (see Y7,8 &9 curriculum overviews).

Students will study each of the taught texts in depth through shared reading, textual analysis, discussion and debate. They learn how to independently annotate an extract and plan for an essay question. We have specific strategies to tackle each of the reading questions for the English Language papers. Students are provided with copies of the taught texts, but we highly recommend that students purchase their own copies to allow for thorough annotation.

Homework complements the lessons and provides opportunities for students to create revision materials for each of the taught texts. As the same skills are needed for Language and Literature, teaching interleaves these and recall of knowledge for each taught text is returned tested frequently.

How will my work be assessed?

Assessments are regular and enable all students to become familiar with the assessment objectives. Assessments are examination-style essay responses or practice English Language papers. The department have a consistent and thorough approach to marking. Exemplar materials, model answers and exam board guidance is used to provide detailed feedback linked to each assessment objective. Furthermore, students complete work, which is peer and self-assessed, again supporting their understanding of the assessment criteria. Each teacher-assessed piece is followed by a DIRT feedback lesson. The Spoken Language Endorsement is recorded for moderation purposes and students are awarded a pass, merit or discussion in accordance to the assessment matrix.