

## KS3 Curriculum

### Reading in Year 7:

Great Expectations or Nicholas Nickelby by Charles Dickens; Wonder by R. J. Palacio, (read at Key Stage 2 and re-read with us to increase familiarity with the text and provide a basis for making comparisons.) Works by Pie Corbett, Ted Hughes, Grace Nichols, Imtiaz Dharker and William Wordsworth; A Midsummer Night's Dream or The Tempest by William Shakespeare.

Through study of the pre-1914 and contemporary prose, pupils will understand how writers create setting, plot and characterisation and the effects of these.

An integral component to all our reading schemes is the development of students' ability to infer and deduce information whilst referring to evidence in texts. This is built into each text based scheme of learning.

In addition to this, our English Department has a 10 minute reading policy which takes place at the start of each English lesson. This is designed to encourage pupils to choose and read books independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment.

As part of our drive to improve vocabulary, we have introduced our Linguistics course which is studied by all students throughout years seven, eight and nine for one lesson per week. The aim of this is to enable our students to understand increasingly challenging texts through learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and where necessary, dictionaries. This course also aims to furnish students with a wider knowledge of root words and introduces etymology and morphology.

An integral component to all our reading schemes is the development of students' ability to infer and deduce information whilst referring to evidence in texts. This is built into each text based scheme of learning. The introduction of quotations to students in Key Stage 2 is built on, with pupils developing their abilities to comment on the effect of particular words, phrases and methods on the reader.

Students are also taught key vocabulary pertaining to the scheme of learning that they are undertaking. A proportion of this is subject specific terminology which enables students to comment more clearly on writers' methods, and also equips them with the tools to examine texts more closely, introducing the concept of text analysis.

### Writing in Year 7:

At Alder Grange, our Year 7 students' writing abilities are grown as they work on their ability to write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure through exploring how writers create tension. Their first writing unit follows the Wonder scheme of learning where pupils will have studied a range of writing techniques through their examination of the novel. Using the stimulus of a photograph, students are tasked with creating a short piece of descriptive writing, aimed at creating tension for the reader. This initial task and the feedback received from it, lays the foundations for the more extended task where students are required to create their own more sustained piece of tense writing through the form of a narrative (including apt description).

Non fiction writing such as summary and letter writing are also taught and undertaken during this initial scheme of learning.

Within their descriptive and narrative writing, pupils are encouraged to apply their growing knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and text structure to their writing, as well as selecting the appropriate form for their material.

As part of the Charles Dickens scheme, students will also be tasked with summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas with any necessary factual detail.

As proofreading and editing documents is a critical component of writing, pupils are encouraged to rigorously check and improve their own work. This is actioned through use of reflection time in lessons following a marking cycle where pupils correct highlighted errors and re-write sections of work following advice from their teacher regarding how to improve. Suggested improvements include amending vocabulary, grammar and structure of writing to improve cohesion and effectiveness, in addition to the revision of punctuation and spelling.

### Reading in Year 8:

At the beginning of Year 8, all students study the 'spy' genre. This scheme focuses on the language used by writers of the genre, how the writers use setting, location and characterisation. Students' abilities to infer and deduce information are further developed when examining implicit and explicit information about characters, in particular, antagonists in spy writing. Students are also taught evaluative skills; engaging with a statement and expressing an opinion based on what they have analysed.

A contemporary play is studied next, and in this, students are given the opportunity to explore how the work of dramatists is communicated effectively through performance and how alternative staging allows for different interpretations of a play. As the play that is studied uses a more informal register to convey character, our students are therefore exposed to a different variation of spoken English. They are also encouraged to compare registers within the play, giving them the opportunity to discover the impact of different registers.

Next is a study of a different Shakespeare play to the one covered in Year 7. Again, students are encouraged to engage with the artistic language of Shakespeare, as well as examining the context of the play and how it impacted on the characters, events and references therein. A deeper emphasis is placed on dramatic terminology in Year 8 and this is applied to both the contemporary play and the Shakespeare play.

Following the Shakespeare scheme in Year 8, the focus of our curriculum again shifts towards English language, with a study of opinion writing. Accompanying this topic is the examination of a range of different opinion articles, including cryptozoology with the Loch Ness monster, and the development of students' ability to make critical comparisons between two texts regarding 'dangerous dogs'.

Throughout the course of Year 8, students are still actively encouraged to choose and read books independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment through the 10 minute reading policy.

The programme of study for the year ends with a study of ballads and their features which, of course, overlap with many features of different styles of poetry and literature. Form, rhythm, rhyme scheme and typical content is taught and learnt before students are challenged with writing a ballad of their own, based on a current news story.

### Writing in Year 8:

Writing in Year 8 builds on many of the core skills taught in Years 6 and 7. Students are called upon to produce non-fiction writing, such as formal letter writing, writing to review and comment, comparative writing, express a point of view and argue a point. As part of the Ballad topic, students experiment with writing their own ballad which adheres to the form and features of a traditional English ballad.

## Spoken English

Throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, our students are encouraged and taught to speak confidently and effectively, using Standard English where appropriate. This includes class discussions, formal and informal contexts. Lessons also provide the forum for students to practise their spoken English by giving short speeches on topics, characters, books and writers as well as expressing their own ideas without digression. As part of regular classroom practice, debates and structured discussions are employed as learning tools. Shared reading and performance of sections from play scripts allow further chances for students to experiment with and learn about spoken English and its nuances such as intonation, tone, and volume.

## Summary:

Throughout Years 7 and 8, students in English study:

- a range of authors (including two authors in- depth each year as part of their homework projects)
- a variety of prose, poetry and plays
- varied writing styles, purposes and intended effect(s) on their audiences
- relevant vocabulary including subject specific terminology
- the art of proof-reading, editing and redrafting
- culturally significant texts such as Shakespeare's plays and poems, pre and post 1914 poetry and prose and contemporary drama
- writers' methods and how these are used to create effects on the reader
- spoken English and its deployment in formal and informal context, including the use of regional registers and Standard English
- contextual impacts on (and of) the texts studied
- spelling rules (through weekly set spelling and vocabulary tests)

## Year 9

Year 9 forms a transition period between Key Stage 3 and GCSE. Throughout years 7 and 8, we introduce and teach crucial skills that will ultimately be necessary for success at GCSE. However, to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum within English and avoid 'teaching to the test' or narrowing our students' studies, GCSE style questions are not introduced until Year 9. At this level, students will begin to connect what they have learnt in their first two years with us to what is required of them from a GCSE perspective whilst still experiencing a varied programme of study.

By introducing elements of the English Language and English Literature GCSE syllabus at this stage, the level of challenge is again increased and provides, in essence, a 'bridge' between Key Stage 3 and GCSE level.

## Reading in Year 9

Reading in Year 9, as in Years 7 and 8, begins with a novel study. Pupils' inference, deduction, analytical and speculative skills are once again called upon as they use their class novel to explore writers' use of language and structure. Here, GCSE style questions are used, and pupils are taught how to marry the skills they already possess with the wording and requirements of GCSE standard questions. Assessment takes the form of an AQA GCSE style English Language paper, with focus directed towards selecting and retrieving information, analysing writers' use of language and structure and composing their own piece of creative writing.

In addition to these paper one skills, students also re-visit and further their comparative abilities by looking at extracts from different parts of a text and comparing the use of language to present a character.

As with the previous years, an author study is completed as an extended homework task.

Following the novel study, students are directed towards persuasive media. This involves the study of persuasive language and devices whilst examining charity literature. During this study, they will complete the language analysis of a leaflet, summarise differences between two accounts centred around the same theme but from different time periods and examine features of speeches in preparation for their writing assessment.

Next is an introduction to 'Macbeth', which is the chosen Shakespeare play for GCSE English Literature. This is aimed at ensuring all students know the plot, characters and themes of the play in detail alongside furnishing them with a contextual knowledge with a study of King James I and his attitudes towards witches, the Basilikon Doran, Scotland and its geography, the Great Chain of being, women in medieval society and the rise and fall in power.

To round off the reading programme of study in Year 9, our pupils are introduced to seven of the fifteen poems from the AQA 'Power and Conflict' poetry cluster. This is taught concurrently alongside the continuation of their Macbeth study, with lessons during the week now being split between Macbeth and poetry.

This poetry study incorporates a second visitation of students' comparative skills but this time in the context of the comparison of poetic methods, themes and context.

Although there are several elements of GCSE English language and Literature introduced into the year 9 reading strand, the curriculum is designed to subtly yet effectively prepare students for the expectations of GCSE English and English Literature.

### Writing in Year 9:

Our rhetoric with writing is much the same as that of reading in Year 9: providing our students with an introduction to GCSE skills and expectations pertinent to this strand of study whilst avoiding the monotonous repetition of GCSE questions and tasks.

Alongside the novel study, there are several accompanying writing facets, each designed to work in conjunction with the reading study. These comprise:

- Setting/character
- Characterisation through dialogue
- Conflict and action
- Creating tension
- Tension graph of the class novel followed by a story that follows the same tension line.

The following study of persuasive media presents the ideal opportunity for pupils to craft a persuasive speech based on what they have learnt about persuasive writing. This forms their assessment but is taught in detail first through modelling, examination of exemplars, and drafting.

Writing is also incorporated the key pieces of work for both Macbeth and poetry, where students are writing to inform (Macbeth project).

Although our schemes or learning are split into 'reading' and 'writing', we firmly believe that reading provides a sound basis for the study of writing. Students find themselves inspired and focussed by what they read and use this as a model for effective and engaging writing.

## Spoken English in Year 9

After the careful study and production of a persuasive text, students are encouraged to share their speech in a formal setting, catering to the needs of their listeners and responding effectively to questions.

In both the author study and the study of Macbeth, spoken English is used as a learning tool through shared reading, hot-seating activities, discussion work and other strategies including peer to peer debates and response to 'deeper' questions designed to stretch thought and comprehension beyond the explicit.

Emphasis remains on the correct and appropriate use of register and Standard English in spoken contexts.