

KS3 English

The English department strives to offer an engaging and diverse curriculum for all students, ensuring outstanding outcomes for all. Our lessons are planned to challenge students to think creatively and work independently, and our rigorous approach to assessment rapidly develops skills students will need at GCSE.

Alongside our curriculum, we offer students the opportunity to attend theatre trips, author workshops, take part in competitions and work on a school magazine. Students also have the opportunity to become Literacy leaders, and therefore help the English department to organise events for World Book Week and other Literary events held at our school.

English is a subject where we aim to give students the opportunity to explore and discuss ideas and to create their own interpretations of texts that we study. We aim to do this both inside the classroom and through enrichment activities.

Learning: In year 7 English students will cover a wide range of topics to help them build essential skills for progression to GCSE and beyond. The programme of study includes:

- Cultural Stories: students take part in an introductory scheme of work based around stories from other cultures. We will explore narrative forms, how texts can be transformed from one type of text to another and how to write our own stories.
- An Introduction to Shakespeare: students are introduced to Shakespeare's life and times. We explore his theatre, his most famous plays and look in depth at *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- Time Travel: students explore famous historical places and people; they write about meeting Henry VIII; read about life in Victorian London and might even get a short visit to the Year 3000!
- Nature Poetry: students will learn key poetry analysis skills, alongside getting to write their own nature poem.
- A class novel, for example, 'Private Peaceful', 'Millions', 'Skellig' or 'Whispers in the Graveyard'. We will read and explore key ideas and characters within the book through discussion, drama and essay writing.

In addition, students will take part in a reading challenge program throughout the year. Skills English is an increasingly demanding subject and from Year 7 we place real emphasis on extended writing - both in students' own imaginative pieces and in their analysis of other texts. We ask students to become increasingly analytical when approaching a text; they no longer just explore what is happening, but also explore authors' perspectives and language techniques. Students are encouraged to become increasingly independent in their writing as we ask them to generate ideas and plan independently. We also emphasise the 'basics' like paragraphing, sentence construction and punctuation throughout our teaching to ensure students keep developing these core Literacy skills. Alongside this, we still assess speaking and listening; an essential skill in English.

Assessment: In English assessment happens in many ways. Books are marked regularly, with informal comments and target setting taking place. We also encourage students to peer and self-assess their own work. On a more formal basis, students are assessed against age related expectations in both reading and writing during every scheme of work. Given the move towards terminal examinations, assessments are often conducted in controlled conditions in class, and students will be given an exam at the end of Year 7. Spoken communication will be assessed two or three times over the year.

Groupings: In Year 7, students are taught in ability groupings. These groups are based on KS2 scores and teacher assessments. We review groups regularly to ensure that students are in the best group, looking at recent assessment data and group dynamics. For those students who need some of the basics in Literacy reinforced, we do offer more hours of English as part of the Literacy fast track group.

Enrichment: Within the English department students are offered multiple opportunities out of the classroom. The department regularly publicises writing competitions for students to take advantage of and encourages students to attend Book Group, to shadow the Carnegie Book Awards, to take part in author visits, the Exeter wide Exetreme Imagination festival and to visit the theatre. Over the past two years we have also offered a trip to Harry Potter World and trips to the Northcott and Bikeshed theatres in Exeter.

Parental support: Outside of the classroom you can also take an interest in what your child reads. Reading widely, both fiction and non fiction, is essential to develop wider skills in English. If you can discuss your child's latest book, or even hear them read aloud, it will really improve their understanding and reading ability as well as help them to gain points in the St James Reading Challenge programme. We also appreciate your support in encouraging students to take an interest in the news and important cultural issues; this helps students to formulate opinion and develop a deeper understanding of the world, an essential skill for text analysis and extended writing. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact ljn@stjamesexeter.co.uk.