



Newport Girls' High School Curriculum Summary

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| Faculty: English and Arts | Subject: English |
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Our Vision

Faculty Vision

The central aim of the English and Arts Faculty is to engender a lifelong love of culture, literature, drama, art and music that goes above and beyond the examination syllabi. We believe that students should encounter and engage with the very best examples of human creativity in order to inspire them as both learners and citizens of the world.

Within the faculty, we aim to ensure that students engage with a broad, diverse and representative selection of work in order to build a bridge between the traditional and the modern. We want students to feel confident when exploring 'the giants' of culture and the arts without feeling daunted or intimidated. Equally, we are passionate about celebrating and exploring work by artists, writers and musicians who have been excluded from the canon in the past, so that the tapestry of our curriculum is truly representative of what art and culture has to offer. By placing this ethos at the heart of our curriculum, we hope to challenge common misconceptions about the arts and demystify the creative process.

Above all, we want students to feel empowered to be creative and to stand on the shoulders of those that have gone before them.

Subject Vision

The English department aims to ensure that all students develop a lifelong love of reading and the written word. We approach the subject holistically, in order to ensure that students become confident and adept readers, writers and speakers.

Curriculum Intent

At Key Stage 3, our focus is on building the foundations required for GCSE and A-Level and facilitating engagement with an array of texts from the canon of English Literature, as well as high quality non-fiction texts from the past and present. In Year 7, students have two lessons of English each week and a third lesson which focuses on literacy, oracy, wider reading and academic writing skills. In Year 8, students have three lessons of English a week and students continue to focus on developing their reading, writing and speaking skills, in order to fully prepare for Key Stage 4.

At Key Stage 4, which begins in Year 9, all students take both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature and the AQA examination board is followed, which includes the study of both modern and literary heritage texts. There is a continued focus on developing students' academic, creative and transactional writing skills, embedding key knowledge and ensuring students engage with the 'big ideas' within the set texts.

At Key Stage 5, the department delivers the A-level course with the Edexcel examination board and there are opportunities to select the texts that are studied as part of the non-examined assessment. Students continue to study a diverse range of texts from the literary canon, ranging from Shakespeare to 21st Century poetry.

Outside of lessons, students have the opportunity to attend theatre trips and poetry readings. Within school, there is a creative writing group that meet regularly as well as a junior drama group. Students have the opportunity to become involved in a number of prestigious competitions such as Poetry by Heart, Foyle Young Poet of the Year and the Rotary Club's Youth Speaks public speaking competition. In addition to this, there are a number of popular in-house competitions such as the annual school poetry competition and the house drama competition in the final week of term.

Curriculum Sequencing Rationale & Implementation

The curriculum has been sequenced carefully and has been designed to ensure that firm foundations are built from the offset, so that students have the skills to engage with a range of rewarding fiction and non-fiction texts, which become more challenging as students progress through the key stages.

KS3:

Year 7 begins with a focus on both reading and writing skills, through the lens of biographical and autobiographical writing. Students explore a number of texts which relate to school life and key coming of age moments by writers such as Roald Dahl and Meera Syal and this prepares students for exploring a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction texts throughout their school career. Students also study a whole novel, Pullman's 'Northern Lights', which explores a range of complex philosophical ideas and a selection of poetry from around the globe. In the Summer term, students complete a sequence of learning focusing on Shakespeare's language and theatre, which prepares them for studying two whole Shakespeare plays, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in Year 8 and 'Romeo and Juliet' in Year 9. In Year 8, we gradually remove some of the scaffolding that is used in Year 7, as students begin to write more extended academic essays, for example when responding to the characterisation of Scrooge in 'A Christmas Carol', which students are unable to master without the support structures put in place in Year 7.

KS4:

There is a focus on GCSE skills and content from the start of Year 9, but in the first term students study two texts which are not assessed at GCSE, in order to ensure they continue to encounter a broad range of literary texts. Having explored and read novels from the 19th and 20th century, students use the skill and knowledge from these units in order to engage with *To Kill A Mockingbird* through a GCSE lens. After studying Shakespeare's language in Year 7 and a Shakespearean comedy in Year 8, students go on to study a tragedy, 'Romeo and Juliet' which prepares them for examining the tragic conventions in their GCSE Shakespeare text, 'Macbeth'. Teachers all set wider reading homework and students are issued with classic 20th century novels, in order to ensure they experience the breadth of the literary canon.

Having completed the full KS3 national curriculum and some preparatory units for GCSE, In the Spring Term of Year 9, students begin working on the creative reading and writing elements of the English Language examination, as the skills they develop in these units underpin both the English Language and English Literature GCSE courses. For GCSE English Literature, students study prose, drama, Shakespeare and poetry, all of which they are very familiar with from KS3. By studying 'A Christmas Carol' in Year 8, students are well prepared for the challenges of 19th century English when studying Stevenson's 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde', as well as already having a broad understanding of Victorian society. When preparing for the GCSE English Language exams, students also explore a wide range of high-quality non-fiction texts from the 19th and 21st centuries on topics such as school life and travel, building on the non-fiction reading skills they developed during the KS3 course. They also work on further honing their transactional writing skills. All students complete the GCSE spoken language endorsement, which takes the form of a formal presentation to the class. Students will have developed their confidence as speakers, through the completion of formal group presentations in Year 7 and a formal individual presentation on a topic of their choice in Year 8.

KS5:

Whilst English Literature becomes an optional subject at KS5, there is a smooth transition from GCSE. Students start by studying a 19th century novel, which builds on their previous knowledge of Victorian literature. They also study a broad range of 21st century poetry, which includes more complex work by some of the same poets they have studied at GCSE. There is an increased focus on independence at Key Stage Five, with students completing a non-examined assessment. Students choose from a selection of texts and are able to construct their own task title. The work completed during KS3 and KS4 on engaging with big themes and ideas is crucial in preparing them for this. There is a focus on constructing a controlled and developed line of argument in essay work at A Level and this builds on the evaluation skills that are taught as part of the GCSE course. The A Level course also provides students with the grounding they need for undergraduate study. For example, students use JSTOR and often complete academic readings between lessons in order to prepare for seminar style discussions.