

Core GCSE: English Language

Contact: Mrs N. Cecere– Head of English

Course Structure & Overview

Exam Board: AQA

Syllabus: 8700

Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing (8700/1) 50%

Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives (8700/2) 50%

English Language is a very exciting, creative and interesting subject to study and can lead pupils into a wide range of interesting careers. This course is designed to enable students to draw upon a range of texts as reading stimulus and engage with creative and real and relevant contexts. Students will have opportunities to develop higher-order reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes. The course is also designed to ensure that students can read fluently and write effectively, demonstrating a confident control of Standard English and write grammatically correct sentences.

Course Content

The GCSE is made up of four sections, with each exam comprising two sections:

Paper 1: Reading and Writing Paper – 1 hour, 45 minutes – 50% of GCSE

This is a single paper combining both reading and writing questions. The reading questions on this paper involves answering questions on one literature fiction text and cover one short form question, two longer form questions and an extended question. The second half of the paper involves answering one extended writing question where the student will have to produce a descriptive or narrative piece. The reading section and writing section are equally weighted, with both sections being out of 40, combining together so the overall paper is out of 80.

Paper 2: Reading and Writing Paper – 1 hour, 45 minutes- 50% of GCSE

Again, this is another single paper covering reading and writing questions. This time the reading section will involve answering questions on one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text. There will be four reading questions to answer, one short form question, two longer form questions and an extended question. Like Paper 1, the second half of the paper will involve answering one extended writing question, but this time the student will need to write to present a viewpoint. This paper is also out of 80, with 40 of the marks allocated to the reading section and 40 marks to the writing question.

Skills Developed

English Language involves:

- Fluent reading, with a good understanding of 19th, 20th and 21st century texts from a wide range of genres
- Critical reading of texts with an ability to make comparisons between texts
- An ability to summarise and synthesise information or ideas from texts
- Using knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve written skills
- Being able to write effectively and coherently, using Standard English appropriately
- Using grammar correctly and being able to punctuate and spell accurately
- Acquiring and apply a wide vocabulary
- Listening to and understanding spoken language and using Spoken English effectively

Progression Routes

Many of the students who enjoyed studying GCSE English Language have gone on to study A Level English Language. But, as the subject contains lots of skills that are transferrable any course would welcome pupils with a good qualification in the subject.

Future Careers

Future careers include teaching, media, advertising, sales, social work and law. In fact, most employers would welcome a candidate with an English Language background and all the transferrable skills that person would bring with them.