AQA A Level English Literature

Vision statement - The English Faculty sets its vision as making: 'Independent and curious readers, writers and thinkers.'

Intent: Curriculum Intent – AQA A Level English Literature

Our English Literature curriculum is designed to create well-read, literary experts, who are confident analytical thinkers, and critical writers. Through the study of a rich variety of genres and authors the course guides students to understand both the variety and intricacy of the 'cannon' of English Literature, and drives students to think deeply about implied meanings, and the pragmatics of context-bound works of literature.

The curriculum has been regularly reviewed and is sequenced to ensure that students receive the best possible preparation for the final exams and the NEA coursework element, whilst promoting an enjoyment of literature more widely. Students will study; Shakespeare, forms of poetry, contemporary drama, as well as the classic novel. The AQA specification ensures that students become evaluative readers, able to share their own views informed by both expert critics, and their broad knowledge of a text and its context for both a contemporary and a modern audience.

The NEA coursework element gives the student the opportunity to explore texts independently, creating their own thesis – which mirrors the skill set required of a dissertation written by a university student – preparing our students for further study.

Reading, discussion and extended analytical writing are embedded throughout the course to develop students' ability to construct coherent, evidence-based arguments. Students who take English Literature are well placed to pursue academic subjects at University including Law, Education and the Creative Arts.

Why study English Literature at The Sixth Form at Ridgewood?

- Ridgewood Sixth Form has a vibrant English faculty led by passionate staff and full of students with a genuine enthusiasm for the subject. All of this makes for an extremely lively and engaging classroom environment.
- The A level English Literature course will introduce you to some of the greatest poetry, prose and drama ever written. You will learn how to approach the analysis of texts from a range of different genres, eras and cultures with confidence. In addition, you'll learn how to express informed and independent opinions and judgements about them based on sound evidence.
- Analytical skills are central to this subject and you will learn how to identify key literary and linguistic features and how to write about the ways in which writers use these to create specific effects. You will also learn how to incorporate critical viewpoints into your essays to support and develop your own arguments.
- The 20% coursework element provides you with the opportunity to explore texts and authors of your choice by creating your own task and taking an autonomous approach to the application and evaluation of a range of critical views.

- Students who have studied English Literature at Ridgewood in recent years have used their enthusiasm and experiences to undertake a variety of courses at university: primary/secondary teaching, journalism, publishing, philosophy, and media and communications.

What topics will I study in this subject?

Topic	What this means
Paper 1 Section A: *Othello*	The study of Shakespeare's 1603 tragedy *Othello* will allow you to explore this timeless story about race, love, jealousy and betrayal**.** You will consider the origins of the play; the social and historical context that influenced the Bard; representations of key characters; relationships between characters and the importance of setting.
Paper 1 Section B: Unseen Poetry Comparison	This topic will take you on a literary journey from the Renaissance period right up to the present day. You will study key features of each literary period and significant poets and their works. In preparation for your exam, you will compare poems from different periods on varying aspects of love. Although not an exhaustive list of aspects of love, areas that will be explored include: romantic love of many kinds; love and sex; love and loss; social conventions and taboos; jealousy and guilt; truth and deception; proximity and distance; marriage; approval and disapproval.
Paper 1 Section C: *The Great Gatsby*	Section C of Paper 1 requires you to thematically compare F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel with at least two of the poems from the *Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages: Pre-1900.* In order to do this, you will first explore Fitzgerald's construction of a cast of characters living in the fictional towns of West Egg and East Egg on prosperous Long Island in the summer of 1922. The story primarily concerns the young and mysterious millionaire Jay Gatsby and his quixotic passion and obsession with the beautiful former debutante Daisy Buchanan.
Paper 1 Section C: *Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages: Pre-1900*	The AQA *Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages* enables you to encounter a range of different types of poem as you study representations of love over time. As mentioned above, you will be required to compare at least two of the poems with F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* on a range of aspects of love.
Paper 2B Section A: *Feminine Gospels*	In this collection, Carol Ann Duffy draws on women's experience - both personal and historical - to entertain and challenge through poems that celebrate, elegise and eroticise the female condition.
Paper 2B Section B: Unseen Prose	In this module, you will explore a range of extracts from modern texts. These extracts will exemplify a range of modern issues including wars and the legacy of wars; personal and social identity; changing morality and social structures; gender, class, race and ethnicity; political upheaval and change; resistance and rebellion and imperialism, post-imperialism and nationalism.
Paper 2B Section B: A Streetcar Named Desire	A post-WW2 play by Tennessee Williams following a fragile Blanche DuBois who is on a desperate prowl for some place in the world to call her own. Themes in this iconic play include violence, sexuality and power.
Paper 2B Section B: *The Handmaid's Tale*	The dystopian novel by Canadian author Margaret Atwood is set in a totalitarian state resembling a theonomy that has overthrown the United States government. The novel focuses on the journey of the handmaid Offred.

What skills will I need in this subject?

Skill	What this skill involves in this subject
Analysis	You will learn how to engage in close reading and stylistic analysis as well as considering the wider social and historical factors, which have shaped and influenced the writer. You will also consider how literary language and its effects works on different readers, shaping and influencing their responses.
Evaluation	You will study a range of texts, key literary periods and literary theories. You will use this information to weigh up different interpretations on a particular focus before forming a conclusion.
Comparison	Both examination papers require you to compare literary texts. When comparing texts, you must consider both what they have in common and what is different about them. This will include comparisons of language, form and structure as well as contextual factors such as the gender of each writer and the period in which the texts were produced.

What will my lessons involve?

- The teaching style of A level is very different from GCSE. Classes are smaller and shared between two teachers. There will be many opportunities to express your views in class and to explore your own interests during independent study; the best students take advantage of these opportunities.
- You will discuss complex ideas and challenging themes in a lively and supportive environment as this is integral to our working methods, and students grow in skill and confidence as they explore texts in detail.
- In your lessons, your English teachers will encourage you to weigh up a variety of interpretations and come to a reasoned and balanced response. Our teaching of individual texts is informed by different critical approaches: Marxist/historicist, feminist, stylistic and post-colonial.
- Organisation and preparation are crucial. You will always be expected to bring your subject folders to enable to refer to prior learning and access previous teacher feedback. You may also be required to complete independent learning activities such as research or text annotations prior to the lesson.

What will my independent study involve?

- The texts you study on this course vary in length, but you are expected to read all texts in your independent study periods and consider your personal response as a reader. This will facilitate in depth analysis and discussion in lessons.
- You will need to be disciplined with time management so that you can receive effective feedback on work completed in timed conditions to reflect the requirements and challenge of an exam.
- To achieve success, you will need to be proactive in reading around the subject (you will be provided with a suggested reading list) and recording relevant connections to the course texts.
- You will need to be proactive in creating flashcards that you then use to regularly self-quiz on key terminology, literary periods and literary criticism/theory.
- You will need to consistently attempt exam style responses and self/peer assess using criteria provided by your teachers to reinforce and build on the expectations of different questions.

How will I be assessed?

Percentage exam assessment: 80%	Percentage coursework assessment: 20%

Assessment	Details of assessment
Paper 1: Love through the ages	• Written exam: 3 hours • 75 marks • 40% of A level • Section A: William Shakespeare's *Othello*: one passage-based question with linked essay (25 marks) • Section B: Unseen poetry: compulsory essay question on two unseen poems (25 marks) • Section C: Comparing texts: one essay question linking F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and poems from the *AQA anthology of love poetry through the ages pre-1900* (25 marks)
Paper 2B: Texts in shared context: Modern Times: Literature from 1945 to the Present Day	• Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes • 75 marks • 40% of A level • Section A: (25 marks) one essay question on *Feminine Gospels*. • Section B: Contextual linking • One compulsory question on an unseen extract (25 marks) • One essay question linking A Streetcar Named Desire and The Handmaid's Tale. (25 marks)
Non-exam assessment: Independent critical study: texts across time	• Comparative critical study of two texts, at least one of which must have been written pre-1900. One extended essay (2500 words) and a bibliography • 50 marks • 20% of A level • Assessed by teachers • Moderated by AQA

How do I know this is the right course for me?

- Studying English Literature at Ridgewood Sixth Form is lively and interactive; however, it is also a challenging and demanding course.
- You need to enjoy reading for this course. You will have to read a vast range of texts independently. You should also be proficient at close analysis and essay writing. You will be required to research around the subject, engaging with critics and contextual factors that surround a text.
- English Literature sits very well with the arts and humanities but is also an excellent complement to maths and science subjects.
- The subject opens up a wide array of possible careers: television, law, radio, journalism, creative arts, teaching, marketing, public relations and any form of business career. Working with the Sixth Form team, the English Faculty equips students for success in their university applications, helping to develop confident, articulate, intellectually independent and interesting individuals.