



A Level

English Literature

Literature is where I go to explore the highest and lowest places in human society and in the human spirit, where I hope to find not absolute truth but the truth of the tale, of the imagination and of the heart.

Salman Rushdie

A Level English Literature Examination Board: OCR

In studying English Literature, students will be required to evaluate reflections on the human experience, as well as to develop precise critical and analytical skills. The English Literature course focuses upon key literary texts from a range of genres and time periods. An enthusiasm for reading and a willingness to discuss texts in detail are essential requirements for this course. Students consider aspects of language such as style, tone and intention, as well as the social, political and cultural contexts in which the works were written and received. The course touches upon a wide range of disciplines, and develops the ability to present ideas with clarity.

English Literature is an enjoyable and challenging discipline which combines well with many subjects. The course will appeal to those who have an interest in reading a wide variety of literature from the past and present, by both British and American authors; who enjoy expressing their opinions and developing independent ideas; who would be stimulated by a subject which draws upon their own experiences and who want to keep their options open for further study. English Literature is a popular and prestigious qualification for a wide range of courses in higher education and beyond.

The course develops skills which are useful in all careers: the ability to read critically and discerningly, accurate and persuasive writing and speaking, and confidence in one's own well-informed judgments. During the course, students are encouraged to develop their interest in and enjoyment of literature, to communicate effectively, both in discussion and writing, to compare texts and to understand the cultural and historical influences on them.



Course Content

The balance of the English Literature course means that students can enjoy the opportunity to study a range of modern texts alongside those from the English Literary Heritage, including Shakespeare.

Year 1 (including the separate AS qualification)

AS Paper 1: Shakespeare and Poetry pre-1900

Students study a Shakespeare play such as *The Tempest*, *Richard III* or *Hamlet*. In addition they will study poetry from poets such as S. T. Coleridge or Christina Rossetti.

AS Paper 2: Drama and prose post-1900

This unit will include the study of American drama including Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* and an introduction to modern gothic prose with Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*.

Year 2

A-level Paper 1: Shakespeare and Poetry and Drama pre-1900

Students will revise the Shakespeare play from Year 1 and then compare the AS poetry text with a new drama text in the second year, such as *The Duchess of Malfi*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *An Ideal Husband* or *A Doll's House*.

A-level Paper 2: Comparative and Contextual Study – The Gothic

Students undertake a specialist study of the gothic genre, through the study of set texts (*Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Bloody Chamber* and wider reading of other gothic fiction).

Non-exam assessment: Literature post 1900 and post 2000

This unit enables students to compare the play from AS study (*A Streetcar Named Desire*) with another modern text, such as *On Chesil Beach* or *Rebecca*. They are also required to analyse modern poetry.

Due to the overlap between the courses, students must choose to study either English Literature OR English Language and Literature. Both courses cannot be taken.

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Students of English Literature wish to develop an understanding of humanity beyond their own experiences. They will learn to express their enthusiasm for novels, poetry and plays in carefully crafted prose of their own, successfully communicating their informed personal opinions in their essays.

A Sixth Form English Literature class relies on active participation and sharing ideas about texts. In a supportive environment, our students enjoy the increase in confidence which accompanies participation in lively debate.

The course builds directly on the skills gained from GCSE study of English Literature. English Literature combines well with any subjects and develops essential analytical and evaluative skills for university as well as developing students' cultural and literary awareness.

The English Department at Stafford Grammar School is lively and staffed with enthusiastic subject specialists. We combine a variety of innovative methods with some traditional approaches in order to engage students, to bring the subject to life and to nurture our students' enthusiasm for literature.

*I read because one life isn't enough, and in the page of a book I can be anybody;
I read because I have friends who don't, and young though they are, they're beginning to run out
of material;
I read because every journey begins at the library, and it's time for me to start packing;
I read because one of these days I'm going to get out of this town, and I'm going to go
everywhere and meet everybody, and I want to be ready.*