

SUBJECT: English

YEAR: 8

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Mrs Melville-Brown

GROUPING POLICY: Year groups are divided into two populations and each population is set by ability. Students are placed in an appropriate set based on results from Key Stage 2, CATs data, teacher assessment and teacher recommendation. Students can move sets if teachers can evidence that they are not currently in the most appropriate group for them.

COURSE CONTENT:

What will my child learn?

Across Year 8, your child will study a range of fiction and non-fiction texts across a wide number of themes. We start the year by introducing students to their first secondary school experience of Shakespeare through a study of the 'The Tempest'. We explore the origins of colonisation and hierarchies on the island. Following this we move onto studying a range of non-fiction texts linked to travel. Students are introduced to the skill of comparison as we examine a range of viewpoints about a similar place.

Our first writing unit of the year is called 'Controversial Issues' and we use this to help students start to develop an argument in their writing. In the unit, students write their own article exploring a topic which they are passionate about. This leads onto the poetry unit for Year 8 where we study a collection of poetry called 'Words That Burn', developed by Cheltenham Literature Festival and Amnesty International. The poems cover a wide range of themes and cultures. The year ends with a study of the Detective genre and a close reading of 'The Speckled Band'. Your child will examine how writers use structure for effect and then craft their own opening to a detective story.

What will homework look like?

Homework forms a vital part of the curriculum and encourages students to become independent, well organised and responsible learners. The department defines homework as any learning or preparation task undertaken outside the classroom. Some suggested homework tasks are listed below, but this is not exhaustive and teachers may set alternative work at their discretion:

- Discussing work with parents / carers and giving feedback;
- Responding to teacher feedback;
- Research tasks or preparation for forthcoming lessons – including reading of set texts;
- Learning and revision;
- Preparation for assessment tasks / tests;
- Drafting and editing of work;
- Resource gathering;
- Reading for pleasure.

What enrichment opportunities are available?

Wider reading is encouraged through homework activities.

Writing competitions are organised both within the department and on a wider scale in collaboration with other schools. We also have book clubs running across the year groups.

ASSESSMENT

How will my child's work be assessed?

At Key Stage 3, continuous assessment of student progress will take place through a combination of formative and summative assessment. Using Whole Class Feedback, a sample of students' work will be viewed each week to address misconceptions and aid the future planning of lessons. Students will complete a main marked piece of work three times a year. This piece of work will assess either reading or writing.

At Key Stage 3, the English department have identified nine reading skills and nine writing skills that need to be developed, in order to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum and ensure students are adequately prepared for the GCSE course. Students will revisit every skill at least once per academic year, throughout Key Stage 3.

Teachers will report progress to parents / carers, as per the whole school reporting cycle. Teachers will make a professional judgement about a student's progress based on class work, main marked piece and verbal contributions in class. Their judgement will be holistic and not based on one piece of work.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

How can I support my child in this subject?

Reading:

- Help them think about the writer behind the text, for example:
 - Why did they choose the language they did?
 - Why did they organise the text in that way?
 - What effect did they hope to have on the reader?
- When looking for information in print or on screen, encourage them to scan ahead and think about how helpful the text is, whether it is a biased or reliable source.
- When they talk about their reading, encourage them to refer to evidence in the text to support their views.
- Get them regular opportunities to make their own choices about what they read at home.

Writing:

- Help them to use their reading to support them as writers, for example ask them to look at how a writer they like uses varied sentences or organised paragraphs.
- Encourage their personal writing, for example writing a diary or a blog.
- Talk through their ideas with them before they start to write, for example prompt them to think about how they intend to tackle a subject.
- Help them reflect on their writing, particularly the effect they hoped to have on the reader.
- Encourage them to read through their work, shaping their sentences for clarity and effect and checking their accuracy.