



# English

## Curriculum Intent

Underpinning the English curriculum across all Key Stages is the need to challenge. Our students enter AHS strong in reading and writing, therefore it is imperative that what we provide stretches them beyond what they, by themselves, can accomplish. Each unit, topic or text chosen should be one that is deliberately difficult but desirably so: one that challenges. We also wish for our students to leave AHS with a lifelong love of literature and language. At each stage, where possible, our curriculum seeks opportunities to nurture and encourage the pleasures of reading and the joy of the English language beyond what is taught in the classroom.

### Key Stage 3

The Key Stage 3 curriculum adopts a chronological approach in order for students to become aware of a traditional literary canon so that they can both understand and challenge it. They will be able to appreciate the intertextual nature of English Literature as a discipline, not only to later connect with their GCSEs but also to have the confidence to see how the stories we tell reflect, adapt and interrogate the literary canon so that they can do so themselves. A key aspect to this is our inclusion of a diverse range of texts across the curriculum, where students look outside of the canon and explore texts from a wider range of cultures and traditions.

Throughout Key Stage 3 students will develop their appreciation and understanding of how language works. Building on the grammar knowledge from Key Stage 2, our curriculum adopts a stylistics and “grammar for writing” approach to the understanding of language. This is reflected in how students are expected to interrogate the texts studied with the appropriate technical language. Creativity, experimentation and exploration of their own writing is interwoven into our curriculum, as well as developing a more detailed appreciation of linguistics. The curriculum aims to introduce students to what types of English courses will be available to them post-GCSE.

Year 7 begins with a focus on the foundations of Literature and story-telling, ensuring that students have a grounding in Greek Myths and Epics - important narratives and characters that recur throughout the canon. This is then followed by an introduction to Greek Tragedy, with a particular focus on knowing the expectations of the genre. The Art of Rhetoric is studied to enable the development of skills in persuasive writing, together with speaking and listening skills. Toward the end of the year, Chaucer’s position within the canon is appreciated through his narrative of Troilus and Criseyde and the Romance genre. Students also have the opportunity here to consider the development of the English language.

Coverage of Shakespeare begins at the end of Year 7 with an exploration of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and is continued in Year 8 with his sonnets so that students have an understanding of a key form. Shakespeare is then further studied in Year 8 with a longer examination of Romeo and Juliet, a text that builds on the Year 7 understanding of Tragedy and Romance. At every opportunity we wish for students to see the canon as a “living conversation” where texts “speak to” other texts. Romanticism, together with literature that flourished throughout the Victorian period, become the bedrock of Year 8 as the timeline moves forward, taking on board seminal writers such as Keats and Dickens. Students will be more appreciative of a wider range of forms and genres, further developing their creative and analytical writing.

Year 9 introduces a greater appreciation of the role of context in analysing a text. Together with more evaluative writing and comparative analysis, Year 9 begins to lay the foundations for what will be required in Key Stage 4. Early advertising and the stylistic study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Purple Hibiscus lay the foundations for skills in textual analysis at GCSE, and link with the study of linguistics at Key Stage 5. Other cultures, together with marginalised voices that are not always fully appreciated in the canon, are discussed through a feminist appreciation of the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy and the afore-mentioned Purple Hibiscus.

Above all, our early curriculum aims to foster in our students a love for reading. We ensure this takes place through half-termly reading sessions, where students are expected to either read for pleasure or discuss the books that mean something to them. These discussions then become part of our viva voce assessments, providing another opportunity at developing vital speaking and listening skills. At the end of Year 9 each student presents to the class on a text of their choice. This presentation becomes the assessed Spoken Language Endorsement section of their GCSE English Language exam.

Co-curricular opportunities are available throughout Key Stage 3, including Creative Writing Club, House Quidditch, House Spelling Bee, public speaking competitions, theatre trips and other one-off events, all aimed at developing a love for the many different forms English can take.

### Key Stage 4

The skills covered in KS3 form the basis of learning in Year 10 and Year 11 and are developed further as the focus shifts to specific set texts as required by the GCSE. Our choices here reflect the foundation created by the canon from Key Stage 3. Each intentionally challenge our students to ensure a clear link between GCSE and A Level Literature is made, but also to reflect the ability and skills that our students will have developed by this point. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is tightly packed so we look for ways to condense, overlap and connect what is taught. This is evident in the choice of texts which share thematic links and “speak to” each other in order to ensure that students utilise their understanding of one text to inform their appreciation of another.

A stylistics approach is applied to their GCSE English Language requirements. Students will then have a limited opportunity to develop their creative and transactional writing skills by reflecting on texts studied in class and experimenting with their own output.

### Key Stage 5

The texts selected from specifications for A Level Literature are both deliberately challenging and are ones that come from a wide range of different eras: Medieval, Renaissance, Victorian, Modernist and contemporary. We seek to ensure that those students who wish to further study English at the top universities have a foundation to engage and debate with others. We see it as our duty as English teachers that students appreciate the diversity of literature that is available to them, to open doors to worlds and ideas that they otherwise would not have come across or have deliberately chosen for themselves. It is through their Independent Assignment that we encourage students to explore a text of their own choice, with the option of using a foundation text studied in class, nurturing their personal interests through an opportunity to examine topics more deeply.

The choice of offering A Level Language reflects both the department’s desire to place the love of language centre stage but also the nature of the students at AHS who excel at analysis, enjoy technical aspects of the subject and appreciate a more scientific approach. The two areas of curriculum choice for this A Level are the sub-topic of Language and Gender and student completion of an Independent Assignment. As a single-sex school, the choice of exploring the role language plays in gender construction enables those studying the subject to reflect on their own identity and perhaps more importantly, the challenges that will face them when they leave school. For their Independent Assignment we focus specifically on journalism, writing for different types of magazines, as it is a career choice students often wish to explore.

Throughout both A Levels, particularly in Year 12, we seek ways to extend our students’ knowledge and skills. We dedicate curriculum time to reading critical material in order to again challenge and develop our students, and also provide an appreciation of what could be explored post A Level. Time is also given to Harkness lessons, where students are expected to prepare for an hour long discussion on a topic, with little to no teacher input during the session. Here, we believe it is important that our students are equipped for a world in which debate, discussion and argument are integral aspects to having your voice heard. Finally we continue to nurture the love of reading with curriculum time given to discussing texts beyond the specification.

## Curriculum Implementation

### Key Stage 3

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Autumn 1: Ovid - Classical Myths	Autumn 1: Shakespeare – Sonnets, Romeo and Juliet	Autumn 1: 19th Century Language of Advertising
Autumn 2: Epics	Autumn 2: Shakespeare – Romeo and Juliet	Autumn 2: Gupta - The Empress
Spring 1: Roots of Drama - Tragedy Rhetoric	Spring 1: Romanticism - Keats	Spring 1: Gupta - The Empress
Spring 2: Rhetoric	Spring 2: Dickens – Great Expectations	Spring 2: Carol Ann Duffy
Summer 1: Chaucer	Summer 1: Dickens – Great Expectations	Summer 1: Language of Literature - Purple Hibiscus
Summer 2: Shakespeare - A Midsummer Night’s Dream	Summer 2: Romanticism – The Gothic	Summer 2: Language of Literature - Purple Hibiscus Speaking and Listening

### Key Stage 4: GCSE (Edexcel)

Year 10	Year 11
Autumn 1: Language Paper 1; Lord of the Flies	Autumn 1: Macbeth
Autumn 2: Lord of the Flies	Autumn 2: Language Paper 2
Spring 1: Macbeth	Spring 1: Exams; Revision
Spring 2: Macbeth	Spring 2: Revision
Summer 1: Exam prep; Poetry and Unseen Poetry;	Summer 1: Revision
Summer 2: Poetry and Unseen Poetry	

### Key Stage 5: A Level (Edexcel)

Year 12 English Literature	Year 13 English Literature
Autumn 1: A Streetcar Named Desire; Wuthering Heights	Autumn 1: Independent Assignment; Modern poetry; Wife of Bath - Tale
Autumn 2: A Streetcar Named Desire; Wuthering Heights	Autumn 2: Modern poetry; A Thousand Splendid Suns
Spring 1: Hamlet; Wuthering Heights	Spring 1: Exam prep; Revision
Spring 2: Hamlet; Wife of Bath Prologue	Spring 2: Revision
Summer 1: Independent Assignment; Wife of Bath Prologue	Summer 1: Revision
Summer 2: Independent Assignment; Exam; Modernism	
Year 12 English Language	Year 13 English Language
Autumn 1: Grammar; Spoken Discourse; Individual Variation	Autumn 1: Independent Assignment; Variation over Time; Language and Gender
Autumn 2: Individual Variation; Child Language Acquisition	Autumn 2: Individual Variation; Language and Gender
Spring 1: Individual Variation; Independent Assignment	Spring 1: Language and Gender; Component 1
Spring 2: Child Language Acquisition; Independent Assignment	Spring 2: Revision
Summer 1: Variation over Time; Child Language Acquisition; Exam prep	Summer 1: Revision
Summer 2: Variation over Time; Language and Gender	

## Impact

Across all Key Stages curriculum impact is identified through the following methods:

- Monthly quizzes: students are asked to recall key ideas, concepts and facts that are relevant to the content studied. For KS4/5 this will invariably be linked to exam content, whereas in KS3 it will be the core terminology and concepts that underpin English Language and Literature.
- Half-termly exercises: students are asked to replicate a taught skill (such as writing an introduction to essay or the end of a short story) which are then considered on merit against a pre-defined criteria (such as exam criteria or model responses). For KS4 and 5, these exercises become more exam focused as they nearer the end of their courses.
- Termly quizzes: students complete an extended quiz, which includes both open and closed questions, in order to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the core English Language and/or Literature concepts and terminology.
- Homework: a range of homework tasks are used by classroom teachers to support the assessment of curriculum impact. These may include revision for quizzes, where classroom teachers can identify strengths and weaknesses before a quiz, or extended writing, where students produce longer responses that can be evaluated on idea, skills, or knowledge.
- Twice yearly assessments: At two different points across the year students complete summative assessments. For KS4 and 5 this will be a response to an exam-style question. KS3 are assessed on their writing development and their ability to use English related concepts when analysing or evaluating texts.