



Aylesbury High School | #AHSWalksTall

Developing uniquely talented young adults, who are independent, strong and confident

Dear Parent/Carer,

As students begin to make their transition from KS3 to their GCSEs, we thought it would be helpful to outline what to expect in their English lessons next year.

In Key Stage 4 English: First of all, it is important to note that although students will be timetabled “English”, they are, in fact, studying for two GCSEs: GCSE English Literature and GCSE English Language. Our units and approach to content makes it clear where and when we shift attention from one GCSE to the other.

We follow the Edexcel specification for both GCSEs. For GCSE English Literature, we are required to study a collection of poetry, Shakespeare, and a pre and post-1914 text. Our choices are:

- “Macbeth” William Shakespeare
- “Lord of the Flies” William Golding, post-1914 text
- “Jekyll and Hyde” Robert Louis Stevenson, pre-1914 text
- “Belonging” poetry, a collection within the exam board Poetry Anthology

For GCSE English Language, we are required to develop skills in imaginative writing and transactional writing, alongside reading, analysis, and evaluation skills. Here, we shape our course in order to reflect as much of the modern world as we can in order to show the continued contemporary importance of the subject. One way in which we aim to achieve this is through our participation in the [Orwell Youth Prize](#).

The groups for English are mixed, and are shaped more by option choices rather than a deliberate selection reflective of ability.

Textbooks and resources: The students will have a yellow 8mm exercise book to do their work in lessons, for them to make notes, and to respond to questions. We require students to keep this in a plastic wallet as we also provide a number of booklets throughout both courses. All students should bring this to every English lesson.

When studying a set text for English Literature students are required to have their own copy of the text. It is important that they have exactly the same copy as everyone else in the class in order to help with page and line numbers. Everyone needs to be in the same place at the same time! Students are provided with a unit booklet for every aspect of both GCSE courses. The booklets contain key terms and ideas, wider reading on important concepts, context, and critical material as is necessary to support and develop their understanding of the content studied in class. We also regularly provide model responses to examine and reflect upon.

Homework and assessment: Homework of 40 minutes duration can be set twice a week in English to give the students time to consolidate their understanding of work covered at school. Homework may take the form of reading, revising, or something written. Any extended writing will be acknowledged by their class teacher. If your child is struggling with their homework then they should talk to their teacher about it so that support can be provided. We will continuously monitor student progress throughout the years by conducting quizzes on current topics to check that homework and classwork is understood.

Revision: We do not recommend students purchase revision books in Year 10, as the material covered in class, alongside their booklets is more than sufficient. However, as they approach their mocks in Year 11, and particularly closer to their final exams, these can be of help. If revision books are to be purchased, please ensure that they are aimed at the Edexcel specification, as there are significant differences in how students are examined across different exam specifications. Do note, however, that we provide a number of revision booklets nearer to their final exams so that they have plenty of material to work with.

Toward the end of Year 10, English clinics are run at lunchtimes for students to drop in for support.

More information can be found on the [English subject page](#) of the school's website.

If you have any queries, please contact Mr Elgin, Head of English, at melgin@ahs.bucks.sch.uk