



# The Cornerstone Academy

## English Curriculum

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## 1. Intent of The Cornerstone Academy English curriculum

The purpose of the English curriculum is to equip students with the skills and knowledge to become confident thinkers, speakers, and writers. We want to ensure that students are prepared for each stage of their academic journey and the world beyond the classroom. Through the study of a range of texts written by diverse voices, students are encouraged to discuss, debate, and explore universal ideas.

The following principles have informed the planning of the United Learning curriculum across all subjects:

- **Entitlement:** All pupils have the right to learn what is in the United Learning curriculum, and schools have a duty to ensure that all pupils are taught the whole of it.
- **Coherence:** Taking the National Curriculum as its starting point, our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that powerful knowledge builds term by term and year by year. We make meaningful connections within subjects and between subjects.
- **Mastery:** We ensure that foundational knowledge, skills, and concepts are secure before moving on. Pupils revisit prior learning and apply their understanding in new contexts.
- **Adaptability:** The core content – the 'what' – of the curriculum is stable, but schools will bring it to life in their local context, and teachers will adapt lessons – the 'how' – to meet the needs of their own classes.
- **Representation:** All pupils see themselves in our curriculum, and our curriculum takes all pupils beyond their immediate experience.
- **Education with character:** Our curriculum - which includes the taught subject timetable as well as spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, our co-curricular provision, and the ethos and 'hidden curriculum' of the school – is intended to spark curiosity and to nourish both the head and the heart.

Here we explore these principles in the context of the English curriculum:

- **Entitlement:** All will study a wide range of high-quality texts and writing forms.
- **Coherence:** The curriculum is carefully sequenced according to themes, ideas, and concepts whilst introducing a variety of literary genres and forms, including different writing forms.
- **Mastery:** We want our students to be able to link new knowledge to previously taught content and understand the different ways they connect.
- **Adaptability:** Each lesson addresses a key question, leaving room for teachers to adapt lessons without losing sight of the core purpose.
- **Representation:** All will encounter texts which offer both a mirror and a window to the rich and multi-layered experiences of the world we live in.
- **Education with character:** Through the curriculum, students are given many opportunities to share, reflect and learn about each other's experiences whilst recognising our common shared experiences.

## 2. Implementation of the English curriculum

KS3 students receive 250 minutes English teaching per week, as well as 50 minutes of DEAR. They are taught by English specialists. At KS4, students receive 300 minutes of English teaching per week and are also taught by English specialists.

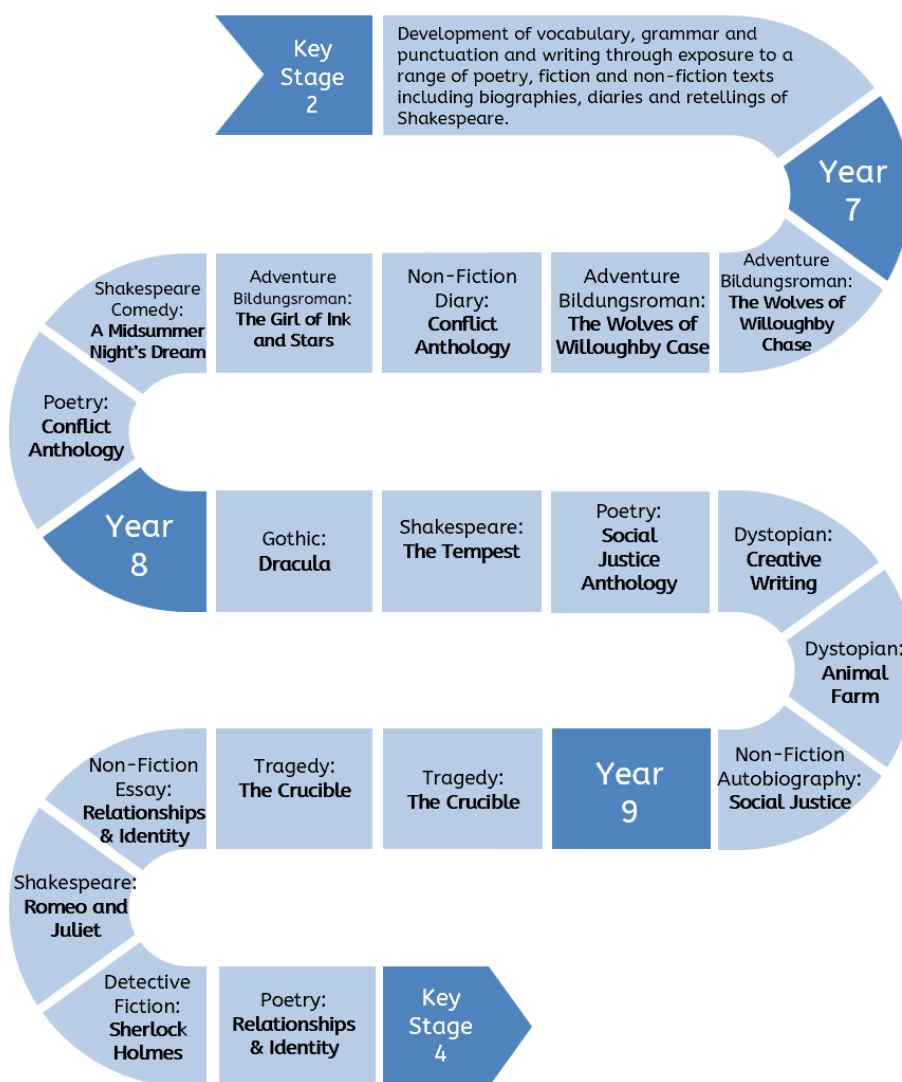
The roadmap diagram on the following page sets out the route that we expect pupils to take through our curriculum. The centre of the roadmap contains the title of each unit, including the titles of texts where appropriate. Besides each of these unit titles, we have indicated the genre(s) and/or form(s) explored in each



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unit, and the themes explored are listed around the circle for each year. This roadmap is supplemented with a more detailed table that provides information on the key features covered/revisited in each unit.



KS4 Curriculum Overview			
Autumn Term		Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 10	<i>19<sup>th</sup> Century Fiction: A Christmas Carol</i> by Charles Dickens	<i>Modern Drama: An Inspector Calls</i> by J.B. Priestley	<i>Shakespearean Play: Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare
	Language Paper 1	Language Paper 1	Language Paper 2
Year 11	<i>Poetry: Power and Conflict</i>	<i>Unseen Poetry &amp; Literature</i>	Literature Revision
	Poetry	Revision	
Language P1 & P2 Revision		Language P1 & P2 Revision	Language P1 & P2 Revision



### 3. Impact of the English Curriculum

In our planning, we have asked ourselves 'why this, why now?'. Here we provide some examples of the curriculum choices we have made, and why the units have been placed in the order we have chosen:

- The curriculum has been carefully sequenced to introduce students to a variety of literary genres and forms, including different writing forms. Each year has a key theme: Conflict in Year 7; Social Justice in Year 8; Relationships and Identity in Year 9.
- In each year, we include a non-fiction unit that enables students to explore the issues around each theme before they explore these issues in the studied texts. In addition, the ideas, and themes, and/or the way they are explored become increasingly challenging. For example, in Year 7 students explore issues relating to gender and the patriarchy in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These ideas are subsequently developed through the Social Justice theme in Year 8 in texts such as *Dracula* (19<sup>th</sup> Century idea of the 'New Woman'). This provides students with the appropriate vocabulary and understanding of the key ideas, enabling them to approach more challenging issues encountered in Year 9. For example, the subjugation and oppression of marginalised groups in texts such as *The Crucible* and *Sherlock Holmes*, where students study the theory of 'The Other'.
- Each unit details the skills and key knowledge, for example, conventions, vocabulary, and terminology which students should know and be able to apply. Students will be given multiple opportunities to re-visit the skills and key knowledge within the year and across Key Stage 3. For example, in the first unit of Year 7, *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, students will be introduced to the impact of a writer's use of characterisation, setting, and symbolism. Students return to this in subsequent Year 7 units (*A Girl of Ink and Stars* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). These key methods are then revisited in Year 8 (*Dracula* and *Animal Farm*) and Year 9 (*The Crucible*, *Sherlock Holmes*).
- Each Shakespeare text represents a different genre (comedy & tragedy). The tragedy genre is placed at the end of Year 9 to support the teaching of a tragedy at GCSE and builds on aspects of the tragedy in *The Crucible*.
- *The Crucible* appears at the start of Year 9 as they build on the exploration of issues regarding race, gender, and class in the second half of Year 8 (*Animal Farm*, *Social Justice Anthology (Nonfiction)*, *Social Justice Anthology (Poetry)*). Pupils need to have covered these units in Year 8 to approach *The Crucible* maturely and appropriately.
- The units in Year 8 and 9 also build on ideas around gender which are introduced in the Year 7 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* unit. The portrayal of women in *The Crucible* is balanced with *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (Year 7), the themed Poetry and Non-fiction units, and the *Sherlock Holmes* unit.
- Part of the reasoning behind the choice of the selected Victorian texts was that the language/references have become part of our vocabulary and shared knowledge. Each Victorian text also explores a different genre.



## Teaching the English Curriculum

Every unit has a Knowledge Organiser that supports the teaching of key vocabulary and terminology. In every unit, key vocabulary and terminology are displayed, defined, and continually revisited. Students are routinely tested on new vocabulary and terminology in 'Do Now' and end-of-lesson reviews. Students are required to apply new vocabulary and terminology in extended written tasks which are supported by high-quality models.

Extended tasks demonstrate whether students are accurately embedding the key knowledge into developed responses. The sequence of the curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop and deepen their understanding of key ideas, forms, and conventions. For example, students study the form and conventions of a tragedy in two texts (*The Crucible* and *Romeo and Juliet*).

Lessons are structured to support the I-We-You cycle, and students have regular independent practice. High quality modelled examples are an integral part of lessons. Extended tasks are followed by a fully developed model to exemplify the standards students should demonstrate.

### So, when you walk into an English lesson, what should we expect to see?

- 'Do Now'/starters which test core knowledge
- Any subject terminology and vocabulary used should be defined and applied by students in the lesson
- Success is exemplified using high-quality models which are dissected in detail
- Opportunities for independent writing

### In Key Stage 4 English lessons we particularly expect to see:

- When guided through how to plan/complete an exam response, students are questioned at each step of the process
- Students reading out their responses/ parts of their responses in lessons
- Full responses to key exam questions (Language and Literature)
- Students' Literature essays begin with students establishing their central ideas/arguments in their opening paragraph
- Students employ a similar strategy for the Language questions

Our curriculum is designed to provide a challenge for all learners. Teachers are expected to adapt resources for the needs of their students. Department meeting time should be used to review schemes and lessons before teaching so that all teachers are confident with the content of the units and strategies for delivery. This time could also be used to allow colleagues to co-plan to ensure that lessons are adapted appropriately to meet the needs of individual classes and individual groups of students.



# Assessing the English Curriculum

## Formative Assessment in English

Our curriculum emphasises secure knowledge as the foundation before progressing to the application of the skill (e.g., evaluation). Lessons begin with 'Do Now' which test on new and prior knowledge and lessons end with a review quiz that also checks new and prior knowledge. There is also an end-of-unit Knowledge Test which tests on knowledge from the unit and previously studied units.

The schemes of work offer guidance on the questions that should be asked in a lesson to check for understanding and provides teachers with the responses they should expect to elicit from students.

Regular extended tasks contained with the scheme of work demonstrate whether students are accurately embedding the key knowledge and applying the key skill into developed responses. By reviewing these tasks as part of whole-class feedback, teachers can identify the things that students can and cannot do. This enables teachers to adapt their teaching to ensure that they only move on when students are secure.

## Summative Assessment in English

Below are the end-of-year assessment requirements for all United Learning academies. Academies have the freedom to choose the texts they wish to assess students on, but one chosen option must be a text which students are revisiting from earlier in the academic year. Students will sit summative assessments at the mid-year point and at the end of

### Year 7

#### Exam 1 (90 minutes)

- **Reading:** School choice of a text (One question)  
*The fiction question will be accompanied by an extract.*
- **Writing:** Description or Narrative (One question from a choice of two)

### Year 8

#### Exam 1 (90 minutes)

- **Reading:** School choice of a text (One question)  
*The question will be accompanied by an extract.*
- **Writing:** Description or Narrative (One question from a choice of two)

### Year 9

#### Exam 1 (90 minutes)

- **Reading:** School choice of a text (One question)  
*Question will be a closed book question.*
- **Writing:** Non-fiction writing (One question from a choice of two)



