



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 teachers will bring it to life by adapting 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. English lessons are taught by English specialists, and DEAR has been carefully planned and adapted by English specialists to build cultural capital, comprehension and oracy skills. At KS4, students receive 300 minutes of English teaching per week and are also taught by English specialists.

Below, are grids detailing the content taught in each year. We strive to ensure students have experience of one complete text, a Shakespearian play, non-fiction writing and access to poetry to ensure a breadth of content at KS3. In the KS3 grid you will find a row for each year group detailing how this topic will also be stretched to meet the needs of Grammar Stream students to ensure they are being stretched beyond that of the rest of the year group.

KS3 Overview						
Autumn Term			Spring Term		Summer Term	
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Year 7	19 th Century Fiction: Treasure Island	Bildungsroman: The Wolves of Willoughby Chase	Non-Fiction: Conflict	Poetry: Conflict	Shakespearian Comedy: A Midsummer Night's Dream	Adventure Bildungsroman: The Girl of Ink and Stars
	GS: Students may read beyond the extracts where appropriate to build exposure to 19 th century texts.	GS: Students may focus on building whole responses on characterisation as opposed to shorter, one paragraph answers.	GS: Students may explore additional non-fiction articles alongside the set texts.	GS: Students may practice writing longer comparative poetry responses.	GS: Students may work on oracy and performance skills as part of this module. Students may also explore the text in further detail beyond just the extracts given.	GS: Students may use this unit to practice writing longer analytical responses.
Year 8	19 th Century Fiction: Dracula	Shakespearian Tragedy: Richard III	Non-Fiction Rhetoric: Social Justice	Poetry: Social Justice	Short Stories: Dystopian	Dystopian: Animal Farm
	GS: Students may read beyond the extracts where appropriate to build exposure to	GS: Students may work on oracy and performance skills as part of this module. Students may also explore the text in further	GS: Students may use this unit to work on presentation and oracy skills.	GS: Students may practice writing longer comparative	GS: Students may use this unit to practice writing longer, analytical responses.	GS: Students may use this unit to practice writing longer, analytical responses.



	19 th century texts.	detail beyond just the extracts given.		poetry responses.			
Year 9	Short Stories: Relationships and Identity	Non-Fiction: Relationships and Identity	Modern Play: The Crucible	19 th Century: Sherlock Holmes	Oracy: Speaking and Listening	Poetry: Relationship and Identity	Shakespearean Tragedy: King Lear
	GS: Students may use this unit to practice writing longer, analytical responses.	GS: Students may use this unit to practice identifying viewpoints and comparing differing viewpoints outside of the set texts.	GS: Students may work on oracy and performance skills as part of this module. Students may also explore the text in further detail beyond just the extracts given.	GS: Students may use this unit to practice writing longer, analytical responses.	GS: Students may practice writing longer comparative poetry responses.		GS: Students may work on oracy and performance skills as part of this module. Students may also explore the text in further detail beyond just the extracts given.

KS4 Curriculum Overview			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 10	19 th Century Fiction: A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens	Shakespearean Play: Macbeth by William Shakespeare	Poetry: Power and Conflict Poetry
	Language Paper 1	Language Paper 1 Language Paper 2	Language Paper 2
Year 11	Modern Drama: An Inspector Calls by J.B. Priestley & Unseen Poetry	Literature Revision – mock dependent	Literature Revision – mock dependent
	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* (19th 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 revisit 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 in 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 (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' tasks and through regular checking for understanding. 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.

Lessons are structured to support the Teach-Check-Practice cycle, and students have regular independent practice. High-quality modelled examples are an integral part of lessons to enable success in independent writing tasks.

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 using a clear success criteria.
- Opportunities to practice small, specific elements of writing using mini-whiteboards
- Opportunities for independent writing following appropriate scaffolding and support

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
- 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
- Students growing in confidence to write independently for extended periods to build resilience in exam conditions

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 is 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 is also 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.

Stretch and challenge in English:

The English curriculum has been specifically designed to ensure high-quality texts are being taught throughout each year group to enrich students' exposure to a variety of genres and types of texts, widening their cultural capital through literature. In addition to accessing this high-level curriculum, grammar stream and high attaining students will also be expertly guided by their English teachers to explore more advanced subject specific techniques and terminology through the medium of the set texts and further supported in how to apply these techniques to their own writing.

As English is predominantly a skills-based subject, these students will be guided and encouraged to exert more independence in being able to form analytical ideas and convey these through extended writing independently without the assistance of strict sentence stems. In lessons where students may be encouraged to just write



one or two paragraphs in response to an analytical question, grammar stream and higher attaining students will be encouraged to compose a longer, essay style response. Teachers of these sets will assess the writing of their classes and provide feedback on the elements of extended writing where students can improve, and this will then be embedded into further practice. Students will be encouraged to analyse texts in depth, layering their analysis throughout their written responses. Additionally, students will be encouraged to explore creativity through creative writing beyond a writing frame. They will be supported to explore using different writing styles and techniques that have been explored through their study of various texts within the curriculum. For all types of writing, students will be exposed to high-quality models with clear success criteria to demonstrate how success at a higher level can be achieved.

Beyond the written skills, these students will also have ample opportunities to practice and refine their oracy skills through debate and independent presentations. For units such as 'Speaking and Listening' in Year 9, students will be encouraged to present on topics that are challenging where they can present a clear and developed argument.

We hope to encourage a love of literature and the arts through our curriculum to develop the cultural capital of all of our students, including higher attaining 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.

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. These tasks take place twice half-termly.

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 the year. These assessments build on the content learnt in the previous years and allows us to identify gaps in understanding of key features in English.



United Learning
The best in everyone™

■ Ambition

■ Confidence

■ Creativity

■ Respect

KS3:

Year 7

- **Reading:** A 50-minute assessment that assess a student's ability to read, understand and respond to short extracts.
- **Writing:** A 45-minute assessment that assess a student's ability to craft language creatively.

Year 8

- **Reading:** A 50-minute assessment that assess a student's ability to read, understand and respond to short extracts.
- **Writing:** A 45-minute assessment that assess a student's ability to craft language creatively and their ability to apply non-fiction writing skills.

Year 9

- **Reading:** A 50-minute assessment that assess a student's ability to read, understand and respond to short extracts.
- **Writing:** A 45-minute assessment that assess a student's ability to craft language creatively and their ability to apply non-fiction writing skills.

KS4:

Year 10

- Students will sit a past paper for Language Paper 1 in January.
- During the summer term 2 students will sit both language paper 1 and 2 as well as literature paper 1.

Year 11

- Students will sit a full set of mocks in November (Language Papers 1 and 2 as well as Literature Papers 1 and 2)
- Students will again sit a full set of mocks in March.

