



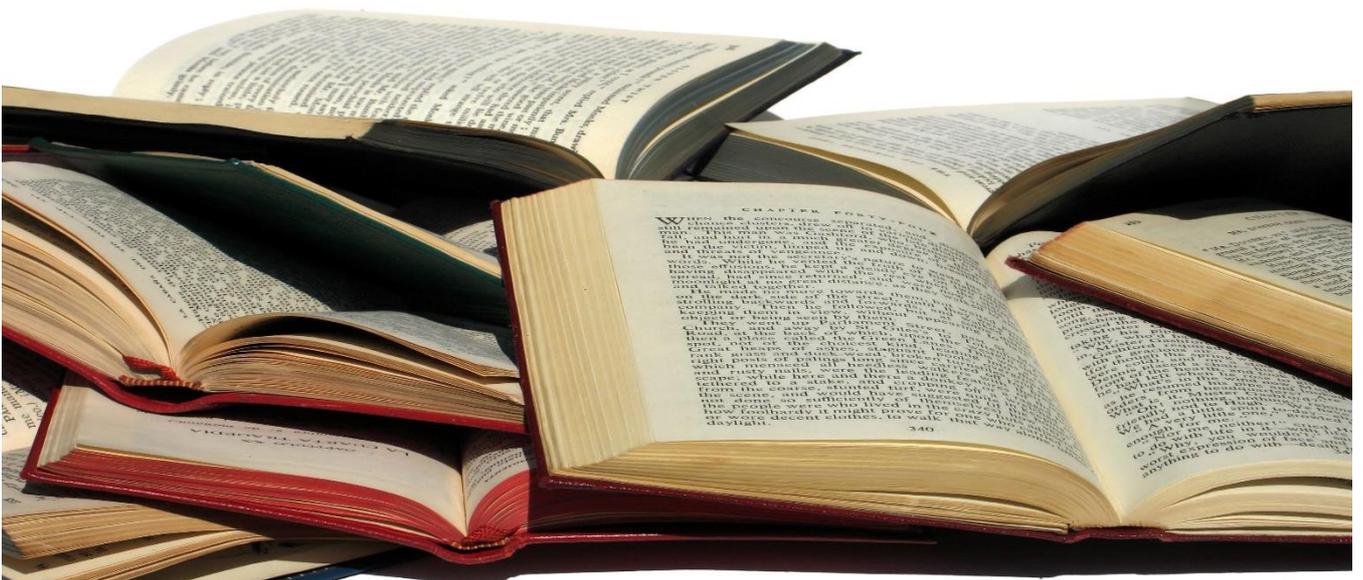
Upton Court  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

# English Department

Starting your  
GCSEs

Language

Literature





## English Language and English Literature: Preparing for your GCSEs Exam board: Edexcel

As a department, we provide students with opportunities to challenge their thinking and develop a core set of skills designed to prepare them for their GCSE exams, further education and the world of employment. The transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 is an exciting one and, in Year 9, students are introduced to the structure of the GCSE exam and the various assessment criteria for the Language and Literature papers. The breadth of texts studied and opportunities for creative and transactional writing enable students to develop a passion for learning and the study of reading and writing.

### Achieving your Potential

Preparing for exams can seem daunting but the Department provides many tailored revision resources and support to aid learning. Here are some of the ways in which you can make the most of support:

- Join any Edmodo revision groups English teachers invite you to; these have many resources specific to our exam board.
- Subscribe to the Department's YouTube channel to access several revision screencasts and videos.
- Purchase or download any tailored revision materials created by the Department.
- Use in-class and homework opportunities to create revision resources such as cue cards, quizzes and podcasts in order to consolidate learning.
- Develop analytical skills by applying learning to real world situations.

#### Strategies for improving literacy:

- ✓ Green pen checking all written work.
- ✓ Writing in a range of styles (fiction and non-fiction).
- ✓ Redrafting work.
- ✓ Self-assessing work against the assessment criteria.
- ✓ Independent reading of a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- ✓ Keep a reading log, summarizing and analysing your reading.
- ✓ Create a WOW vocabulary log.

In order to succeed in the study of English Language and Literature, students will need to have an extensive vocabulary, articulate use of Standard English in verbal and written form, a command of a range of punctuation and grammatical structures, and careful reading and proofreading skills.

### Extending Learning

Of course, the study of English Language and English Literature at GCSE is never just about passing exams. The English Department seeks to provide opportunities for students to enrich learning at KS4 and KS5. Some of these include:

- Theatre trips to enjoy live productions of set texts
- Poetry By Heart (for Years 10-13)
- Workshops in central London or trips to The Globe for KS5 students
- Creative Writing Society
- The unique opportunity to promote the subject in fun ways as an Ambassador
- Master classes to extend more able students
- Independent reading recommendations (upon request)

## Strategies for Learning

### Consolidating Learning



Research shows that reviewing information soon after it has been learnt allows students to remember much more. Returning to the learning from a lesson later in the same day will allow you to be much more successful.

### Organising Learning



You will complete a significant amount of classwork, homework, independent work and other activities in preparation for your GCSE exams. Successful students find ways to organise their time and learning effectively so that it is of use to them.

### COPE Strategies:

- Create flash cards after each lesson or at the end of each week covering key content.
- Keep a log of key quotations on an ongoing basis.
- Use Quizlet and Memorise regularly.
- Review class notes within 24 hours of the lesson.

### COPE Strategies:

- Write a blog to share your learning with others.
- Support KS3 students to strengthen your skills.
- Create a homework timetable.
- Title and date your work clearly.
- Complete exam questions in timed conditions.
- Use banks of practice questions to create a booklet of essay/writing plans.

### Preparing Revision Materials

Successful students prepare for revision and revise earlier topics throughout the year – this means creating revision materials throughout the year in preparation for the exam period. They will also revise constantly so they do not become rusty on earlier topics. They use in class assessments and Pre-Public exams to perfect their revision strategies.



### Exam Practice

Ultimately, your success will be measured in the public exams at the end of Year 11. Successful students practise many past papers, find effective ways to monitor and improve their exam technique, and are very familiar with the mark scheme and how it will be applied.



## Structure of exams

### English Language Paper 1: Fiction and Imaginative Writing. 40% of total GCSE (64 marks)

1 hour 45 minute exam

#### Section A: Fiction reading (15%)

- One unseen 19<sup>th</sup> Century fiction extract (approximately 650 words)
- Mixture of short and extended questions

#### Section B: Imaginative Writing (25%)

- Choice of imaginative writing tasks
- Tasks linked thematically to Section A text
- One task includes stimulus images

### English Literature Paper 1: Shakespeare and Post-1914 Literature. 50% of total GCSE (80 marks)

1 hour 45 minute exam

#### Section A: Shakespeare (25%)

- Part a) requires close language analysis of an extract (approx. 30 lines)
- Part b) requires analysis of the relationship between a theme in the extract and the rest of the play

#### Section B: Post-1914 Literature (25%)

- One essay question (from a choice of two)
- Each question provides a quotation as stimulus. Students must relate one of

### English Language Paper 2: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing. 60% of total GCSE (96 marks)

2 hour exam

#### Section A: Non-fiction reading (35%)

- Two unseen 20<sup>th</sup> Century and 21<sup>st</sup> Century texts (Total: 600 – 1000 words)
- Questions on first text and then the second
- One question synthesizing understanding across both texts
- One question comparing both extracts

#### Section B: Imaginative Writing (25%)

- Choice of transactional writing tasks
- Tasks linked thematically to Section A text

### English Literature Paper 2: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Novel and Poetry since 1798. 50% of total GCSE (80 marks)

2 hour 15 minute exam

#### Section A: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Novel (25%)

- Part 1 requires close language analysis of an extract (approx. 400 words)
- Part 2 may focus on different aspects of the text, such as character(s), theme(s), and setting(s)

#### Section B: Poetry since 1789 (25%)

- Part 1 is a question comparing language, form, structure and context in one named anthology poem and one poem of the student's choice
- Part 2 is a question comparing language, form and structure in two unseen contemporary poems linked

## Useful Websites



The Edexcel website provides useful information on the specification, practice papers and mark schemes for English Language and Literature.

### English Language:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/english-language-2015.html>

### English Literature:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/english-language-2015.html>



### The English Department YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SGSEnglish>



**Sparknotes** is a useful website for revising key terminology, events, characters, themes and settings in literature texts. Students have found the No Fear Shakespeare section particularly helpful.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/>



The website **enotes** is useful for accessing simple summaries of Literature texts.

<http://www.enotes.com/>

**DODDLE** The **Doddle** website is monitored by teachers. It contains a range of resources and quizzes to support students' learning and teachers use this to set work for classes and individual students to help them improve.

<http://www.doddlelearn.co.uk/>



The **Zondle** website contains a range of games designed to support students reading and writing skills.

<https://www.zondle.com/publicPagesv2/>

You should also make regular use of resources on BBC Bitesize and look out for EDMODO invitations from your teacher.

## Recommended reading for the summer holidays

### Top three books from reading4kids.com, June 2016

1. The Book of Pearl - Timothee De Fombelle
2. Five Hundred Miles - Kevin Brooks
3. Notes on Being Teenage - Jana Rosalind

### Reading to help you prepare for your GCSE English studies

Getting used to the different styles of reading for GCSE would be a great way to prepare. Here's some ideas to get you going, a quick search on Amazon, or a conversation with your local librarian will reveal a whole world of amazing stories!

#### Nineteenth century novels:

The Sign of Four – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
Kidnapped – Robert Louis Stevenson  
The water Babies – Charles Kinglsey  
Little Women – Louisa May Alcott  
Black Beauty – Anna Sewell  
Oliver Twist – Charles Dickens  
Hard Times – Charles Dickens  
Treasure Island – Robert Louis Stevenson  
The Hound of the Baskervilles – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
Alice in Wonderland – Lewis Carrol

#### Shakespeare:

**Veronica Bennett, *Shakespeare's Apprentice***(2007), about an apprentice actor who falls in love with a niece of Lord Essex shortly before Essex is convicted of treason.

**Gary Blackwood, *The Shakespeare Stealer***(1998), about an orphaned boy who is instructed by his master to steal the manuscript of a play from Shakespeare; #1 in the Shakespeare Stealer series.

**Peter Hassinger, *Shakespeare's Daughter*** (2004), about a daughter of Shakespeare who dreams of becoming a singer and goes to visit him in London.

**Anthony Horowitz, *The Devil and His Boy*** (2000), about a thirteen-year-old boy who joins a troupe of actors and then learns they are plotting to overthrow Queen Elizabeth.

#### Modern literature:

Susan Hill's Ghost Story Anthology  
Strange meeting – Susan Hill  
Brave new world – Aldous Huxley  
The time Machine – HG Wells  
Lord of the Flies – William Golding  
The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy – Douglas Adams  
Ender's Game – Orson Scott Card

#### AND DON'T FORGET THE POETRY...

The Nation's favourite Poems – Edited by Griff Rhys Jones  
100 Best-Loved Poems – Edited by Philip Smith