

KS3 English curriculum

Our Year 7 Literature curriculum takes students on a journey through Elizabethan London and Shakespearean language. Students start the year by reading the novel, 'The Devil and his Boy' by Anthony Horowitz. This explores Shakespeare's theatre, the form of a novel and themes such as gender, class, injustice and the supernatural. Later in the year, the students study Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Students will become familiar with concepts of the era such as the Age of Exploration, Colonialism, Shakespeare's life and works. . Finally, their journey ends with the study of the origins of language with the epic poem, *Beowulf*. Through this unit, students will learn about etymology, idioms, kennings, oral storytelling, heroes, protagonists and antagonists.

Alongside this learning, students undertake further units, which develop them as writers. They study the art of storytelling and then learn how to subvert a fairy tale of their choice. They then move onto non-fiction writing, in the form of a formal letter. These units are underpinned by the English grammar of word types, simple tenses and sentence structures. In Year 7, we explore the elements of the foundation of the rhetoric: the analysis paragraph which eventually leads to a standpoint, evidence, and inference. The bedrock of quality creative and functional writing is also the paragraph; in this case we cement the crafting of punctuation, sentences and paragraphing for impact. Their final writing allows them to write creatively, exploring poetry and allowing them to craft their own poem using language devices and imagery.

A third and final element of the English curriculum at QE is oracy. Through three separate units throughout the year, the students are given the opportunity to use talk as a tool for learning and for conceptualising ideas. These units have individual, paired and group outcomes so that students are facilitated in their experiences of different types of talk and in learning the art of rhetoric.

During Year 8 the students consider the concepts of personality and character. They start the Year reading the novel, *A Monster Calls*, which explores the duality of human nature, loss, grief and inner strength and hope. The monster famously tells Conor that, 'There is not always a good guy. Nor is there always a bad one. Most people are somewhere in between' and it is this message that is central to the novel. Within this unit, they will have the opportunity to explore genre and narrative conventions such as allegory and myths and learn, in more detail, how to make inferences and deductions. Continuing this idea of duality, the students' then study Gothic Fiction. Within this unit they will become familiar with Gothic conventions of *The Uncanny*, *The Unseen Antagonist*, *The Sublime* as well as authorial intent and unreliable narrators. Here, we find ourselves in the Victorian period, where we meet writer such as Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley. Later in the year the students have the opportunity to study a multimedia text comparison of *Life of Pi*, when they learn about India throughout history, emigration, genre conventions and film methods) and film methods.

Alongside this learning, the students have opportunities to develop their writing skills. Intertwining with the idea of duality, the students create an 'alter-ego' character in their own creative writing narrative. Within this study, they will become familiar with synonyms and intensifiers, narrative perspective, verb choice and sentence structure for effect. Embedded within their study of the Gothic, they craft their own Gothic story opening, using a range of language devices and sentence types, while employing conventions of the genre in their own writing. The bedrock of quality creative and functional writing is also the

paragraph; in this case we cement the crafting of punctuation, sentences and paragraphing for impact. Their final writing unit of the year encourages creative responses from a visual 'other-culture' prompt, which compliments their study of other cultures through Life of Pi.

Continuing our recognition of the importance of oracy, simultaneous to all of these units are opportunities for talk. Students work within groups to plan and present a charity campaign, use group work to discuss a contemporary Gothic novel and end the year with a drama unit where they script and perform an additional scene from a play, incorporating their dramatic and creative flair.

At the beginning of Year 9 all students study *Of Mice and Men*. It is here that we delve into The Great Depression and 1930s America. Students learn about the context of the time, including inequality, discrimination, The American Dream and the plight of itinerant travellers. Many of these themes are echoed in their later study of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, where students learn about the historical context of the Elizabethan era, such as gender inequality and patriarchy. Within this unit, they depend their understanding of Shakespeare's writing by exploring concepts of deception, feminism, soliloquy, stagecraft, comedy, tragedy and verbal sparring. Leaving behind the Elizabethans, we move to the Modernist period we meet another influential poet, Wilfred Owen and explore his impact on the public perception of World War One. Here, we are introduced to other War Poets and we also examine their influence on contemporary war poetry. This study compliments and provides an early introduction to some of the poems that students will study at GCSE.

Alongside this learning, student continue to learn how to write well. Using passive voice to create journalistic tone, the student craft their own journalistic articles. They then create their own Dystopian narrative and finally explore descriptive writing through a study of the Fantasy genre. Within these units, students fine-tune sentence control, structural shifts and use of language devices for effect. To further develop creative and functional writing, we explore the impact of tenses and vocabulary choice, and then learn a formal approach to planning, drafting and proof-reading. This is underpinned by the English grammar of more advanced word types, continuous tenses, and sentence types.

Throughout the year, oracy opportunities are embedded into each unit. Students conduct a group debate on an issue arising from the novel *Of Mice and Men* and learn debate etiquette for public speaking. During their dystopian fiction writing, they group read and discuss the dystopian novel, 'The Declaration'. Finally, they use group work to script a scene from a nineteenth century short story that they have read through group work and collective study.

KS4

Philip Pullman famously said, "“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.” At QE, we believe that the desire to tell our own story and to listen to the stories of others are at the heart of what it means to be human. We want our English curriculum to empower our students to be able to give voice to their own stories but also to listen to and truly appreciate and understand the stories of others.

At Key Stage 4, we have selected a range of texts that all address the big questions of how human beings behave towards each other: how we do behave in reality, day to day and how we should behave towards each other to create a fairer, kinder world. In focusing on this key question that lies at the heart of any civilised society, we want to show our students that literature doesn't shy away from exploring the knotty problems of human

existence. Texts written many years apart by diverse writers continue to engage in this dialogue about how we should live together. We want our students to learn that literature is a living breathing art form that cares and holds us to account if we would but listen to its messages and heed and enact its warnings in our own lives.

We begin our study of English Literature GCSE with the study of the eternally relevant, 'An Inspector Calls'. Students study this classic play exploring Priestley's stagecraft and the ways in which he communicates his urgent message of the need for collective social responsibility, particularly that of the rich caring for the poor, the strong caring for the weak. Alongside the script, we explore how the language, structure and form of a text reveals the writer's intention and provokes a reader's response. We consider contextual factors affecting a writer's perspective of a text, which then enables us to explore and develop personal viewpoint and thesis. Following on from An Inspector Calls, such themes of power and the conflict that can ensue from a misuse of this power are then explored by different poets from different time periods in our AQA Poetry Anthology. Students study poems from poets as varied as the social visionary and proto-Romantic William Blake writing in the Georgian period (1820s) to the current poet laureate, Simon Armitage. All poems explore the nature of power, the possibility of conflict within the individual but also within political systems and ultimately world conflict in the form of wars and the ways in which these geo-political forces affect the individual. Of course, as we explore theme and message, we are able to draw our students' attention to how a poet's use of form and structure change and evolve and how they contribute in subtle ways to displaying and emphasising the poet's message to maximum effect which, in turn, prepares our students for study at A Level. In our writing, we discover how to present different purposes to diverse audiences and master distinct text types, which is underpinned by the English grammar of complex word types and advanced sentence crafting. We build upon the strong foundation of accurate and powerful writing by developing a personal voice and style, which achieves greater creativity.

Such a reflective exploration of the experience of being human in a world of competing forces then leads us into the study of Shakespeare's tragedy, 'Macbeth', where the inability to handle a personal thirst for power turns a decorated war hero into a throne stealer and a child murderer. Students are encouraged to consider modern Macbeths and whether the ability to manage a thirst for power is still a much-needed skill in modern politics. Our study of 'A Christmas Carol' then further explores ideas of social responsibility and the need for compassion and connection within society, as we study Scrooge's painfully education in the correct use of financial and personal power. We encourage students to reflect on a different authorial intention in Dickens' intentional salvation of Scrooge as an example to the reader of how personal change can occur and compassion and selflessness can triumph if the individual receives sufficient guidance.

In our study of all these texts, whilst we explore the beauty, power and endless inventiveness of language and its ability to create worlds and characters beyond our everyday experience, we also feel that we expose our students to the best writing that allows them to reflect on their own life and enact some of the messages they learn from great writers, past and present. Within our study of such a variety of different texts, we look at how to identify implicit and explicit information, analyse language and structure whilst at the same time evaluating writers' methods, enabling our students to be able to write creatively, either writing to describe or narrate.

At QE, we are passionate about our students becoming perceptive readers and compelling writers.

In higher education, in the world of work and in our everyday lives, it has never been more essential to understand what we read, and recognize how writers employ language to shape the way we see the world around us. In English, we study how authors use words to create fictional worlds which fill us with delight, hope, horror or fear. In addition to this, we look at how non-fiction writers tackle diverse topics, from sport and education to colonialism and environmental disaster, and how the way they write influences our point of view. Through creative writing, be it descriptions of gothic castles or stories about time travel, our students are encouraged to develop their own distinctive voices.