

# English Literature

## A level

### What will I study and learn?

The course builds on the appreciation of literature that you have gained at GCSE and enables you to explore texts in more depth. It will extend your ability to read critically and think independently through close examination of some challenging and exciting texts.

You will study plays, poems, and novels, and you will also have the opportunity to write an extended essay on two texts of your own choice.

### How will I be assessed?

The A level course is linear, which means that all three, equally-weighted papers will be taken at the end of the Upper Sixth:

#### Examinations

##### Paper 1 (2 hour 15 minutes)

Drama

**Section A.** One question from a choice of two on a Shakespeare play: either *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, or *Twelfth Night*.

**Section B.** One essay question from a choice of two on another play: either *Doctor Faustus*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Home Place*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Pitmen Painters*, *The Rover*, or *Waiting for Godot*.

##### Paper 2

Prose

One comparative essay question from a choice of two on two prose texts. For example, *The Colour Purple and Atonement*; *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Mrs Dalloway*; *Frankenstein* and *The Handmaid's Tale*; or *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Beloved*.

##### Paper 3

Poetry

**Section A.** One question from a choice of two, comparing an unseen poem with a named poem from the Post-2000 Anthology.

**Section B.** One question from a choice of two on a chosen poet / movement of poetry. For example, Christina Rossetti, T.S. Eliot, the Romantics, or Modernism.

#### Coursework

Essay

A 3,000-word essay on two texts of your own choice, linked by a theme. For example, an exploration of the presentation of sexual awakening in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy and *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf.

### What skills will I develop?

You can certainly expect to learn to think for yourself and make significant progress in your handling of written English. Perhaps no other subject has so direct an application to the fundamental requirements of employable adults: that they can express themselves fluently and persuasively in writing and conversation; that they can read the most demanding written material and make appropriate judgments on it; and that they can respond humanely and imaginatively to the complex situations they face every day. Former students have found successful careers in such diverse fields as law, medicine, marketing, theatre, and the media.

## A level/IB

The main requirement for a student of English Literature is a love of reading. The extent to which the meaning of a text may hang upon the interpretation of a single, carefully-placed word or phrase, the way in which writers employ language to body forth the deepest anxieties and richest joys of the human experience, and the way in which you, as a reader, encounter aspects of yourself in the texts you

read and discuss – these things will make the study of literature an exciting and richly rewarding experience.

You'll embark upon a journey of cultural discovery and enrichment that should last your whole lifetime. Appreciation of art, music, film, etc. exercises the same muscles in the brain that are used in responding

to literature, and the connections between what you're doing in English and what you're discussing in other academic subjects should become ever more apparent as you progress through the Sixth Form.



## IB – English Language A: Literature

The course has the potentially misleading title of English Language A: Literature, but it is essentially an English Literature course, and it forms a central part of the rigorous and internationally recognised IB curriculum, allowing you to develop your written as well as oral skills by reading a wide range of literary texts from across the world.

Over the course of the two years you can expect to study thirteen texts at higher level or nine at standard level. The IB has certain criteria in place to make sure these texts are as varied as possible. As a result you can expect to study at least three literary genres (eg poetry, drama, prose fiction, etc.), at least three different literary periods (ranging from the sixteenth century to the present day), and all of these texts have to come from at least two different continents.

There are three areas of exploration that are covered over the two-year course:

### Readers, writers and texts

This area of exploration introduces students to the nature of literature and its study. The investigation students will undertake involves close attention to the details of texts in a variety of literary forms to learn about the choices made by authors and the ways in which meaning is created.

### Time and space

This area of exploration focuses on the idea that literary texts are neither created nor received in a vacuum. It explores the variety of cultural contexts in which literary texts are written and read across time and space as well as the ways literature itself – in its content – mirrors the world at large.

### Intertextuality

This area of exploration focuses on intertextual concerns or the connections between and among diverse literary texts, traditions, creators and ideas. It focuses on the comparative study of literary texts so that students may gain deeper appreciation of both unique characteristics of individual literary texts and complex systems of connection.

### What skills will I develop?

Owing to its stimulating and challenging nature, you can expect to emerge from the course at the end of the Upper Sixth having honed a wide range of skills. Reading a wide, and international, range of exciting texts means that you will be able to improve your ability to read and think critically. The Works in Translation element of the course, with its essay, will mean that reflection and independent research skills are built into the course. As there are two oral assessments, you should come away as a more confident public speaker, and you will also have the chance to do some creative writing within Part 4. Written comprehension and discussion of texts go hand in hand throughout the course.

### How will I be assessed?

External assessment			Internal assessment
<b>Paper 1</b> Guided literary analysis SL and HL (35%)	<b>Paper 2</b> Comparative essay SL (35%) and HL (25%)	<b>Higher level essay</b> HL (20%)	<b>Individual oral</b> Collaborative project SL (30%) and HL (20%)
The paper consists of two passages, from two different literary forms, each accompanied by a question. SL: Students choose one passage and write an analysis of it (1 hour 15 minutes). HL: Students write an analysis of each of the passages (2 hours 15 minutes).	The paper consists of four general questions. In response to one question, students write a comparative essay based on two works studied in the course.	Students submit an essay on one literary text or work studied during the course. The essay must be 1,200–1,500 words in length.	Students will offer a prepared response of 10 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of questions by the teacher, to the following prompt: Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of two of the works that you have studied.

### Want to know more?

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Exam Board:  
www.qualifications.pearson.com  
(Edexcel)  
www.ibo.org

“A great atmosphere of learning is fostered in the small classes and there is always great discussion.

Oskar Bishop, OB 2020

Courses: Biology, English Literature and History