

# English Literature

## 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.

## 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.

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.



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

**Oskar, OB**  
Courses: Biology, English  
Literature and History





## Want to know more?

Mr Peter Forster  
Head of English  
pforster@bgs.bristol.sch.uk

Exam Board:  
qualifications.pearson.com  
(Edexcel)

### 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: Drama (2h 15m)

###### 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 (1h 15m)

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 (2h 15m)

###### 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.

#### Essay

##### Coursework

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.

#### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

You should achieve a grade 7 or above in GCSE/IGCSE English Literature to study this course.