

## Curriculum guidance and rationale

## YEAR 7 – THE ODYSSEY/EXPEDITIONS

Theme strand: Islands and Adventures | Skill strand: Exploring the Writer's Craft

Greek mythology	Gods/goddesses	Voyage	Hero
Greek islands	Suitor	Cyclops	Fate
Sacrifice to the gods	Trojan war	Trickery/deception	Pasture
Ewe/ram	Prophecy	Oared ship (Galley)	Olympus
Oral tradition	The Classical world		

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

The aim of the Year 7 course is to immerse students in stories and the craft of the writer. To begin this journey, it is necessary for us to explore the origins of narrative, and consider some of the most ancient stories that still survive in our culture. The two Greek epics by Homer (*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*) have been enormously influential to the development of Western literature, and almost certainly evolved from a vibrant oral tradition of storytelling in the Ancient Greek world, so they give us an ideal starting point for our journey with Year 7.

We have chosen to use *The Odyssey* rather than *The Iliad* because it will allow us to make use of Emily Wilson's accessible and vibrant 2017 translation of the text; we think Wilson's unpretentious, yet often beautiful, writing style will be particularly suited to the Year 7 course with its special focus on the writer's craft.

*The Odyssey* also nicely sets up the Year 7 course theme of Islands and Adventures, and the idea of stories as journeys, which tracks right across the year and culminates in a study of Shakespeare's *Pericles* - a text with some thematic and structural similarities to *The Odyssey*.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Students will be provided with two excerpts from Wilson's translation: the first is part of the beginning of Book I, which establishes the central predicament of Odysseus and the role played by the gods in the story; the second is a much longer excerpt taken from Book 9, in which Odysseus recounts his adventure with the Cyclops. In addition to these excerpts, students will be provided with a brief summary of the wider narrative.

Teaching will be through class reading and discussion of the texts. The 'adventure' aspect of the unit will be supported by reading and studying a collection of nonfiction texts on the themes of exploration and expeditions. Students will consider some examples of real-life expeditions, which will feed into this term's portfolio project.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Read and enjoy a range of fiction and nonfiction texts on the theme of adventure/expeditions;
- Explore some of the context for *The Odyssey*, including a basic overview of Greek mythology and the Classical world;
- Reflect on how aspects of the writer's craft are being used in *The Odyssey* – how and why is it an engaging story?
- Reflect on the character of Odysseus and the extent to which he meets our expectations of a hero;
- Practise discussion skills.

### ASSESSMENT – CREATIVE PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Produce an 'expedition scrapbook', documenting your imagined expedition. This will include at least three pieces of prose writing, each between 250-500 words, which may take inspiration from *The Odyssey* and other texts you have read this term. You may wish to include journal entries, news reports, or first-person narrative pieces. In addition to this, you may include any supplementary texts that further describe aspects of your expedition, such as maps, plans or character profiles.
- *For at least one of their prose pieces, students must include a marked first draft accompanied by the final, improved version.*
- *Students must also produce an annotated self-critique of one of their prose pieces.*

## YEAR 7 – THE ISLAND AT THE END OF EVERYTHING

Theme strand: Islands and Adventures | Skill strand: Exploring the Writer's Craft

Leprosy	Lepidopterist	Quarantine	Colony
Philippines	Germs	Deformity	Mother-daughter bond
Nun	Missionary	Orphanage	Sailboat
Heirloom	Prejudice	Contamination	Obsessive
Coming-of-age	Traditions	Outsider	Punishment and discipline

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

Through reading and studying the excerpts from *The Odyssey*, students will have been introduced to the course theme 'Islands and Adventures' and the idea that reading itself can be an adventure. This term's text, *The Island at the End of Everything* reflects the theme in a very different way: it is written by a female author, with a female protagonist and a strong focus on the relationship between a daughter and her mother. In addition to this, the book introduces some thematic complexity, particularly around some of the emotions and relationships that are explored, as well as exploring the real-world historical context of leper colonies. The prose is vivid and lyrical, providing ample opportunities for analysing and discussing the effects of writers' language choices.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

As with *The Odyssey*, teaching is based around whole-class reading of the text, focusing on the core skills of retrieval, analysis, comparison, evaluation and context. Students will be expected to analyse, annotate and discuss key extracts from the story, supporting their developing understanding of the writer's craft and logging their progress towards this on their tracker sheets. Students will be encouraged to compare and draw links with last term's work as they read, considering the extent to which the course theme of 'Islands and Adventures' is explored differently in this term's work, as well as engaging creatively with the text and developing their writing skills through the portfolio project.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Read and enjoy a complete novel as a class;
- Explore how the writer uses the skills of *the writer's craft*;
- Develop empathy for characters;
- Understand the historical context of leprosy/leper colonies;
- Develop discussion skills.

### ASSESSMENT – CREATIVE PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Produce a collection of letters sent to and from characters in *The Island at the End of Everything*. This will include at least three letters, each between 250-500 words. You may wish to write some of the letters sent from Culion Island which were intercepted by Mr Zamora, or imagine the letters that Ami might have sent to her mother while she was at the orphanage on Curon Island.
- *For at least one of their prose pieces, students must include a marked first draft accompanied by the final, improved version.*
- *Students must also produce an annotated self-critique of one of their prose pieces.*

## YEAR 7 – PERICLES

Theme strand: Islands and Adventures | Skill strand: Exploring the Writer's Craft

Shakespeare's theatre	Fate/Destiny	Assassin	Shipwreck
Greek gods	Ancient Greece/The Levant	Famine	Knights' Tournament
Episodic narrative	Family bonds	Grief	Reunion

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

The National Curriculum mandates that students in KS3 cover two Shakespeare texts. We have chosen to teach these in Year 7 and Year 9. Given the Year 7 course theme of Islands and Adventures, with its focus on storytelling and the 'writer's craft', it was necessary to select a Shakespeare text with a propulsive adventure plot and a sense of movement/travel, which also reflects aspects of the oral storytelling tradition. Additionally, given our focus on narrative in Year 7, we want students to appreciate Shakespeare as an entertainer and storyteller first and foremost: whilst Pericles is not considered amongst his greatest works from a literary perspective, it was nonetheless one of his most popular plays in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which is testament to its power as a piece of escapist popular entertainment and, ultimately, as a true story for the masses.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Students study an abridged version of the play which omits the problematic sub-plot involving Marina's abduction and enslavement. Our version of the story tracks Pericles' journey episodically, maintaining a sense of narrative movement but allowing students the creative freedom to engage in imaginative writing that 'fills in the gaps'. Students will appreciate that the Pericles/Apollonius story was already ancient before Shakespeare wrote his version, and so will be encouraged to feel a sense of ownership and freedom when working on their own interpretations of key moments in the narrative.

Coverage of the play text will be accomplished through class reading and discussion. Students will be encouraged to make notes on their copy of the text as they progress through the play, and in-class responses will take the form of short creative pieces inspired by the text, and linking back to the key skills of the 'writer's craft' which have been taught throughout the year.

As preparation for their portfolio project, students will also study a range of narrative poetry that supports/reflects thematic aspects of the Pericles story and the course theme of Islands and Adventures.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Understand the original context in which the play would have been performed;
- Read, understand and enjoy the play;
- Practise using the skills of the 'writer's craft';
- Gain confidence in reading and understanding Shakespeare's language;
- Evaluate how the play reflects aspects of the 'writer's craft';
- Understand features of narrative poetry.

### ASSESSMENT – CREATIVE PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Produce a collection of poems of different forms that document the experiences and adventures of Pericles. You should aim to include at least three poems.
- *For at least one of their poems, students must include a marked first draft accompanied by the final, improved version.*
- *Students must also produce an annotated self-critique of one of their poem*

## YEAR 7/8/9 – ‘OUR LANGUAGE’ (ETYMOLOGY, MORPHOLOGY AND GRAMMAR)

Etymology	Morphology	Anglo-Saxon	Latin
Evolve	Morpheme	Prefix	Suffix
Root	Noun	Verb	Adjective
Adverb	Pronoun	Preposition	Conjunction
Clause	Sentence	Simple tense	Continuous tense
Perfect tense	Subject	Object	Complement

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

For students to be effective communicators in the world, and in their life beyond secondary school, it is vital that they have a decent grasp of the English Language. Knowledge of language is immensely powerful, and young people whose vocabulary range is narrow will find themselves ultimately out-competed in their lives by those whose communication skills are more advanced. Students who read widely outside of school are likely to acquire vocabulary and the rudiments of grammar naturally and will be able to infer meanings intuitively; however, for students who do not read (i.e. the majority) these skills are unavailable. These students are at a huge disadvantage. Therefore, it is our responsibility to teach them more explicit methods of decoding meaning and forming sentences, firstly by demonstrating how words are constructed from morphemes, and how knowledge of key roots and prefixes can help them grasp the meanings of unfamiliar words; and, secondly, by explicitly teaching clause structure and how sentences are constructed.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

#### **Part 1 – Etymology and morphology**

This unit of work introduces students firstly to the concept of etymology, i.e. the study of where words come from and how they evolve. Following this, students learn how words are built from smaller units called morphemes. Students will learn about the three kinds of morpheme - prefix, suffix and root - and will gain a working knowledge of the most common prefixes and roots. Equipped with this knowledge, students will develop their skills of inferring meaning through morphological analysis of words.

#### **Part 2 – Grammar and syntax**

Once students are familiar with the key groups of roots and prefixes, and are comfortable with the concept of morphology, they will begin to explore how English sentences are formed. Students will re-visit core knowledge of word classes, and will learn how clauses are formed from subjects, verbs and objects. Students will learn about the different types of sentence as well as revisiting key knowledge of punctuation - including advanced punctuation such as colon, semicolon and parenthesis – and exploring tense.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Explain some of the influences on the evolution of the English Language;
- List the most common English prefixes and their meanings;
- List the most common English roots and their meanings;
- Know the difference between nominal, verbal and adjectival suffixes;
- Use knowledge of morphology to infer meanings of unfamiliar words;
- Identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions;
- Identify subjects, verbs and objects within clauses;
- Identify and explain the three types of sentence: simple, compound and complex;
- Recognize and explain simple, continuous and perfect tenses.
- Identify and use basic and advanced punctuation, including colons, semicolons and parenthesis

## YEAR 8 – THE PRINCE OF MIST

Theme strand: *Lights in the Darkness* | Skill strand: *Developing a Creative Voice*

Genre	Deception	Animalistic	Protagonist
Antagonist	Foreshadowing	Foreboding	Magician
Coming-of-age	Retribution	Charismatic	Horror
Sinister	Supernatural	Sacrifice	Circus

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

A primary drive of the English Department is to promote a love of reading. In each unit we teach we embed the opportunity to read and enjoy a text to its end. When teaching a text, it is first introduced with an explanation given as to why this text was chosen and exploration of context conducted. As the investigation of the text continues, key terminology (see the table above) is introduced and its meaning explained, then linked and discussed in the context of the text and the experience of the students.

We have chosen *The Prince of Mist* specifically because it develops the Year 8 theme strand of *Lights in the Darkness* as it challenges students to search for the 'light in the darkness' in an alternative way. The texts being linked by a theme strand encourages comparisons and the consideration of alternative ways to approach a concept. The Autumn Term text, *Private Peaceful*, introduces the theme strand in a more overt way by considering the 'lights in the darkness' Tommo tries to find in the environment of WWI. In *The Prince of Mist* students must consider Max Carver's search for light in a new home and to stand against the sinister figure of Cain. Additional characters, such as Alicia, bring in a female perspective when exploring her search for comfort and stability in a foreign and supernatural environment.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Teaching consists of whole-class reading of the text and students are supplied with a copy of the text by the English Department. Students will be encouraged firstly to simply understand and enjoy the story, but will be increasingly required to scrutinise the effects of Zafon's language and the genre of the text and to use this as a stimulus for creating their own pieces of microfiction. The previous unit covered transactional writing and links will be made from this regarding the need to consider and influence a reader, plus grammatical forms when writing. Reflection on previous pieces of writing is crucial before approaching new pieces. Textual study and key terminology will help the students to draft and refine their pieces of horror microfiction with imagination, creativity and relish as they try to 'out-spook' one another.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Explain the narrative of *The Prince of Mist*;
- Describe the principal characters in *The Prince of Mist*;
- Reflect on how the text displays elements of 'Lights in the Darkness';
- Understand the key terms introduced this term;
- Understand the conventions of the horror genre;
- Use the text as a catalyst for creating microfiction in the horror genre.

### ASSESSMENT

Academic Portfolio tasks:

- Produce a collection of microfiction texts in the horror genre. Students may wish to take inspiration for this project from characters and events in *The Prince of Mist*. Students must produce at least five pieces of microfiction, with each text being between 100-400 words. In these texts, students should demonstrate understanding of the typical features of the horror genre, including mood and atmosphere, tension and suspense, and the characterization of a villain.
- *For at least two of your pieces of microfiction, students must include a marked first draft accompanied by the final, improved versions.*
- *Students must also produce an annotated self-critique of at least two of their pieces of microfiction.*

## YEAR 8 – THE GRAVEYARD BOOK/THE JUNGLE BOOK

Theme strand: *Lights in the Darkness* | Skill strand: *Developing a Creative Voice*

Episodic narrative	Protagonist	Antagonist	Coming-of-age
Mentor	Homage	Orphan	Life lessons
Rebellion	Gothic	Assassin	Witch trial
Family	Neolithic	Headstone	Temptation

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

By the summer term of Year 8, students will already have explored *Private Peaceful* and *The Prince of Mist* in depth. In both of these texts, students will have discovered different elements of the course theme 'Lights in the Darkness', as well as aspects of the *bildungsroman* (coming-of-age) narrative format. *The Graveyard Book* is a natural text to finish the year with as it develops some of the horror tropes from *The Prince of Mist*, and builds on the 'darkness' aspect of the course theme; it also demonstrates the *bildungsroman* format more completely than the previous two texts, so students can discover how this narrative form operates across a whole novel. In addition to this, *The Graveyard Book* is a complex and challenging work that will stretch students' skills of analysis and evaluation as well as introducing new stylistic features such as the episodic structure, which students will have the opportunity to try out in their portfolio project.

To provide literary context to their studies of *The Graveyard Book*, students will examine key extracts of Kipling's classic text *The Jungle Book*, which it was directly inspired by. This exercise will introduce skills of comparison and allow students to reflect on the idea of literary homage.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Teaching will consist of whole-class reading of the text, focusing on the core reading skills of retrieval, analysis, comparison and evaluation. Students will be required to annotate key extracts from the text as they read. Three extracts from *The Jungle Book* will be read alongside their equivalent sequences in *The Graveyard Book* and students will have the opportunity to explore how Gaiman adapts and references elements of Kipling's storytelling in these sequences.

A key focus will be enjoyment of the story and the act of reading. While students will be regularly tested on their knowledge of characters and events, and questioning and discussion will form a significant part of lessons, they will not be required to produce extended analytical responses: assessed work will instead take the form of creative responses leading to an extended narrative piece.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Read and enjoy a complete novel as a class;
- Understand the features of an episodic novel and utilize these in own creative work;
- Understand the idea of literary homage through making comparisons between *The Jungle Book* and *The Graveyard Book*;
- Understand what is meant by a 'coming-of-age' story;

### ASSESSMENT – CREATIVE PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Students will devise a concept for an episodic novel in the style of *The Graveyard Book* and *The Jungle Book*, including a complete chapter. The concept should echo the key narrative features of both books.
- In addition to the complete chapter (500-800 words), students must produce a 'chapter outline' which includes a title and synopsis or each of the planned chapters.
- *Portfolios must include a marked first draft of the chapter, accompanied by the final, upgraded version.*
- *There must also produce an annotated self-critique of all or part of the chapter.*

## YEAR 9 – THE OUTSIDERS

Theme strand: *Identities in Conflict* | Skill strand: *Developing a Critical Voice*

Social class	Family	Gang	Dropout
1960s	Drive-in movie	Fugitive	Midwest USA
Coming-of-age	Redemption	Identity	Smoking
Heroism	Rebellion	Conflict	First-person narrator

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

The Year 9 course invites students to consider a range of diverse voices, perspectives and identities - and to explore the tensions that can arise between different groups in society. We have chosen to introduce this the course theme through S.E. Hinton's seminal young adult novel *The Outsiders*, a coming-of-age story which deals with ideas of social class, identity and belonging – all of which recur throughout the course, and further on into Year 10 and 11 with our study of *Blood Brothers*. Given that students move from a creative to an academic focus in Year 9, it was important to choose an accessible, relatable text that will ease students towards academic analysis, and serve as a 'bridge' from Year 8 into the more mature territory of Year 9. With its coming-of-age narrative, *The Outsiders* follows on neatly from *The Graveyard Book*, which is also charts the journey of a young protagonist finding his place in the world.

Given the predominance of male authors in Years 7 and 8, the choice to start Year 9 with a female-authored text was deliberate. The fact that S.E. Hinton was only 17 years old when the book was published is also inspiring and motivating to students: we want our students to view themselves as writers, and this book proves that it is possible to become a published author whilst still a teenager!

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Lessons should be built around class reading and discussion. Students should be encouraged to approach the text critically and analytically, focusing on the presentation of theme, narrative and character, as well as Hinton's use of language. The text should be used as a vehicle for introducing skills of academic writing – so students should be encouraged to produce short analytical responses to key passages in the text.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Introduce skills of academic/analytical writing;
- Practise exploratory class discussion;
- Familiarize students with key themes of social class division and identity
- Practise reading skills: Retrieve, Analyse, Evaluate, Context.

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Three short analysis responses to key moments in the text (300-400 words each)



## YEAR 9 – THE DESTRUCTORS AND EVELINE

Theme strand: *Identities in Conflict* | Skill strand: *Developing a Critical Voice*

Blitz	Working class	Middle class	Vandalism
Irony	Ambiguity	Leadership	Rules & Routines
Abuse	Alienation	Gender expectations	Responsibility
Paralysis	Panic attack	Dilemma	Domestic chores
Rebellion	Catholic	Amoral	

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

Through their reading of Hinton's *The Outsiders* in the previous term, students will have been introduced to the Year 9 course theme 'Identities in Conflict': they will have explored the idea that social class can create divisions between people, and that personal identity can be bound up with the sense of belonging to a certain group that may be defined in socioeconomic terms. This term, students have the chance to explore another angle to the idea of identity, specifically related to gender and gender expectations. The two short stories, *The Destructors* and *Eveline*, present us with different insights into the lives of teenagers, with the two pieces having a male and female focus, respectively. Through reading the two stories, students will be asked to consider the extent to which the conflicts and crises experienced by the two protagonists – Eveline and T. – reflect the idea that society, and perhaps writers, may have different expectations of young women compared to young men.

In addition to developing the course theme, this unit of work also gives students a chance to explore the short story form and allows them to gain an appreciation of shortform fiction's distinct formal characteristics. The choice of twentieth-century, canonical literary writers was also deliberate: this brings an added level of challenge into the course following *The Outsiders* and will give students the opportunity to develop their skills of language analysis.

There are several layers of complexity to both of these texts, which provide fertile ground for discussion and the development of critical analysis and evaluative skills.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Teaching will consist of whole-class reading and discussion, beginning with *The Destructors*. Analysis and discussion will be mostly centred on the ambiguous central character, T., who commits morally reprehensible acts for no obvious reason. Students will be asked to infer possible reasons for his shocking behaviour, and to consider Greene's intentions in creating an amoral protagonist. Study will also take into account how Greene uses language effectively for the purposes of characterization, and students will be encouraged to build on their knowledge of social class from *The Outsiders*, which is manifested more subtly in this story.

Once students are confident with *The Destructors*, they will move on to *Eveline* and will be encouraged to draw parallels between the themes and ideas in both stories, as well as comparing and contrasting the two protagonists. Students will be encouraged to explore the idea of emotional conflict and responsibility as they read *Eveline*, and will pay close attention to the way that Joyce is able to convey a huge amount of backstory and characterization in relatively few words.

Once students are confident with both stories, they will work towards an essay in which they will have the opportunity to compare how both texts present young people, drawing links and contrasts between both stories as well as reflecting on the extent to which each piece develops the course theme.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Understand the affordances and constraints of the short story form;
- Practise skills of evaluation and critical analysis;
- Consider the way both writers explore the idea of gender expectations;
- Practise class discussion skills

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- One piece of creative prose writing which reflects one or more key themes from the two stories (600-1000 words).

## YEAR 9 – THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Theme strand: *Identities in Conflict* | Skill strand: *Developing a Critical Voice*

Jew	Antisemitism	Moneylending	Stereotype
Justice	Bond	Ambiguity	Trial
Dual narrative	Suitor	Riddle	Gender roles
Dramatic irony	Compassion	Sympathy	Antagonist
Appearances vs. reality	Morality		

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

It is a National Curriculum requirement that students cover two Shakespeare plays in the pre-GCSE (KS3) phase. We have taken the decision to teach *The Merchant of Venice* in its entirety rather than extracting key scenes. Shakespeare is a key component of literature study at all levels, so we feel it is important to give students the full, rich experience of reading and annotation of more than one play during their time with us, in order to provide them with a broader understanding of what Shakespeare is about. This experience will also give students a firmer footing for studying *Othello* at GCSE.

We have chosen *The Merchant of Venice* specifically because it develops the Year 9 theme strand of *Identities in Conflict* in interesting ways, most obviously in the complex presentation of Shylock as a persecuted individual struggling to express himself in a world that will not accept him, and whose own identity is ultimately suppressed. There are also interesting parallels to be drawn between Shylock and *Othello*, and we hope that students will make these connections as they begin studying *Othello* in Year 10.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Teaching consists of whole-class reading of the play. Students are required to purchase their own copy of the text in order that they can make annotations as they learn. Students will be encouraged firstly to simply understand and enjoy the story, but will be increasingly required to analyse the effects of Shakespeare's language and to form a critical opinion on Shylock and Shakespeare's intentions for this character; i.e. to what extent can he be considered a 'victim' rather than a 'villain'?

### LEARNING AIMS

By the end of this unit of work, students should be able to:

- Read Shakespeare with some confidence;
- Use the skill of annotation effectively;
- Explain the narrative of *The Merchant of Venice*;
- Describe the principal characters in *The Merchant of Venice*;
- Form and express an opinion on the character of Shylock;
- Reflect on how the play displays elements of 'Identities in Conflict'.

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- 'Write about the character of Shylock and how he is presented at different points in *The Merchant of Venice*' (500-600 words);
- Three annotated extracts from the play.

## YEAR 9 – A RAISIN IN THE SUN

Theme strand: *Identities in Conflict* | Skill strand: *Developing a Critical Voice*

Ambition/Aspiration	Chicago's South Side	Racism	The American Dream
Masculinity	Family bonds	Slavery	Life insurance
Chauffeur	Segregation	Jazz	Matriarch
Investment	Bribe	Entrepreneur	

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

It is crucial that the topic of race/racism is covered in our KS3 curriculum, and it is vital that we choose texts that address this issue from inside the community in question. For this reason, we have chosen to explore this topic through Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, which deals with the struggles of an impoverished black family in 1950s Chicago – providing an ideal conclusion to the Year 9 course on *Identities in Conflict*, which has seen students explore a diverse range of voices and perspectives, as well as challenging issues such as prejudice and injustice.. Hansberry's play is considered a classic, and was the first play by a black woman to be staged on Broadway.

In addition to exploring themes of racism, the play also encourages interesting discussion on topics such as masculinity, The American Dream, and family bonds, whilst also satisfying the NC requirement for students to study 20<sup>th</sup> century drama in KS3.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Students study an abridged version of the play consisting of four extended extracts which present two of the play's narrative threads: Walter Lee and his struggles with identity and thwarted ambition, and the fallout from Mama's decision to purchase a house in a white neighbourhood. Students will read and annotate their copies of the text in class, and will be encouraged to engage in regular discussion about issues presented in the text, leading towards the production of written work with a nonfiction/transactional focus.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Gain contextual understanding of racism;
- Read and enjoy a piece of 20<sup>th</sup> century drama;
- Practise skills of evaluation, considering different interpretations of characters' motivations and behaviour;
- Develop empathy for characters;
- Practise class discussion skills.

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Three short analytical responses to key moments in the play (300 words each);
- One speech/talk based on the theme of dreams and aspirations (600-800 words).

## YEAR 9 – THE YELLOW WALLPAPER AND A DOLL’S HOUSE

Theme strand: *Identities in Conflict* | Skill strand: *Developing a Critical Voice*

Feminism	Sexism	Postnatal depression	Gaslighting
Physician	Nursery	Country mansion	Hysteria
Bank loan	Desperation	Oppression	

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

Our Year 9 texts have been selected to provide students with opportunities to explore complex issues of identity, conflict, inequality and injustice in society. Gender issues, sexism and feminism are a key part of topic, so we have chosen two classic 19<sup>th</sup> century texts that explore these ideas. The two texts complement each other very well, since both feature a wife who is subjected to subtle control, coercion and ‘gaslighting’ behaviour on the part of the husband, although the way that the two women react to this treatment is different in interesting ways. This unit of work also allows us to explore two different literary forms: short form fiction (*The Yellow Wallpaper*) and 19<sup>th</sup> century drama (*A Doll’s House*), as well as satisfying our National Curriculum obligation to teach ‘seminal world literature’ in KS3.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Students will be provided with copies of the texts to annotate in class. Teaching will be delivered through whole-class reading, beginning with *The Yellow Wallpaper* and moving on to *A Doll’s House*. Students will be encouraged to draw connections, comparisons and contrasts between the characterization and experiences of both female protagonists and consider the different ways in which they are oppressed/controlled/mistreated by their husbands.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Read and enjoy two classic 19<sup>th</sup> century literary texts;
- Compare how two different writers explore the same theme;
- Consider the affordances and constraints of the short story form;
- Consider the affordances and constraints of the dramatic form;
- Practise discussion skills;
- Understand the concept of sexism/female oppression;
- Practise reading skills: Retrieve, Analyse, Evaluate, Compare, Context

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Essay - to be confirmed
- Short analysis pieces – to be confirmed

## YEAR 10/11 – BLOOD BROTHERS

Theme strand: Tragedy and Transience; Beauty and Critique | Skill strand: Studying with Insight and Independence

Colloquial language	Working class	Middle class	Social exclusion
Superstition	Naive	Stereotype	Motif
Profanity	Foreshadowing	Social criticism	Nature and nurture
Childhood	Debt cycle	Council housing	Public school
Secondary modern school	Factory	'The Dole'	

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

For the Eduqas GCSE in English Literature, students must study one piece of 20<sup>th</sup> century drama. We continue to select Willy Russell's *Blood Brothers* for this part of the GCSE for several reasons. Firstly, it is a gripping story that students find accessible, and is therefore an ideal text to study at the very beginning of GCSE preparation in Year 10. Secondly, the play has important and relevant things to say about the social class system, allowing students to explore ideas around social exclusion and division, and furthering themes of identity and prejudice that have been established in the Year 9 course, *Identities in Conflict*. In fact, a clear line can be drawn between *Blood Brothers* and the Year 9 text *The Outsiders*, which introduced students to ideas of social class divisions and how this can lead to conflict. Finally, *Blood Brothers* is firmly rooted in the working class experience, which the majority of our students can relate to easily – giving them a greater ability to empathize with the struggles of the central character, Mickey.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Teaching is delivered primarily through whole-class reading of the text (students are expected to purchase their own copies of the play through the school, so they annotate them freely). Teachers should seek regular opportunities to engage the class in discussion about key characters, events and themes in the story.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Use the skill of annotation effectively;
- Explain the narrative of *Blood Brothers*;
- Describe the principal characters in *Blood Brothers*;
- Form and express an opinion on the key characters;
- Reflect on how the play expresses key themes.

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Three annotated extracts;
- At least one analytical response to an extract (250-300 words);
- A whole-text essay on how the theme of social class is presented in the play;
- At least one whole-text essay on a character, relationship or theme in the play (500-800 words).

## YEAR 10/11 - OTHELLO

Theme strand: Tragedy and Transience; Beauty and Critique | Skill strand: Studying with Insight and Independence

Duplicitous	Jealousy	Manipulation	Exploit
Racism	Moor	Shakespearean tragedy	Reputation
Military ranks	Irony	Soliloquy	Aside
Misogyny	Virtuous	Fidelity	Power
Outsider	Vengeance	Justice	Façade
Purity and corruption	Fall from grace	Reputation	

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

It is a National Curriculum requirement that students study at least one play by Shakespeare in the GCSE (KS4) phase. Shakespeare is a key component of literature study at all levels, and we ensure students have the opportunity to experience reading and annotating more than one play during their time with us in order to provide them with a broader understanding of what Shakespeare is about. This experience gives students a firmer footing for studying *Othello* at GCSE.

We have chosen *Othello* because it is a captivating tale of love and jealousy, with a villainy so malevolent it destroys several lives. While Othello is the protagonist, the tragic hero whose actions spurred Iago's desire for vengeance, it is Iago, the sinister, duplicitous puppet-master who captivates audiences as he controls and manipulates everyone around him in a truly Machiavellian manner. In Year 9 one of the reasons students studied *The Merchant of Venice* was to aid them in their analysis of *Othello* as there are interesting parallels to be drawn between Shylock and Othello, and students will be encouraged to make these connections as they begin studying *Othello* in Year 10.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Teaching consists of whole-class reading of the play. Students are required to purchase their own copy of the text in order that they can make annotations as they learn. Key terminology will be introduced and explored during the reading of the play. Students will be encouraged firstly to simply understand and enjoy the story, but will be increasingly required to analyse the effects of Shakespeare's language and to form a critical opinion on key characters and Shakespeare's intentions for these characters; i.e. to what extent can Othello be considered a 'victim' rather than a 'villain'? Students will be taught how to write critical essays exploring such concepts. Several of these pieces will go into their Academic Portfolio.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Read Shakespeare with some confidence;
- Use the skill of annotation effectively;
- Explain the narrative of *Othello*;
- Describe the principal characters in *Othello*;
- Form and express an opinion on the key characters;
- Reflect on how the play expresses key themes.

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Three annotated extracts;
- At least one analytical response to an extract (250-300 words);
- At least one whole-text essay on a character, relationship or theme in the play (500-800 words).

## YEAR 11 – A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Theme strand: Tragedy and Transience; Beauty and Critique | Skill strand: Studying with Insight and Independence

Social responsibility	Social criticism	Redemption	Workhouses
Remorse	The Poor Laws	Miser	Avarice
Poverty	Ignorance	Compassion	Selflessness
Characterization	Semantic field	Pathetic fallacy	Christmas traditions

### WHY DO WE TEACH THIS UNIT?

For the Eduqas GCSE in English Literature, students must study one piece of 19<sup>th</sup> century prose. We choose to teach Charles Dickens' timeless classic *A Christmas Carol* because it is a beautiful story with an inspiring and powerful message about redemption and social responsibility, which we have found to be consistently engaging and challenging across all ability levels. Dickens' prose is rich and colourful, providing excellent opportunities for analysis of language and characterization, and the themes of social responsibility, charity and compassion provide fertile territory for the exploration of ethics, justice and moral obligation in society. *A Christmas Carol* is the last text we study for GCSE, and it serves as an interesting conclusion to the exploration of social class and inequality issues that began with *The Outsiders* in Year 9 and tracked through *Blood Brothers* and several of the poems in the Eduqas anthology.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

Teaching is delivered primarily through whole-class reading of the text (students are expected to purchase their own copies of the text through the school, so they can annotate them freely). Teachers should seek regular opportunities to engage the class in discussion about key characters, events and themes in the story.

### LEARNING AIMS

- Read and enjoy a classic piece of 19<sup>th</sup> century prose;
- Practise analysing language and characterization;
- Practise reading skills – Retrieve, Analyse, Evaluate, Context
- Engage in discussion around key issues raised by the text;
- Understand the socio-historical context of the text and consider Dickens' aims in writing it

### ASSESSMENT – ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Three annotated extracts;
- At least one analytical response to an extract (250-300 words);
- At least one whole-text essay on a character, relationship or theme in the story (500-800 words).

# SKILLS GLOSSARY

*Note: this glossary is for **staff use only**. In class, please encourage students to develop their own understanding of the skills through exploratory dialogue. This glossary expands on the skills listed on the curriculum map.*

## **Reading skills**

*Note: these are also skills of academic writing.*

**RETRIEVE** – The skill of finding information in a text - reading a text and being able to extract key information from it.

**ANALYSE** – The skill of looking closely at the language and effects used by a writer - close examination of why/how language is effective. Analysis requires a 'close up' posture towards the text.

**EVALUATE** – The skill of interpretation, critical engagement and personal response to a text. Evaluation involves consideration of wider themes, authorial intent and why a text 'matters' – it requires a 'zoomed out' posture towards the text.

**COMPARE** – The skill of finding interesting similarities and differences between texts.

**CONTEXT** – The skill of understanding how wider influences affect a text, including those of society, culture, historical period, genre, and the life experience of the author.

## **Creative writing skills**

*These are the skills of 'the writer's craft'.*

**STORYTELLING** – The skill of planning and sequencing a narrative in such a way as to make it optimally engaging for readers.

**CHARACTERIZATION** – The skill of creating realistic characters, often manifested through speech, behaviour, description, thought process, and backstory.

**TENSION** – The skill of using language and structure to create a feeling of suspense, pace or unease that is highly engaging for readers and is usually resolved.

**MOOD AND ATMOSPHERE** – The skill of using language to evoke sensory effects, impressions and emotions. The 'feeling' evoked by a text.

**IMAGERY** – The skill of using language to create vivid images, including figuratively, such as through simile and metaphor.

**DIALOGUE** – The skill of incorporating speech between characters into a story. Often, dialogue is used to develop characterization or to aid the storytelling.

**SELF CRITIQUE** – The skill of being able to take a critical and evaluative posture towards one's own creative work, often with the aim of refining and improving the work.

**AESTHETICS** – The skill of being able to deliberately and artfully manipulate language to create style and beauty in a piece of work. Aesthetics may involve novel combinations of words, poetic or sonic techniques such as assonance, alliteration and cadence, as well as artful use of punctuation and paragraphing.

## **Academic writing skills**

*Note: the reading skills (above) also form part of the repertoire of academic writing skills.*

**EVIDENCE** – The skill of sourcing appropriate textual evidence and using this to support a point.

**OVERVIEW** – The skill of maintaining awareness of the whole text while writing analytically about it.

**TRACKING THE TEXT** – The skill of conveying the narrative of a text while writing analytically about it – the ability to 'move through' the text while analysing it.

**FOCUS AND DIRECTION** – The skill of frequently returning to the question and producing writing with intentional sequence and structure.

## **Oracy skills**

*These are the skills of dialogic (or exploratory) talk.*

**LISTEN MINDFULLY** – The skill of careful, active and deliberate listening to the ideas of another.

**EXPLAIN** – The skill of articulating a viewpoint or idea.

**JUSTIFY** – The skill of substantiating an utterance by reference to evidence/support.

**REVOICE** – The skill of repeating another's utterance in one's own words, or re-wording one's own utterance to add further clarity.

**BUILD** – The skill of adding to or following on from the ideas introduced by another.

**QUESTION** – The skill of raising an enquiry about the ideas of another or the learning material.

**CHALLENGE** – The skill of providing a rebuke or rebuttal to the ideas of another; offering a counter-argument.

**EXPLORE** – The skill of offering creative or tentative interpretations of the ideas of another, or the learning material.

**ARGUE** – The skill of defending a viewpoint across several speaker turns by recourse to evidence or support.

**DISAGREE** – The skill of graciously accepting and seeking to understand the divergent views of another.



# Curriculum FAQs

- **Why don't we write analytical 'Literature style' essays in Years 7 and 8?**

Because the aim of Years 7 and 8 is to immerse students in stories and the craft of the writer, allowing them to build confidence and understanding in the mechanics of language and literary creativity. We want our students to become writers before they become scholars: they need time to find and develop their own creative voice before they can write critically about the creative choices of others. This is not to say that we won't be teaching the skills of critical analysis in Years 7 and 8 - just that these skills will be developed through reading and discussion, not longform essays.

- **Why do we have portfolios?**

We have a moral responsibility, as educators, to provide students with a rich and valuable experience that gives them opportunities to develop a broad range of intellectual, creative, metacognitive and communication skills. A culture of rigid assessment, high-pressure examination, constant grading and 'teaching to the test' simply does not allow for this. Instead, we want to create a culture that celebrates and encourages outstanding effort and attitude, in which students feel confident, valued and empowered through their learning, regardless of 'ability'. The portfolio system is absolutely fundamental to this ethos, because students can see that their success is dependent on a much broader range of factors than just 'how smart they are'.

- **What are the portfolios for?**

They allow students to present a clear, visible pathway from initial planning and drafting to final product. They are a personalized, self-curated working record of the evolution of students' learning and competence across a range of forms and skill areas.

- **Why don't we grade our students?**

Grading has a detrimental effect on students' ability and willingness to process and act on feedback. This is because students tend to look at the grade alone and consider this the only worthwhile piece of information on the quality of their work. If the grade is high, they disregard feedback because they see no need to be better; if the grade is low, they disregard feedback because they become despondent and apathetic. Grading also brings out uncharitable class group behaviour, in that there is always a tendency for students to rank themselves against their peers. We do not want our students to seek self-validation through grades. Instead, we want them to will find value in the *process* of producing great work: the plans, the false starts, the drafts, the mistakes, the feedback. We want them to see a finished result as simply the final stop on a journey, and be just as eager to share and celebrate their process as their final piece.

- **Why do we have Skills Repertoire sheets?**

Because it is important for students to develop a metacognitive oversight of their own learning and progress: having them track and reflect on where, how and how confidently they are using key English skills gives them a greater level of agency and ownership of their own learning, as well as providing them with the tools to produce successful writing.

- **Why don't we do formal 'assessments' or mock exams outside of Year 11?**

Because the portfolios give us a far better indication of students' ability, effort, progress and attitude. Imposing high-pressure, timed assessments on students outside of Year 11 is not only unnecessary, but potentially detrimental to their confidence and development as learners. We believe that the way to prepare students for the rigours of the new, longer, more academic GCSE examinations is not through forcing students to complete yearly mock exams, with all their attendant stresses, marking burdens and logistical manoeuvrings, coupled with a rigid system of in-class 'assessments' completed on set dates and marked according to a fabricated marking rubric. Such a system denies students the opportunity to invest care, attention and effort into work that they value; it denies students the chance to develop vital skills of planning, time management, critical thinking, editing and self-critique. It is a system that restricts creativity and fosters the damaging belief that grades are the only metric by which students must judge their own worth as a learner. These are not our values.

- **Why do we have Theme Strands?**

Because it is important for our curriculum to have a narrative: we want each year to have its own distinct thematic focus and 'story', so that Year 8 'feels different' to Year 7, and so on. Grouping set texts under a certain theme also allows students to critically engage with the notion that different authors explore similar ideas in different ways, as well as giving them opportunities to reflect on and compare the texts they have studied as the year progresses.

- **OK, but why these particular themes?**

The Year 7 theme, 'Islands and Adventures' introduces a sense of discovery and fun, supporting the idea that reading can transport you to far-off places and stretch your imagination. We want students in Year 7 to enjoy reading and develop a love of stories: this is the perfect theme for showing students that reading can be transporting and expansive.

The Year 8 theme, 'Lights in the Darkness' allows students to continue developing a love of reading, but with reference to some more mature, emotionally challenging ideas such as war, horror, loss, grief and good vs. evil. The idea here is to encourage a wider spectrum of emotional responses to the texts that we study.

The Year 9 theme, 'Identities in Conflict' responds to the growing maturity of our students by introducing them to texts that feature characters whose diverse identities affect the way that they relate to the world around them. In this age of social media, identity politics is more prevalent than ever before and it is important to expose students to some of the ways that individuals may feel marginalized by the societies in which they live. Additionally, this theme lays the groundwork for some of the core themes of the GCSE syllabus: so *Blood Brothers* is a natural progression from *The Outsiders* and students' work on the treatment of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* will ensure that they are well-positioned to explore the character of Othello at GCSE. Notions of prejudice, social class and wealth inequality are also found in *A Christmas Carol*.

- **How does our KS3 curriculum prepare students for KS4/GCSE?**

The KS3 curriculum is delivered over Years 7-9 and is designed to provide students with a firm grounding in the key academic and creative skills required for success at GCSE and beyond. The key reading and writing skills refined and developed over KS3 align with the Eduqas GCSE assessment objectives; these skills are displayed in every classroom and underpin the reading and writing work undertaken in class, as well as forming the basis for the tracker sheets used in Years 7-9. In addition to this, the texts chosen for the Year 9 course deliberately lay key thematic groundwork for the GCSE texts (see above). The portfolios produced by students at KS3 allow them to develop skills of planning, time management, and self-critique – all of which are vital at KS4.

- **Why have we chosen to teach *Othello* for our GCSE Shakespeare text?**

Because it is a challenging text with the highly engaging pairing of flawed hero and charismatic villain. The character of Othello himself, being a black/African man in a white society, also provides fertile ground for critical engagement with the difficult, yet vitally important, ideas of identity, prejudice and racism, continuing ideas explored in depth over the Year 9 course. Additionally, the plot of *Othello* is straightforward and linear, as opposed to other Shakespeare plays (e.g. *Romeo and Juliet*) which can have dual narrative strands and multiple locations: the narrative progression of *Othello* is easy to follow, which gives students the chance to really focus on character, theme and language. *Othello* is also commonly studied for A-level, so will provide our students with excellent grounding for future study.

- **Why do we teach morphology and etymology?**

For students to be effective communicators in the world, and in their life beyond secondary school, it is vital that they have a decent grasp of the English Language. Knowledge of language is immensely powerful, and young people whose vocabulary range is narrow will find themselves ultimately out-competed in their lives by those whose communication skills are more advanced. Students who read widely outside of school are likely to acquire vocabulary and the rudiments of grammar naturally and will be able to infer meanings intuitively; however, for students who do not read (i.e. the majority) these skills are unavailable. These students are at a huge disadvantage. Therefore, it is our responsibility to teach them more explicit methods of decoding meaning by demonstrating how words are constructed from morphemes (which themselves have evolved from earlier languages), and how knowledge of key roots and prefixes can help them grasp the meanings of unfamiliar words.

- **What do we do to stretch the most able?**

The general philosophy within the department is that teachers ‘teach to the top’, such that the delivered material already provides adequate challenge for the most able, with personalized scaffolding and support provided to allow less able students to access this level. Texts chosen for the curriculum are deliberately challenging in scope, and the portfolio system allows the most able to be as creatively and intellectually ambitious as they choose. In addition to this, there are extracurricular opportunities to become involved with discussion and debate, as well as the OpenWrite writing group, and the student newspaper, *The Raptor*.

- **How do we promote reading?**

We carefully considered the texts that we teach, with the hope that the wide range of voices, characters and stories will appeal to our students. In addition to the texts read in class, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are given a reading list of eight books, available through the English department or the school library, which expand on the Theme Strand for the year, bringing in a wider range of voices and settings. Students are expected to make their way through the reading list at their own pace as the year progresses, logging their progress and evaluating each book using a reading tracker sheet.

- **How do we promote oracy (speaking and listening) skills?**

Students carry out bi-termly specified oracy tasks (see curriculum map), which cover the three key speech genres of ‘present’, ‘discuss’ and ‘debate’. To support this, a repertoire of key oracy skills is explicitly taught to students over Years 7-9 (see skills glossary). Oracy is also developed through class discussion and one-to-one dialogue with teachers. In addition to this, at the end of Year 9 and mid-way through Year 11 every student has a 10-minute one-to-one ‘viva assessment’ in which they have the opportunity to present and discuss their portfolio work with a teacher; in the case of Year 11 vivas, these will be senior members of staff. Students are given class time to prepare for the vivas, and will be expected to respond to questions from the interviewer as well as presenting key pieces of work. From 2021 onwards, Year 10 and 11 homework will be oracy-based, with students expected to plan and record two pair or group podcasts per half term, linked to key questions arising from the learning material.

- **What are the ‘viva assessments’ and why do we run them?**

Students undertake two viva assessments during their time with us. These are so named because they emulate the viva voce spoken assessments that are common at graduate/postgraduate level. The first of these takes place in July of Year 9; the second takes place in late November/early December of Year 11. In both cases, the assessment takes the form of a 10-minute one-to-one interview with an English teacher, in which the student presents and discusses their portfolio. Students are given time in class to prepare for the viva – they receive a list of questions to choose from, and then spend time planning their answers to these questions. The students’ planned responses are used as the basis for dialogue with the teacher during the assessment. It is expected that students will have fully organized and audited their portfolios before presenting them in the viva. *Note: the Year 11 viva assessment also serves as their Spoken Language endorsement for the English Language GCSE – therefore, it is graded as Pass, Merit, Distinction and all interviews are filmed. The grade only relates to a student’s speaking and listening performance in the assessment – the portfolio itself is not graded.*