

Year 8 Curriculum Principles for English

In Year 8, Team English equip all students with the fundamentals of reading, writing and independent thought which pave the way for outstanding outcomes in year 11 and beyond.

By the end of Year 8 students of English at Dixons Cottingley will be exposed to:

A range of literary and non-fiction texts from the Renaissance theatre through to the 20th Century American novella, and into an exploration of short stories by the likes of Roald Dahl and J.K Rowling. The year closes with an exploration of discursive and non-fiction texts as year 8 study the art of rhetoric and persuasion.

Cycle 1 - Prejudice & Inequality: *Of Mice and Men* and Poetry

- Year 8 analyse characterisation and structure in John Steinbeck's novella. The study of context is critical in year 8 as all students begin the scheme by discussing and debating contemporary influences such as the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl and other factors which impacted the lives of migrant workers in California. The scheme incorporates moral debates through the treatment of characters in the novel as a consequence of race, gender and disability. Poetry also complements the scheme, building on War poetry from Year 7 and preparing students for their poetry GCSE anthology in Year 9.

Cycle 2 - Greek Tragedy: William Shakespeare's *Othello*

- Students read and perform the Shakespearean tragedy of *Othello*. The scheme hinges on tragic conventions and Shakespeare's depiction of the dangers of jealousy, building on their foundational knowledge from their knowledge of *The Tempest* from Year 7. Students will analyse the play to evaluate and challenge ideas about class, race and the conformity of women in Elizabethan England and consider the play's significance in the modern world.

Cycle 3 – Constructing Texts

- Year 8 study a variety of extracts which prepare them explicitly for their GCSE Language papers. The scheme incorporates a wealth of fiction and non-fiction texts which will form a basis for students to develop creative writing skills for narrative and descriptive writing as well as the art of rhetoric and persuasion as students explore the use of pathos, ethos and logos.

The English faculty prioritises knowledge retrieval and interleaving to ensure that recall is seamless and knowledge is cemented so students can securely move onto our year 9 curriculum. Differentiation is at the heart of our teaching, ensuring that all students regardless of ability can access and above all enjoy their English lessons.

By the end of Year 8 students of English at Dixons Cottingley will be taught the following skills:

- Advanced academic vocabulary
- A broad and deep appreciation for a variety of literary and non-fiction texts
- The fundamentals of writing including discursive, transactional, creative and descriptive styles
- Speech writing and persuasive delivery
- Developed oracy through partner and full class talk
- An understanding of socio-historical contexts
- Comparative skills
- Time management and independent research skills through weekly teacher assessed homework

Our English curriculum ensures that social disadvantage is addressed through:

- Exposing students to powerful knowledge through highly regarded works of literature and wider reading which is interwoven through all schemes
- Developing cultural capital through trips and wider experiences including guest lecturers and activity days with leading universities
- Intervention planning for every student meaning that the most gifted are stretched and challenged whilst those who need the most support meet their maximum potential

Opportunities to build an understanding of social, moral and ethical issues are developed alongside links to the wider world, including careers, through.

- Ethical and moral debates



- Stretch lectures which afford the English Faculty opportunities to go beyond the GCSE specification and broaden the scope of students' knowledge.

In order to truly appreciate the subject and create deep schema, English has been sequenced with the following rationale:

- The English curriculum has been sequenced thematically.
- English is driven by core knowledge and key skills.
- The English curriculum at DCO is robust and rigorous.
- All of our schemes are carefully planned around our 'core' anchor texts with a wider reading selection.