

The Lionheart KS3 English Curriculum

Our curriculum is built on the understanding that skills are domain specific and are therefore limited without subject-specific, broad, secure knowledge foundations, which build upon those learnt by students at KS2. Our curriculum ensures that by the time children begin Key Stage 4 (in year 10, and not a day earlier), they have been taught two full novels; 3 full plays (including a Shakespeare tragedy and a comedy); the canonical, and influential contemporary poets; classical Greek and Anglo-Saxon epic narratives, and 6 complete short stories/novellas by canonical 19th century writers. Our curriculum, then, is grounded in breadth and diversity, because we believe that it is through secure foundational literary knowledge and experience that children develop the skills and the references to become instinctive readers and writers. Evidence demonstrates that treating thinking skills as abstract from content leads to students writing thin, superficial responses and that by grounding skill in relevant and enriching knowledge, students will become scholarly and confident. Our curriculum reflects this approach to education.

Year 7: Heroes and Villains/Myths and Legends			
Text	The Ruby in the Smoke	Collection of epic poetry and classical narratives	A Midsummer Night's Dream
Key retainable knowledge	What/How/Why and an analytical vocabulary	Heroic/epic traditions and idiomatic cultural references	Shakespearian Comedy and dramatic method
Core written assessment	Evaluative essay on characterisation	Analysing then writing and delivering a heroic speech	Extract to whole play analytical essay
Year 8: Social and Political Protest Writing			
Text	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time(play)	19 th Century Short Stories	Social and Political protest Poetry
Key retainable knowledge	Modern drama, dramatic method and didactic/political traditions	19 th Century genres, style and context	Poetic devices and genres and Canonical poets
Core written assessment	Thematic analytical essay	Mimicking of 19 th century style narrative writing	Comparative essay on 2 poems (Hughes and Angelou)
Year 9: Aspects of Narrative and Literary Genres			
Text	Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line	Macbeth or Romeo and Juliet (dependent on KS4 choice)	War Poetry Collection
Key retainable knowledge	Narrative methods and theory	Shakespearian tragedy and dramatic method	Poetic devices, war poetry as a genre, WW1 and WW2 context
Core written assessment	Extract to wider story analytical essay under exam conditions	Article 'How the modern world is a Shakespearian tragedy.'	Two unseen war poems – single then comparative analysis

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Joined up and extended learning

Our curriculum is taught in terms of genre in order to give students an understanding of the literary canon so that they become literate in important cultural genres which will allow them to recognise these in writing and to find themselves unintimidated by a diverse (in every sense) range of styles, references and texts. This will give them the grounding needed in order to analyse their texts with confidence and to write in a conceptualised and evaluative manner at KS4 and 5, and to become highly literate and therefore highly employable adults.

In order for this to happen we recognise the need to master a topic. Therefore, our units are taught across a full term and the content is revisited in assessments and knowledge tests as well as class discussion from first teaching onwards. Each unit has its own key retainable knowledge organiser and 40-word vocabulary list to allow for explicit vocabulary instruction. The vocabulary will be

¹ The broad KS3 curriculum, organised by unit

relevant (but not unique to) the subject content of the unit. This vocabulary will feature as part of the resources for the unit, will be modelled by teachers within daily lessons, and should be integrated into extended writing. The content of the knowledge organiser will also form part of the dialogue of the scheme of work itself and build into a broad and oft repeated mastery of the unit.

Similarly, the non-fiction/unseen poetry is also tightly linked and relevant to the text and genre central to the teaching of the unit. Through delivery of the non-fiction/unseen poetry booklets, students will develop both cultural capital as well as their comprehension, inference and more general reading skills which helps to prepare them for studying Language at KS4. We believe that tackling every text a student comes across – be it fiction, non-fiction, poetry or prose – with the same set of reading skills allows students to become confident and capable readers. All our learners are therefore taught how to be a reciprocal reader by using four simple steps: predict, clarify, question and summarise. This approach is discursive and inclusive and allows students to develop metacognition, to become independent and creative thinkers and readers whilst simultaneously extending their knowledge of the main units.

Assessment

Our students will have 6 written assessments a year – 3 of these are the formal end-of-topic assessment and three are classroom based mid-way through the unit. In the summer term of years 7 and 8 we assess students orally. All of our students sit the same assessment at the same time, within reason. Our students also sit a 'Big Test' which assesses their knowledge across the core subjects twice a year: the first test is sat at the end of autumn term 2, the second sat in the summer. In English, the 'Big Test' is not content focused but skills based, and assesses students' ability to understand the key areas of study that inform the curriculum. Questions cover vocabulary, inference, narrative voice and literary devices. As part of our metacognitive approach to learning, retrieval practice forms a routine part of daily lessons. This could include testing on the key retainable knowledge for current and previous units, or focussed on accompanying vocabulary.

The trials and the end-of-topic assessments will be individually marked and the low stakes, retrieval testing self-marked in class.

Schemes of Learning

These are centralised and available to all staff, who should be confident in differentiating resources to meet the needs of their individual cohorts. Administrative principles of each scheme are that they are paper light, easy to use and organised week by week (rather than lesson by lesson). The core lessons are tightly produced and well-resourced, as are the unseen poetry and non-fiction booklets.

Homework

Students are given a booklet on language analysis for their homework at the start of each of the three blocks of learning. The work in these booklets does not require marking as the students will be able to either self-assess during whole class feedback (all tasks are based on Daisy Christadoulou's examples in 'Making Good Progress'), or these are automatically marked on the VLE. Children are also given the knowledge organiser and the vocabulary lists at the start of the unit and are expected to study these independently at home.